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**Subject:** Office Safety - Electrical Hazards

To All:

FYI - From Occupational Hazards weekly eNews at <http://www.occupationalhazards.com>

Gary

## Keep Your Office Safe From Electrical Hazards

By Josh Cable

If yours is the type of office where computers, printers, monitors, scanners, lamps, CD players, cell phones and iPod chargers typically are plugged into one inexpensive, overloaded power strip, the nonprofit Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) cautions that such a practice not only is unsightly but also dangerous.

According to ESFI, overloaded electrical circuits pose both an electrocution and fire hazard. While the number of outlets in offices often is a factor that is out of employers' – and employees' – control, ESFI recommends these steps to stay safe from electrical hazards:

- If you must use a power strip, use a name-brand product from a reputable retailer. Low-quality or counterfeit power strips may contain wiring that isn't adequate to carry the load.
- Place power strips where there is plenty of air circulation to disperse heat.
- Do not attempt to plug grounded (three-prong) cords into ungrounded (two-slot) outlets.
- Do not bind, kink or knot electrical cords.
- Never run power cords under rugs or where chairs can roll over them.
- Keep cords close to a wall to avoid trip hazards.
- Keep all non-critical electrical items unplugged until you need to use them.
- Consider charging battery-operated devices in another area.
- If your computer screen flickers or fades, or you detect a burning smell, power down and immediately contact the building engineer.
- If you work from home, have a licensed electrician conduct an electrical inspection.

For additional electrical safety information, visit the foundation's [Web site \(http://www.electrical-safety.org/0\)](http://www.electrical-safety.org/0) or call (703) 841-3229.

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