

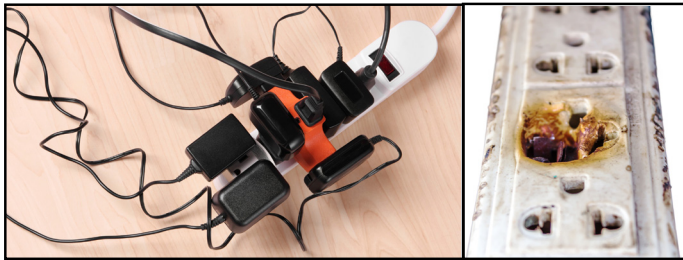
NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

October 2015

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS: OVERLOADING POWER STRIPS

The supply of electrical outlets is often inadequate, especially in older buildings. To meet needs, extension cords and power strips are often interconnected, or “daisy chained”. This is a violation of OSHA regulations and the National Electrical Code and can cause overloading, leading to failure and even fire.

Safety Hazards



Most power strips are approved to provide power to four or six individual items. When power strips are interconnected, they become overloaded--providing power to more items than they are made to. This can cause fire or a circuit breaker to trip, de-energizing computers and other equipment in the area. This risk is magnified when another outlet nearby is also overloaded.

Another issue is extension cords connected to power strips. Because electrical resistance increases with power cord length, interconnecting cords increases resistance and heat generation. This creates risk of equipment failure and fire, particularly when paper and other combustible materials are in contact with the wires. **OSHA's regulations only allow extension cords to be used as temporary wiring for up to 90 days.**

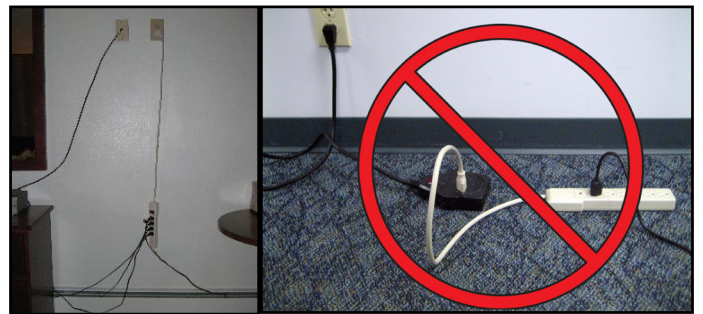
Solutions

- Replace power strips connected to an extension cord (or another power strip) with a power strip that has a longer cord.
- Rearrange furniture so outlets can be accessed.
- Use a power strip that is able to accommodate bulkier transformer plugs.
- When possible, have new outlets installed.

Choosing the Right Equipment

Since surge protector models vary in the amount of current they are rated to safely carry, it is important to consider the amperage requirements of the devices to be plugged into it. Choose a model with the appropriate power cord length. Avoid having excess cord, and make sure the surge protector is set on its base. Some have swivel plugs which makes them easier to connect to the outlet, and helps to protect the plug and cord from damage. Check each surge protector to make sure it is in good condition.

Only power strips equipped with internal fuses are acceptable as permanent wiring. Those lacking these fuses are equivalent to extension cords, and therefore may not be used as permanent wiring. Never suspend a power strip in mid-air by its power cord or cords plugged into it, this causes excessive stress on electrical connections.



Source
www.compliance.gov/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/fastfacts_daisychains.pdf

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