



These hints from the experts at the Electrical Safety Foundation International may help you stay safe around electrical equipment:

- Never remove the third prong of a three-prong plug. Convert two-pronged outlets using an adapter with a ground tab.
- When working outdoors, use only weather-resistant heavy gauge extension cords marked "for outdoor use."
- Keep outdoor outlets and electrical products covered and dry between uses.
- If an electrical products falls into a pool or pond, unplug it before you reach into the water.
- Turn off electrical products if a cord overheats. Be sure amperage ratings for outdoor extension cards are higher than those of the electrical product with which they're used.
- Never try to repair electrical products yourself.
- Keep cords out of your path or work area. Throw the cord over your shoulder.
- Put a ground circuit interrupter between your electric power source and your electric products.

Do you take your appliances for granted?

- Don't, says the Electrical Safety Foundation International. Taking a moment to check appliances can save lives.
- To make sure appliances are in good condition, look for breaks in power cords, plugs, or connectors. An appliance which repeatedly blows a fuse or trips a circuit breaker could indicate a defect that may cause a fire or electrical shock. Unplug the appliance immediately and have it repaired or replaced.
- Unplug any appliance that has given you an electrical shock, and do not use it until it has been checked and repaired by a qualified technician.
- Remember, electricity and water don't mix. Keep all electrical cords and products such as radios, TVs, hairdryers, and curling irons away from water in a sink or tub.
- Extension cords can be job savers if the power cord on the electrical appliance or tool you're using isn't long enough to reach the nearest outlet.
- Using extension cords properly is crucial to your safety, says the National Electrical Safety Foundation, which recommends the following tips for safe usage:
- Use extension cords on a temporary basis, not as permanent wiring.
- Never run any electrical cord under a carpet. If the cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which may result in a fire hazard.
- Do not use extension cords that are cut or damaged. Touching even a single exposed strand can give you an electric shock or burn.
- Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots for the plug. Don't cut off the ground pin to force a fit. This defeats the purpose of a three-prong plug and could lead to an electrical shock. Also, never force a plug into an outlet if it doesn't fit.

A ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) can be plugged or installed into an outlet to protect against electrical shock. GFCIs are products designed to prevent serious injury or death from electrical shock by detecting ground faults at very low levels.

GFCIs should be used in any area where water may come into contact with electrical products. GFCIs are now required by code in certain areas of the home, including unfinished basements, kitchens, bathrooms, garages, crawl spaces, laundry rooms and around swimming pools.