

Re: Extension Cord Safety

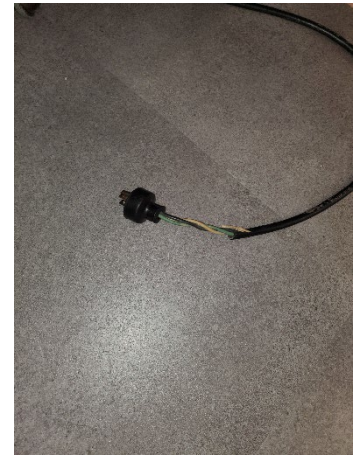
Extension cords are common in homes and on jobsites, but customers may not always recognize the risks of improper or long-term use. **Licensed Electrical Contractors can help spot unsafe practices and identify when a permanent electrical solution may be needed.** Wire gauge is one example of where customers can get confused: a **16 AWG cord is smaller and carries less current than a 12 AWG cord**, despite what the numbering may suggest.

When extension cords go wrong

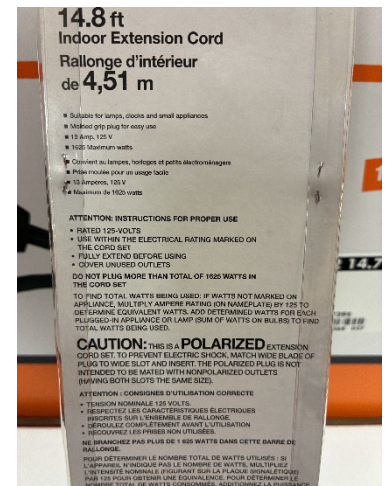
ESA has reviewed incidents involving **daisy-chained extension cords that resulted in a fire** and a **frayed cord that resulted in electrical shock**. In an [earlier Ontario fatality](#), a 14-year-old-boy was electrocuted while using a computer connected to an unapproved power bar. Its ground pin had been removed to fit a two-pin, ungrounded receptacle. An internal defect energized the computer's metal casing.

What to reinforce with customers

- **Keep temporary use temporary:** Long-term reliance on extension cords may signal the need for additional receptacles, dedicated circuits or another permanent solution. Never use extension cords as permanent wiring or run them through doors, windows, walls or ceilings, or under rugs, flooring or other finishes.
- **Choose the right cord for the job:** Use a cord with a recognized Canadian certification mark and the appropriate wire gauge and rating for the equipment being used. For outdoor or damp locations, use a cord rated for those conditions.
 - **Note:** Visit [ESAsafe.com/ApprovalMarks](https://www.esa-safe.com/ApprovalMarks) for a full list of recognized marks.
- **Avoid daisy-chaining and overloading:** Don't connect extension cords together or connect multiple loads beyond a cord's rated capacity.
- **Inspect before use:** Check plugs, prongs, cord caps and insulation for loose or damaged parts, cracking, exposed conductors, overheating or other signs of damage. If damage is found, remove the cord from service immediately.
- **Protect cords from damage:** Keep cords away from sharp edges, pinch points, standing water and areas where they may be crushed or damaged.
- **Take extra care around water:** Cords used near pools, hot tubs or swimming areas can pose a serious shock hazard if they are not rated and protected appropriately.



This cord poses a clear shock and fire hazard and should be taken out of service



The manufacturer indicates this cord is for indoor use with a maximum wattage of 1625W

Learn more

For more information, review [ESA's Flash Notice \(25-07-FL\): Hazards due to misuse of extension cords](#), including guidance on selecting the correct cord, proper loading and identifying unsafe conditions that may increase the risk of electrical shock or fire.