

# Extension Cord Safety



## Reduce the Risk of Fire From Extension Cords

Improper use of extension cords is major cause of fires in New York State. Follow these basic safety tips when using extension cords to reduce your risk of fire.

1. Use extension cords only when necessary and only on a temporary basis.
2. Check the plug and the body of the extension cord while the cord is in use. Noticeable warming of these plastic parts is expected when cords are being used at their maximum rating, however, if the cord feels hot or if there is a softening of the plastic, this is a warning that the plug wires or connections are failing and that the extension cord should be discarded and replaced.
3. Never use an extension cord while it is coiled or looped. **Never cover any part of an extension cord with newspapers, clothing, rugs, or any objects while the cord is in use.** Never place an extension cord where it is likely to be damaged by heavy furniture or foot traffic.
4. Don't use staples or nails to attach extension cords to a baseboard or to another surface. This could damage the cord and present a shock or fire hazard.
5. Don't overload extension cords by plugging in appliances that draw a total of more watts than the rating of the cord.
6. Use special, heavy duty, extension cords for high wattage appliances such as air conditioners, portable electric heaters, and freezers.
7. Replace cracked or worn extension cords with new — #16 gauge cords that have the listing, of a nationally-recognized testing laboratory, safety closures, and other safety features.

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