



Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust

A MINI TRAINING SESSION FOR INJURY PREVENTION

# Quick Take on Safety

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## Cord Management

### TRAINING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Overview: Covers daisy chaining, cords in walkways or under desks, extension cords and electrical multi-taps.
- Purpose: Refreshes and reminds employees about the common electrical hazards related to cords.
- Preparation:
  - Gather 2.5 inch to 3 inch strips of Velcro (or other securing product) to give to employees for cord management.
  - Read and become familiar with this Quick Take. *Change as needed to reflect procedures and personnel in your department.*
- Handouts: Quick Review on Safety: Cord Management handout

### CORD MANAGEMENT HAZARDS

Hazards related to cords in the workplace most often include daisy chaining, use of extension cords, cords that run across or in walkways or under desks, and the use of electrical splitters or multi-taps. Daisy chaining is when you plug power strips or extension cords into other power strips or extension cords rather than into wall outlets. Electrical multi-taps or splitters are devices that allow multiple items to be plugged into one outlet typically via plug adaptors.

Both daisy chaining and the use of multi-taps or extension cords can increase the risk of fire. As more items are plugged into a single circuit, the risk of overloading the outlet or cords increases. This can cause the breaker to trip, resulting in a loss of power or the cords or outlets to overheat and combust.

If the items plugged into the daisy chain or multi-tap are space heaters, coffee makers or other high amperage equipment, the risks of overloading a circuit increase even more.

Cords across walkways or cluttered below desks present trip hazards, which can lead to injury or damage to equipment. Cords across walkways also tend to become damaged or frayed. This can result in fires or equipment no longer working.

Fortunately, although all of these hazards are serious, they are preventable. Please pay careful attention to the use of cords in your workspace. Your health and safety are important to us; we don't want you to get hurt.

### PREVENTION

- Plug power strips or surge protectors directly into wall outlets. If there is no outlet nearby, ask for a power strip or surge protector with a longer cord or move items on the desk closer to the outlet. Avoid using an extension cord.

- Power strips or surge protectors are most often designed for low amperage equipment such as computers, monitors, phones and other office equipment. High amperage equipment should be plugged directly into wall outlets.
- Multi-taps and splitters should be used sparingly or not at all for the same reasons as power strips or surge protectors; they can overload circuits, trip breakers and increase the risk of fire. [*Instructor Note*: When daisy chaining, multi-tap or splitter use occur due to a lack of available outlets nearby, installing additional electrical receptacles can help to resolve power supply problems.]
- Cords should not cross walkways. If a cord is crossing a walkway it should be secured and covered with a highly visible bridge.
- Keep cords managed under desks. They should not be in a position to cause tripping injuries. [*Instructor prompt*: If a roll of Velcro is available, cut off a small length and hand to employees. They can use this to quickly wrap around cords under desks to keep them tidy.]
- If you encounter any damaged or frayed cords, do not use the equipment and report the damage immediately to a supervisor or member of management.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- How else can we improve cord management?
- How can we hold employees or others accountable to maintain consistently good cord management?

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITES**

- Have employees go back to their desks to perform a short safety check. If any hazards are found that cannot be safely remedied, compile a list and send to appropriate personnel or the safety committee.

# Cord Management Session

## Planning and Review

Trainer

Training Date

Department(s)

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### TRAINING GOALS

- Employees understand the basic hazards of cord management
- Employees review and adjust their workstations to remove cord management hazards
- Employees report electrical concerns or cord management problems.

### RESOURCES

- Office of Compliance, “Fast Facts: Power Strips and Dangerous Daisy Chains,” [Compliance.gov](#)
- Office of Compliance, “Fast Facts: Temporary Extension Cords and Power Connectors Should Not Be Used for Permanent Wiring,” [Compliance.gov](#)

### REVIEW

Did the training meet the stated goals?

How can the training be improved?

### TRAINER COMMENTS

