

EXTENSION CORDS

Extension cords are a useful tool for temporarily extending power from an electrical outlet to a portable device.

However, extension cords can quickly overheat and cause a fire if used for too large an appliance, and they are subject to damage if left unprotected.



Make sure the extension cord you choose is of sufficient size and ampacity to manage the electrical needs of the appliance you are using it with.

The Oregon Fire Code (OFC) and National Electrical Code (NEC) both prohibit the use of extension cords in lieu of permanent wiring, and you or your business may be subject to any liability that arises from the misuse of extension cords.



Large appliances such as freezers, refrigerators and vending machines must be plugged directly into an electrical outlet.

City of Roseburg Fire Department Safe/Prohibited Use of Extension Cords

Based on the Oregon Fire Code



City of Roseburg Fire Department
700 SE Douglas Avenue
Roseburg, OR 97470
 (541) 492-6770

fireprevention@cityofroseburg.org

This brochure is provided as a resource. If you need a copy of the code references cited in this brochure or would like more fire safety information, please contact the Roseburg Fire Department.

When Can I Use an Extension Cord?

Extension cords can be safely used on a temporary basis, to extend the range of a permanently installed electrical outlet to a portable appliance. When using an extension cord, make sure that:

- The cord is plugged into an approved, properly installed electrical outlet, powertap, or approved multi-plug adaptor.
- The ampacity of the extension cord is **greater than** the rated capacity of the appliance served by the cord.
- The extension cord is a grounded (three-prong) type cord with secure ends.
- The extension cord is in good condition, with no splices, torn sheathing, or bare wires.

Extension Cord Safety

- Never use nails or staples to attach an extension cord to a wall or other surface.
- Never use an extension cord while it is coiled or looped. Never cover an extension cord with newspapers, clothing or rugs while in use. Extension cords can generate heat when in use. This heat needs to have the ability to dissipate in order to avoid damage to the cord and cause a fire.
- Do not extend extension cords through ceilings, walls or doors. Exposure to a closing door can damage the protective cover and wiring of the cord.
- Never use an extension cord instead of permanent, professionally installed wiring.

What Kind of Appliances Cannot Be Used With an Extension Cord?

Large appliances or appliances which use a lot of electricity must be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Appliances may need to be re-positioned in order to use an existing outlet, or you may need to have an electrician install a new outlet. Some examples include:

- Vending machines
- Refrigerators / Freezers
- Microwaves
- Portable space heaters
- Coffee pots

If in doubt, read the appliance instructions to see if the manufacturer has listed the appliance to be used with an extension cord, or if it is supposed to be plugged directly into an electrical outlet.