



Minimizing Risk of Electrical Fires

One of the leading causes of fires is the failure of electrical equipment. Electrical appliances, power cords, and cables are useful and inherently safe equipment found in every work area. Yet if any of these become defective, damaged, overloaded, or incorrectly installed or maintained they can cause an electrical fire. Using proper equipment, preventive measures, and proper maintenance can prevent or minimize the risk of electrical fires. Identifying the hazards is the first step in minimizing these risks:

- ✓ Make sure all electrical systems and wiring are correctly installed and up to code. If you are not sure, have a certified electrician check them out.
- ✓ Never overload circuits. If lights dim on a regular basis, a fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips repeatedly: these are indicators that the circuit is being overloaded. Have an electrician check for shorts and other faults in the lines or devices.
- ✓ Use extension cords for temporary, not permanent, use. Make sure cords are in good condition, are the proper type for the task and are rated for outdoor use if used outdoors. Never overload them and protect cords from heavy traffic areas.
- ✓ Inspect electrical equipment on regular basis to determine if cords are frayed or cracked, and if plugs or sockets are damaged. Either repair or discard and replace prior to use.
- ✓ Don't misuse the equipment or use faulty equipment. Keep flammable and combustible materials away from electrical equipment.

Preventative maintenance is the key in preventing mishaps with electrical equipment, tools, and appliances. Inspect on a regular basis, make the appropriate repairs, discard and replace if necessary. Don't allow damaged cords, equipment, or appliances to become the source of a fire.

Remember: "No task is so important that it be done at the risk of safety."