

EXTENSION CORD POLICY

Division: Finance & Management

Date Established: 02/01/2008

Responsible Office: Environmental Health & Safety

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POLICY SUMMARY

This policy describes the acceptable use, and limitations on use, of extension cords on the SUNY Buffalo State campus.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is designed to prevent the potential hazards posed by extension cords, while explaining the scope in which extension cords are allowed on campus, how to use them safely, and when and where they can and cannot be used.

DEFINITIONS

Extension cord - Any insulated, flexible wiring fitted with a plug at one end and one or more outlets, typically used to plug in devices whose cords are not long enough to reach an outlet. Intended for temporary use only.

Grounded – Signified by the round prong located on the plug of an extension cord. Only extension cords that have this prong are grounded and are allowed to be used on campus.

Permanent – For purposes of this policy, any device or electrical line that would remain plugged in and maintain a constant electrical connection for more than 15 days. Does not include use of an extension cord for the connection.

SCOPE & PURPOSE

Many extension cords contain inferior wiring, which can lead to a cord shorting out or overheating. If an extension cord short circuits or overheats, the length of the extension cord and what it may be running over or under increases the potential that items may catch fire. Extension cords are not designed for constant use; this increases the chance of them shorting out or overheating.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

Who should know this policy

- Members of the SUNY Buffalo State community
- Students
- Contracted workers
- Environmental Health & Safety Office staff

Environmental Health & Safety Office

- The Environmental Health & Safety Office is responsible for: maintaining this policy; providing guidance regarding this policy; monitoring campus adherence to this policy; and reporting instances of non-compliance to appropriate officials and/or levels of management.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all members of the SUNY Buffalo State community.

RELATED PROCEDURES

1. All extension cords will comply with National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) 70 (National Electric Code).
2. Extension cords shall not be used as a substitute for the fixed wiring of any facility, office, or shop on campus.
3. Extension cords shall not be used for permanent or semi-permanent installations, i.e., they cannot be used on a constant basis if their service will surpass 15 days. Extension cords being used with portable equipment that will be unplugged or removed at the end of the day are allowed.
4. Extension cords must be minimum 16 gauge copper wire and rated for at least 13 amperes. Extension cords must also be grounded and shall not exceed their rated capacity.
5. Extension cords must be well maintained and must not contain splices, taps, or rips. Outlets and terminals must also be free of flaws such as cracked, split, or gashed insulation. In addition, exposed wires, burn marks, knots, loose connectors, or any other factor that may contribute to possible fire or electrocution cannot be present when using an extension cord. Any cord showing one or more of these characteristics must be removed from use immediately.
6. Extension cords, power strips, and surge protectors shall not be connected or “daisy-chained.”
7. Extension cords cannot be used in bathrooms. Extension cords used in wet or damp locations must have connections to a ground fault circuit interrupter or GFCI circuit.
8. The ground fault prong on extension cords must not be removed; a new outlet may be requested to allow compatibility with the 3-prong extension cord.
9. No multi-plug adapters are allowed to be used in conjunction with extension cords.
10. Extension cords shall not be covered by carpeting, clothing, furniture, or any other object that could prevent the cord from cooling or receiving proper air circulation.
11. A cord being used temporarily may be covered by tape or another type of protective covering to avoid becoming a tripping hazard.

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12. Extension cords shall not be tacked, stapled, or attached to any wall or surface in any kind of permanent or semi-permanent manner.

13. Major appliances (TVs, fridges, amplifiers) may not be connected to an extension cord.

14. Extension cords, when in use, cannot be connected to another extension cord.

RELATED INFORMATION

Related Links:

New York State Fire Code, Section 605.5

CONTACT INFORMATION

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APPROVAL

Approved prior to 2016

REVISION HISTORY

Date of change: 03/23/2015

Brief description of edit: Adapted to standard template

Date of change: 04/30/2026

Brief description of edit: Adapted to ADA compliant template