HAZARD ALERT – ELECTRICAL SHOCK

Date: April 18, 2007

Health and Safety, Human Resources


In March, 2007 a student received an electrical shock and burn to her wrist, while using an equipment cart. The cart had its power bar located on the cart handle. It is believed that the student’s thin metal bracelet came into contact with the prongs of a plug that had only been partially inserted into the socket. In response, the Department has permanently taped the plug into place on their cart to ensure it remains fully inserted with no energized prongs exposed, as shown in the photo.

While this solution may not be practicable or appropriate in all circumstances, it is important that all managers and users of powered carts or other electrical equipment take appropriate precautions when using the equipment.

Safe Handling of Electrical Equipment:

- Prior to use of a plug or electrical cord inspect the plug and cord for defects. Where the cord is frayed and wires are exposed, DO NOT use the Cord or Plug. Report the defect to the cart or equipment manager.
- Fully insert plugs into sockets.
- Take precautions against the plug becoming unintentionally dislodged.
  - Have plugs with loose fitting prongs replaced or repaired.
  - Secure the cords against their being unintentionally pulled.
  - On moveable equipment, place the power bar or insert in an out of the way location.
  - Where practicable place a cover over the inserted plug.
  - Electrical Tape should only be used and only on permanent connections with the consent of the equipment manager.
- When disconnecting appliances from electrical outlets, use the plug when you pull it out. Don’t pull it out by the cord.
- NEVER remove the third, grounding prong from a plug.
- Eliminate octopus connections: if more than one receptacle plug is needed, use a power bar or power distribution strip that has an integral power cord and a built-in overcurrent protection.
• Do not tie power cords in knots. Knots can cause short circuits and shocks. Loop the cords or use a twist lock plug.
• Follow good housekeeping procedures - keep the work area free of clutter and debris that could be tripping or slipping hazards.
• Keep power cords away from heat, water, oil, sharp edges and moving parts. They can damage the insulation and cause a shock.
• Do not carry electrical tools by the power cord.
• Switch off tools or equipment before connecting them to a power supply.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY of those who manage carts or other electrical equipment, to ensure users are instructed on the equipment’s safe use.

For further information or comment please contact Health & Safety, HR. (585-4776 or 5487)