ELECTRICAL CORD SAFETY

It is often tempting for people to reach for an extension cord if the device cord does not reach an intended outlet, but there are do-nots and "**nevers**" when it comes to fire safety when using an extension cord.

Extension cords are intended for temporary use and should never be used to connect a major appliance. The biggest concern with using an extension cord to power an appliance is using the wrong cord, which can lead to overheating of the cord, damage to the appliance, and increased risk of fire or electric shock.

Electrical Safety Foundation International (EFSI) offers many extension cord safety tips. Here are just a few:

- Do not overload extension cords or allow them to run through water or snow on the ground.
- Do not substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.
- Do not run through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors. If cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which may result in a fire hazard.
- Do not use an extension cord for more than one appliance.
- Multiple plug outlets must be plugged directly into mounted electrical receptacles; they cannot be chained together.
- Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products to be plugged in, 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.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can give you an electric shock or burn.
- Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots for the plug. Do not cut off the ground pin to force a fit. This defeats the purpose of a three-prong plug and could lead to an electrical shock. Never force a plug into an outlet if it doesn't fit.
- Buy only cords approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Intertek (ETL) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA).