# Tool Box Talks

## Topic: Extension Cords

An extension cord is not inherently dangerous. It is free of moving parts, flames, and noise. However, with misuse the extension cord can cause a serious hazard on the worksite.

No doubt you've received a shock from a 110-volt line at some point without serious harm, but even a 10-volt current can create a fatality. It's easy for the right conditions to come together, with a bare wire from an extension cord to come in contact with wet or sweaty hands, wet floors, water pipes or even other electrical connections.

These rules should be applied for the safe use of extension cords:

- Use only equipment that is approved to meet OSHA standards.
- Do not repair or modify extension cords.
- Extension cords should be factory assembled 3-wire.
- Cords, connection devices and fittings should all be equipped with strain relief.
- Never remove a cord from a receptacle by pulling on it, grasp the plug and pull it out to avoid unnecessary wear on the cords.
- Extension cords should always be inspected at the beginning of the work day. Look for signs of fraying, missing ground prongs, and cracked tool casings. Remove and clearly tag worn or damaged cords from service immediately.
- Cords should be stored where they will not be hit or tramped upon.
- Cords should be stored in large loops. Avoid kinking them down or bundling them up into knots.
- Extension cords are not ropes; do not use them to raise or lower tools and materials.
- Extension cords come in special types, if your needs require water resistant, chemical resistant, heat resistant or other requirements; then be sure you have the right cord for the right conditions.
- Ground-fault circuit interrupters should be used on all 120-volt, single-phase, 15- and 20- ampere receptacles. Or you must have an assure equipment grounding conductor program in place.
- Tools and equipment should be double insulated and distinctively marked as such.

Employee Participants