SAFETY CONVERSATION

Topic: Extension Cord Safety

WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO LEARN

In this Safety Conversation you will learn about the safety precautions to be applied when using extension cords within your workplace.

HOW IT WILL HELP YOU IN YOUR JOB

Following this conversation, you will:

- Be aware of the hazards of using extension cords
- Know the safety precautions to take when using extension cords
- Understand the different types of extension cords and know which type you should use

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Extension cords are used widely every day, both at work and at home. They are very useful, but can present a fire, electrical shock or tripping hazard when either worn out or used improperly.

Types of Extension Cords:
Power cables may be used to supply appliances with a low current consumption (most office equipment), as well as medium and high electrical appliances, both indoor and outdoor. These cables should only be used as temporary solutions.
It is important to know what the maximum amps are for the extension cord and what the equipment you are using requires. Not knowing this may lead to overloading the cord and increases the risk of fires.

Care and Inspection:
Extension cords must be treated with care and checked regularly for damage or deterioration. The cord itself should never be pulled to disconnect it from an electrical source; always remove it by the plug.
We should not plug two cords together to make a longer one. It's best to use one cord in a continuous length from the plug to the equipment. Extension cords that are either connected together or are too long will reduce operating voltage and operating efficiency of tools or appliances and may cause motor damage.
Wherever possible, all cords must be routed to avoid creating potential tripping hazards or them becoming damaged. Where routing of cables in footfall areas proves unavoidable, use anti-trip cable covers or tape the cables down to secure them.
Where extension multi-point block adaptors are used, these should be properly secured, off the floor and not overloaded.
Once the extension cable is removed ensure that the cable is not damaged and if tape was used, remove all the tape. Any defective extension cords must be removed from use and replaced immediately.
If you discover a cable that is a safety hazard, first make it safe (if possible) and then report it to a responsible person.

PUTTING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT INTO PRACTICE

- Prevent potential electrical or tripping hazards that may lead to injury
- Carry out regular inspections to ensure that there is no damage to the cable

BE MINDFUL

- Ensure that the extension cord does not create a trip hazard
- Switch off electrical equipment when it is not in use

SPEAK OUT

- Inform your supervisor or manager if you notice an extension cord that is damaged or defective.

GET INVOLVED

- Where tape is used to secure the cords, be sure to completely remove all tape after use. Tape can hide potential damage to the cord.

YOUR VALIDATION

- What checks should be carried out on extension cords before use?
- What can be done to prevent the cords becoming a trip hazard?
- Why shouldn't we link extension cords together to create a longer one?

MORE INFORMATION

- MAN 05 Electrical Safety