

# Safety is everyone's responsibility.

## Safer Use of Extension Cords

It's happened to all of us. You go to plug in your new appliance and its cord isn't long enough to reach the nearest outlet. You dig through the closet and find an extension cord that is just long enough to reach the outlet. Problem solved, right? Maybe not.

Different products require different amounts of electrical current to operate. If you use an extension cord that isn't designed to carry enough electrical current to meet the product's needs, the cord could overheat and start a fire. So, be sure the extension cord you choose is properly rated to **safely** handle the current drawn by the product.

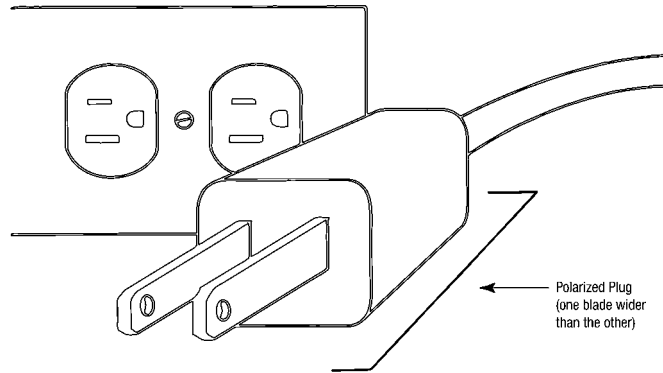
To determine whether there's a potential for cord overload, check the wattage rating marked on the label attached to the cord. Then, add up the wattage ratings of all the products that will be operating simultaneously off the cord.

If the rating marked on the label attached to the extension cord is lower than the total wattage ratings of the products, unplug one of the products and check the total wattage of the remaining products.

Continue to unplug products from the extension cord until the total wattage of all products plugged into the cord is lower than the wattage rating of the extension cord. You can usually find the ratings for appliances on the manufacturer's nameplate or in the use and care booklet.

In addition to current-carrying capacity, there are other factors to consider when choosing and using an extension cord:

- Make sure your extension cords bear the UL Mark.
- Never run a cord under a rug or carpet, or drape it over a hot surface such as a radiator, space heater or stove. Electric current in the wire causes the temperature of the wire to increase slightly. If the cord is covered by a rug or other items, heat can't escape and the cord can become too hot. When this happens, a fire could start. An extension cord should not be covered or exposed to anything that will raise its temperature and possibly cause a fire.
- Never use a cord outdoors that is not marked for outdoor use. Store all cords indoors when not in use. Sunlight can deteriorate the cord over time, if materials are not suited for such exposure.
- Never keep an extension cord plugged in when not in use. The cord will still conduct electricity until it is unplugged from the outlet. Following this tip will reduce the risk of mouth burns, electric shock or even death for young children who may chew on the receptacle end or put a hairpin or other metal object into an unused plug receptacle. Newer cords with more than one receptacle have covers for the unused openings – use them.
- Never use an extension cord that is cut, damaged or repaired. Touching even a single exposed strand of wire as fine as a thread can give you an electric shock or burn.
- Never use a cord that, when used, feels hot or very warm to the touch.
- Never file or cut the plug of an extension cord or appliance to plug it into an old outlet. As a safety feature, many new cords and appliances have polarized plugs (one blade wider than the other). These special plugs are designed to prevent electric shock by properly aligning circuit conductors. If a plug doesn't fit, have a qualified electrician install a new outlet.



- Never coil a cord when it is in use. Remove all ties and wrappings – except warning tags – from a new cord before use. Leave the warning tags on so others can read the warning tags before using the extension cord.
- Never let the connection between the cord and a lamp or appliance rest on a wet surface, or run any cord (even one designed for outdoor use) through standing water.

For more consumer safety information, visit <http://www.ul.com/regulators/pubedu.html>

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