

Power Strip Use

Power strips are everywhere, and while they are an essential resource for our office environments, they can pose a very real safety hazard.

Lessons learned from a recent fire in Sam Jackson Hall reinforce the importance of safe power strip use. Several power strips linked together (daisy-chained) caught fire overnight during building system upgrades. We got lucky this time, since the fire occurred between a steel cabinet and a concrete wall—the outcome could have been much worse. Understanding and complying with power strip requirements would have prevented the event.



Please remember to follow all safety procedures when using power strips.

- ✦ Each power strip must plug **directly into an outlet**. Power strips may **NOT** be plugged into other power strips (daisy-chaining).
- ✦ Power strips may **NOT** be used for medical equipment. This does not apply to equipment with a power strip integral to its design and construction (e.g., IV poles).
- ✦ Do not use power strips for equipment with a high power draw (e.g. refrigerators, microwaves)
- ✦ Power strips must be kept clear of all combustible materials.
- ✦ Keep power strips visible and accessible.
- ✦ Do not place power strips in areas where the cord is in danger of being pinched or damaged.
- ✦ Minimize the number of items plugged into a power strip. Remove unneeded cords and chargers, and when equipment is eliminated from a work area, ensure the cord is also removed from the power strip.
- ✦ Consider permanent power solutions. If power needs exceed available outlets, contact Facilities & Real Estate to discuss installation of additional outlets.
- ✦ Upgrade your power strip. Power strips lose the ability to manage power surges and protect equipment over time. If your power strip looks old or worn, it may be time for a new one with updated safety features.

Need more information? Read the OHSU Healthcare Power Strip Use procedure.