

## Toolbox Safety Talk

### Electrical Safety for Custodial Staff

Incidents involving electricity can cause burns, explosions, shocks, and death, and are a major cause of building fires. According to NFPA approximately 1,000 fatalities due to electrocution and another 30,000 nonfatal electrical shock incidents occur each year. Electrocution is the fourth leading cause of industrial fatalities, after traffic, homicide and construction incidents.

Employees should seek immediate medical assistance for all electrical injuries. All electrical incidents shall be reported to your Supervisor.

Your daily tasks require you to travel from room to room, floor to floor and in some cases even to multiple facilities. While making your daily rounds it is important to recognize, avoid, and communicate all observed electrical hazards. As custodial staff you are not authorized or expected to perform installation, maintenance, repairs and or troubleshoot electrical components, equipment or systems. However, if you encounter unsafe conditions immediately warn employees around you and report it to your supervisor, such as;

- Shocking, sparking, overheating, or smoking machinery;
- Corroded outlets, switches, and junction boxes;
- Exposed wiring, broken plugs or outlets, missing covers, doors or faceplates.

### **Employee Guidance for Electrical Safety**

#### **Cords and Power Tools**

- Perform a visual inspection prior to each use.
  - Cut, damaged, defective, worn and or frayed cords are prohibited from being used. Note: Black electrical tape does not provide suitable insulation and is not acceptable for repairs.
  - Ground prongs are required to be intact if equipped.
- All power tools and equipment must be grounded unless the tool is double insulated.
- Do not create trip hazards with your cords, if you must run a cord temporarily across the floor, protect your co-workers and the building's occupants by covering the cord appropriately.
- Cords must be protected from damage while in use and during storage.
- Never daisy chain (plugging into each other) multi-outlet strips or extension cords.
- If a damaged cord or tool is found safely remove it from service and tag as "damaged, do not use". If conditions are unsafe to de energize contact your supervisor.



#### **Electrical Breakers, Disconnects and Panels**

- If you are not trained to work in high voltage areas, do not enter them, even in an emergency.
- If you encounter exposed wiring, missing box covers, knockouts or faceplates, do not attempt to correct the hazard. Notify employees working in the area of the hazard and notify your supervisor immediately.

#### **Electrical Fires**

- An **ABC** Fire Extinguisher is effective to extinguish electrical fires.
- Use "**C**" rated extinguishers for electrical fires. **Never use water.**

#### **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI)**

- GFCI's are designed to:
  - Protect the employee from electric shock.
  - Detects an imbalance in current flow over normal path.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters must be used when working outdoors and in wet conditions/locations.
- Always place GFCI at the electrical source, e.g. at the receptacle.
- GFCI should be tested before each use, test the GFCI by pushing the "TEST" button on the GFCI which imposes an artificial ground fault.



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**Housekeeping**

- Electric panels must always be kept clear of obstructions.
- Never store materials and or equipment in front of electrical disconnects, panels, etc.
- Never store combustible or flammable materials near electrical sources, electric heat sources and or lights.
- Storage is not allowed in electrical vault or service panel rooms.

**Lights**

- When changing light bulbs de-energize (unplug, switch off) lighting systems.
- Light fixtures equipped with bulb guards are required to be in place and replaced if broken.

All University employees and contract employees must comply with the Electrical Safe Work Practices Program. The Electrical Safe Work Practices Program establishes the minimum requirements for electrical work within the University. **Remember;**

- Always perform a 360° check on ALL equipment, cords, extension cords, GFCI's and outlets before using power equipment.
- Ensure your hands are not wet when plugging in or unplugging equipment.
- Only perform work in which you are authorized and trained. Always follow safe work practices.
- Report unsafe electrical installations, problems and unsafe work activities by contacting your supervisor or EH&S at 5-8200.
- Always be on the lookout for electrical hazards—know what to do in the event of an emergency. If ever in doubt, ask questions