

Extension Cord Safety

Extension cords should ONLY be used for temporary needs – i.e. the sound system for a meeting. They should NEVER be a permanent solution. If you have something in your classroom that needs to be plugged in long-term, either move it to a location close to an existing outlet, or put in a SchoolDude request for a new outlet to be installed.

We have all seen the common do's and don'ts for extension cord safety (don't use a frayed cord, tape down a cord that might present a trip hazard, etc.). But how do you know if the extension cord is safe?

Polarized or 3-Prong Plug

- All extension cords should either be polarized (one prong is wider) or grounded (a round prong in addition to the two flat prongs).
 - Cords not including one of these code compliant safety features should immediately be removed, and either be repaired or destroyed.
- Outlets that cannot accept grounded or polarized plugs should be replaced by a licensed electrician.

Correct for the Environment

- Indoor cords are typically designed with two or three visible parallel insulated wires.
- Indoor cords for heavy-duty use should be jacketed (an insulating cover over all the individual insulated wires).
- Outdoor cords must always be grounded (3-prong plug) and jacketed.

UL Approved

Every extension cord should have a label identifying it as UL Listed.

Rated for the Load

The wattage rating imprinted on the cord or attached label should meet or exceed the wattage of the attached device or tool.

Permanent Work

- Extension cords should NOT be tacked down (tape is okay to avoid trip-and-fall hazards), or pass through a wall or door.
- Temporary wiring (extension cords) is to be removed once work is completed or within 90 days as defined in National Electrical Code NFPA 70 Sections 590.3 (B) and 590.3(D), plus in OSHA standard 29 [CFR§1910.305(a)(2)(i)(B)].
- **If long-term use is necessary, an electrician should install code-approved conduit and outlet(s).**