Power Strips (Power Bars)

This standard is intended to provide general electrical safety information to faculty, staff and students to ensure that power strips in use comply with good safety practices and fire codes, and therefore minimize shock and/or fire hazards inside buildings at the University of Guelph.

A power strip is a device with a flexible power cord with a three prong plug on one end and a block of electrical sockets on the other end. Power strips often include a circuit breaker to interrupt the electric current in the event of an overload or short circuit. Many of these devices have surge protection built in and an on/off switch. Power strips are often used when there is a shortage of electrical outlets and many electrical devices (such as computer systems, audio and video) are in close proximity.

All the following apply:

- When the number of wall outlets is inadequate, additional wall outlets should be installed, however, power strips may be used when electrical equipment is positioned in close proximity to electrical wall outlets. Power strips shall only be used for computers, audio and video equipment and low amperage office and laboratory equipment.
- The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) recommends the use of power strips with a minimum 14 gauge copper conductor to ensure a higher level of safety.
- Power strips shall have approvals by Underwriters Laboratories (ULC) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA); see label attached to power strip.
- Power strips shall be three-conductor (grounded).
- Power strips shall be inspected before each use and properly maintained and shall not be coiled or looped when in use, and shall be free of cracks and other damage.
- For electrical equipment:- always follow the manufacturer’s instructions with respect to the use of power strips.
- Power strips shall be kept away from areas where they may be pinched and areas where they may pose a tripping or fire hazard (e.g., doorways, windows, holes in the wall, floor or ceiling).
- When power strips are exposed to potential damage (being stepped on or the wheels of carts/chairs), they shall be moved from the floor and mounted or attached to the desk or other work surface.
- Damaged power strips shall be replaced.
- Placing multiple power strips in series or with an extension cord (daisy-chains) is not permitted. Each power strip shall be plugged directly into a structurally mounted electrical outlet.

Failure to use and maintain power strips according to the requirements above may create a fire or shock hazard that puts you or others at significant risk.

For further inquiries, contact Environmental Health and Safety at (519) 824-4120 ext. 53282 or by email at ehs@uoguelph.ca [1].

Source URL:https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-13

Links
[1] mailto:ehs@uoguelph.ca