

# Construction Safety Week: Electrical Hazards



Electrical sources are one of the most dangerous hazards in today's modern world. Between 2015 and 2019, fire departments responded to a yearly average of 78,000 home fires involving electrical malfunction or distribution--fires which resulted in a yearly average of 820 deaths, 2,400 injuries, and \$2.8 billion in property damages. In addition, electrical appliances and power cords pose a risk of shock and electrocution when improperly used or poorly maintained. As such, all employees should be able to recognize, correct, and prevent electrical hazards, both at home and on the job.

---

## 15 Tips for Preventing Electrical-Related Incidents

- 1** Never run cords under rugs or mats, or place objects on power cords.
- 2** Do not use flexible cords in places where they may be crushed, pinched, or damaged.
- 3** Never use extension cords as a permanent source of power.
- 4** Plug appliances directly into a wall outlet, never into a power strip or surge protector.
- 5** Do not plug a surge protector into another surge protector!
- 6** Never overload wall outlets. Rule of thumb: one plug and one outlet.

*(continued on next page)*



- 7** If outlets, switches, or breakers feel warm, burned, or if a plastic burning smell is present, immediately contact building maintenance or the fire department if the hazard is unknown.
- 8** Replace surge protectors according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- 9** Never use power cords without the round ground pin or if the rubber covering is damaged.
- 10** Never leave heat-producing appliances on and unattended.
- 11** Be sure there are no combustible materials stored close to heat-producing appliances.
- 12** Space heaters are especially troublesome and should be used with caution, and all manufacturer's safety recommendations followed.
- 13** On a job, ensure periodic safety inspections occur on all electrical appliances and devices.
- 14** Ensure all electrical equipment is shut off when not using.
- 15** If any questionable burning smell is noticed, shut off the appliance and call a licensed electrician.

