

Spring Cleaning and DIY Project Safety Tips from ESFI

Learn how to avoid electrical hazards while tidying or improving your home this spring.

ARLINGTON, VA, UNITED STATES, March 1, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The arrival of spring and warmer weather brings a renewed focus on home improvement and spring cleaning projects. Before completing any projects, review ESFI's tips below to ensure these activities do not result in injuries or deaths.

ESFI's website, esfi.org, offers a variety of free resources and information that can be shared with your family, community, and workplace. Follow these basic guidelines to help prevent serious electrical and fire hazards during DIY and spring cleaning projects:

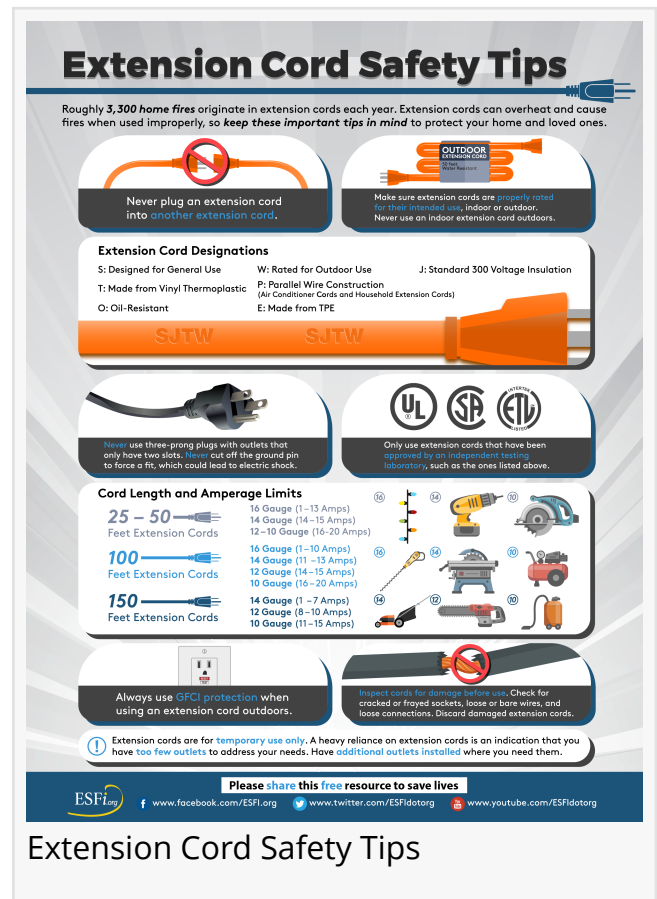
Overhead Power Lines

Before starting any outdoor projects this spring, be aware of where overhead power lines are located outside your home. Whether you're working on the roof, trimming trees, or painting your siding, it's your job to be aware and alert others about nearby power lines.

1. Locate all overhead power lines.
2. Stay at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
3. Do not touch anything in contact with power lines.
4. Carry ladders and equipment horizontally to avoid bumping into the lines.
5. Stay at least 35 feet away from downed power lines and call 911 if you encounter one.

Extension Cords

Using extension cords properly is critical to your safety. With continuous use over time, an extension cord can rapidly deteriorate, creating a potentially dangerous electric shock or fire hazard. Stay safe from electric shock and electrical fires with the following tips:



Extension Cord Safety Tips

Roughly **3,300 home fires** originate in extension cords each year. Extension cords can overheat and cause fires when used improperly, so **keep these important tips in mind** to protect your home and loved ones.

- Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord.
- Make sure extension cords are properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor. Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors.

Extension Cord Designations

S: Designed for General Use W: Rated for Outdoor Use J: Standard 300 Voltage Insulation
 T: Made from Vinyl Thermoplastic P: Parallel Wire Construction (Air Conditioner Cords and Household Extension Cords)
 O: Oil-Resistant E: Made from TPE

Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots. Never cut off the ground pin to force a fit, which could lead to electric shock.

Only use extension cords that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as the ones listed above.

Cord Length and Amperage Limits

| | |
|--|--|
| 25 - 50 Feet Extension Cords | 16 Gauge (1 - 15 Amps) 14 Gauge (14 - 15 Amps) 12 - 10 Gauge (16 - 20 Amps) |
| 100 Feet Extension Cords | 16 Gauge (11 - 10 Amps) 14 Gauge (14 - 15 Amps) 12 Gauge (14 - 15 Amps) 10 Gauge (15 - 20 Amps) |
| 150 Feet Extension Cords | 14 Gauge (11 - 7 Amps) 12 Gauge (8 - 10 Amps) 10 Gauge (11 - 15 Amps) |

Always use GFCI protection when using an extension cord outdoors.

Inspect cords for damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections. Discard damaged extension cords.

Extension cords are for temporary use only. A heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have additional outlets installed where you need them.

Please share this free resource to save lives

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Extension Cord Safety Tips

- Do not overload extension cords or allow them to run through water or snow on the ground.
- Heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have additional outlets installed where you need them.
- Make sure the extension cord or power strip is rated for the products you're using and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- The appliance or tool that you are using the cord with will have a wattage rating on it. Match this up with your extension cord, and do not use a cord that has a lower rating.

[DIY Safety](#)

Planning any DIY home projects? Some projects, such as installing ceiling fans or dimmer switches, you may be able to tackle, while other electrical projects should be left to qualified electricians. Never attempt a project that is beyond your skill level. Knowing when to call a professional can prevent electrical fires, accidents, and electrocution.

Before you complete any projects, keep your home up to code by understanding and labeling your home's electrical panel. This will also make it easy to turn off power to a specific section of your home for an emergency or electrical work.

1. Locate the main circuit breaker.
2. Turn off ALL breakers EXCEPT the main breaker.
3. Ensure there is no power in the house.
4. Turn on one breaker at a time, see which lights in the home turn on.
5. Using a label maker, mark which area in the home the breaker is associated with.
6. Large appliances such as dishwashers, air conditioners, water heaters, and ranges may have their own breaker.

ABOUT ESFI

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May to increase public awareness of the electrical hazards around us at home and in the workplace. ESFI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. For more information and to use ESFI's free-to-share electrical safety resources throughout your community, visit esfi.org.

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