



December 5, 2023

December 2023 Safety Tip

Electrical Safety



Electrical Safety Prevents Workplace Injuries and Fatalities

Electricity is something that you can't see, hear, or smell, making it critical to have a basic understanding of what it is and how it works in order to use it safely. By following the simple safety precautions below, you can help reduce the risk of injury while working with electricity.

Common Electrical Hazards

- Burns
- Electrical shock
- Exposed live wires
- Overloaded sockets
- Contact with energized equipment
- Arc flashes and arc blasts (when electricity jumps from one circuit to another)

General Safety Precautions

- **Stay clear of energized equipment** – *always keep your hands and feet away from electrical panels, wires, and other equipment.*
- **Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)** – *wear gloves, boots, and other PPE when working with electricity.*
- **Be aware of your surroundings** – *keep an eye out for potential hazards, and always be aware of what you are doing.*
- **Know the dangers of electricity** – *understand the dangers of electricity and how to stay safe around it.*

Everyday Electrical Safety Tips

- Before plugging in a device, examine both the device and its cord for damage. Look for corroded, loose or bent plugs. If a cord becomes hot to the touch and/or sparks or shocks, repair or replace it. Don't attempt to repair broken cords or components by yourself, instead use a qualified electrician.
 - **Never hold a tool or appliance by the cord**—that invites damage—and remember to keep cords away from heat and water.
 - **Don't run cords under rugs**—abrasion can damage them.
 - When removing plugs from outlets, pull on the plug, not the cord.
 - **Don't overload circuits.**
- **Don't tamper with plugs.** Never break off the third (ground) prong to fit a plug into a two-plug outlet; instead, replace the outlet. If the third prong is removed, the equipment is no longer grounded. Any cord with a prong missing should be put out of service.

- Remember **extension cords are for temporary use** only. Using them as a permanent wiring solution is not recommended.
- Identify electrical sources over your head and below your feet when working outside.
 - When using an extension ladder for instance, make sure to stay at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
- To avoid unexpectedly striking an underground electric line or other utility, **call your 811 utility locator before you dig.**

Holiday Electrical Safety

Putting up holiday lights and decorations are common customs this time of year. However, dry Christmas trees, burning candles, and busted holiday lights can lead to dangerous and even deadly fires. Keep these three tips in mind this holiday season:

- Make sure live Christmas trees have plenty of water and look for the “Fire Resistant” label if buying an artificial tree.
- Place burning candles in sight, away from flammable items, and blow them out before leaving the room.
- Never string together more than three sets of incandescent lights, and never overload electrical outlets.

WCMB is here to help you keep your workplace safe! Contact us at WCMB@mt.gov.

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