



A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

Winter 2011

EXTENSION CORD SAFETY ----- TAKE NO CHANCES!

The Holiday Season is almost upon us! We often use extension cords to power our holiday lights but we sometimes overlook the hazards that using extension cords present.



Did you know that there are about 4000 injuries and 3300 fires associated with extension cord use every year?

Extension cords are very useful devices, but they can present a fire or shock hazard when either worn out or used improperly.

- Extension cords come in either two or three-wire types.
- Two-wire extension cords should only be used to operate one or two small appliances and no more than 3 standard strands of lights.
- Three-wire cords are used for outdoor applications and electric power tools.
- Extension cords must be treated with care and checked regularly for damage or deterioration.
- The cord itself should *never* be *pulled* to disconnect it from an electrical source; remove it by the plug.
- Extension cords should not be placed under rugs or furniture and should never be strung through doorways, windows, walls, ceilings, or floors.
- Damaged cords present a potential fire or shock hazard and should be destroyed and replaced immediately. Don't try to fix it with tape!
- An extension cord should never be used as a substitute for permanent wiring.
- Do not fasten to a building or structure, even though staples are sold for this purpose at hardware stores.
- Avoid plugging two cords together to make a longer one.
- Extension cords which are either connected together, or are too long will reduce operating voltage and may cause appliance damage.
- Use good housekeeping practices to keep extension cords from being a tripping hazards or becoming damaged.



- Inspect them regularly for wear.
- Replace defective units.
- Prevent potential electrical hazards that may lead to an injury!



Air quality and Winter Classrooms

The cold of winter is coming. In our classrooms, we'll often tightly close up the doors and windows to stay warm. It may be warmer, but there are issues that can arise when we don't adequately ventilate the classroom.



One of the things our bodies produce is carbon dioxide (CO2). It is in the air we exhale. At low levels, carbon dioxide is harmless, but at higher levels, it can cause problems. Have you ever breathed in right over a glass of soda and felt the stinging of the bubbles in your nose? That's the CO2 in the soda! High CO2 levels can cause itchy, drippy noses, red and runny eyes, scratchy throats, and general respiratory discomfort. They tend to clear up as soon as the person leaves the room. More importantly, high CO2 levels have been shown to cause lethargy, drowsiness, and suppress cognitive function in students. Students in unventilated rooms show lower test scores as a result of high CO2 levels.

Another thing in the air that we exhale is moisture. This moisture drives up the humidity in the room and can make it uncomfortably muggy. High humidity levels also assist in mold growth and no one wants that.

Finally, a closed up classroom allows those viruses and illnesses that are so prevalent in the winter to accumulate. Occupants of rooms without ventilation are more likely to get colds, flus, and other airborne illnesses.

Fortunately, there is a simple solution. HVAC units, besides heating and cooling, are designed to exchange the room air with clean, filtered, outside air. This lowers the CO2 and moisture levels, and it removes those cold and flu germs that are floating in the air. Always make sure that the HVAC fan is running continuously when the room is occupied, even if you think it's noisy. The added noise is a small price to pay for better health. Ask your M&O person to ensure that the outside vent is open to allow fresh air to come in. Your air will then be clean and fresh, even with the doors and windows closed. You'll be glad you did, and so will your students!

Foul Weather Driving Tips

Driving safely when the weather turns foul takes concentration and planning.



- Always wear your seat belt.
- Make sure your windshield and mirrors are clear of frost, snow and ice and the driver's seat is positioned properly
- Plan ahead. Leave earlier than usual to allow extra time to reach your destination
- Keep a "winter emergency kit" in your car. It should include a flashlight, flares, jumper cables, snacks, drinking water, extra gloves, hat, blanket, sand, a small shovel and boots. A warm sleeping bag is also a good idea.
- Carefully assess road and driving conditions when driving on unfamiliar roads. Be especially cautious on bridges and ramps.
- Drive at speeds appropriate for road conditions. Use "defensive" driving attitude and actions.
- Keep your distance from other autos and obstacles.
- In a skid situation, if your car is equipped with an Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) remember to maintain continuous pressure on your brakes. If your car does not have ABS, and you feel your car starting to skid, pump your brakes lightly. Turn your car to follow the direction of the skid to help maintain control.

Remember, if the road and weather conditions are truly hazardous, reschedule your travel.



Food Safety

Whether preparing food for a family reunion or a community gathering, people who are great cooks at home don't necessarily know how to safely prepare and store large quantities of food for large groups. Food that is mishandled can cause foodborne illness. However, by following some simple steps, volunteer cooks can make the event safe and successful!

Plan Ahead – Make sure the location meets your needs.

- Be sure you have enough oven, stovetop, refrigerator, freezer, and work space.
- Find out if there's a source of clean water. If not, bring water for preparation and cleaning.

Store & Prepare Food Safely

- Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within 2 hours of shopping or preparing.
- Find separate preparation areas in the work space for raw and cooked food.

- Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that held raw food.
- Wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and work surfaces frequently with hot, soapy water.

Cook Food to Safe Internal Temperatures – It's the only way to tell if harmful bacteria are destroyed!

- Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat, poultry, casseroles, and other food. Check temperature in several places to be sure food is safely cooked.
- Never partially cook food for finishing later because you increase the risk of bacterial growth.

Transport Food Safely – Keep hot food HOT. Keep cold food COLD.

- Keep cold food at or below 40 °F. Place in a cooler with a cold source such as ice or commercial freezing gels.
- Keep hot food at or above 140 °F. Wrap well and place in an insulated container.

Need to Reheat? – Food must be hot and steamy for serving. Just "warmed up" is not good enough.

- Use the stove, oven, or microwave to reheat food to 165 °F. Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil.



Keep Food Out of the "Danger Zone" (40-140 °F).

- Keep hot food hot -- at or above 140 °F. Place cooked food in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays, and/or slow cookers.
- Keep cold food cold – at or below 40 °F. Place food in containers on ice.

When In Doubt, Throw it Out!

- Discard food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Place leftovers in shallow containers. Refrigerate or freeze immediately.

Fight BAC!TM - www.fightbac.org

When preparing for your special event, remember you have the power to Fight BAC!TM and keep your food safe.

Clean – Wash hands and surfaces often.

Separate – Don't cross-contaminate.

Cook – Cook to proper temperatures.

Chill – Refrigerate promptly.

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