MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

MSU DAWG TRACKS

May is National Electrical Safety month. So, it seems like the perfect time to raise awareness about electrical hazards & how to avoid potential problems.

During routine safety inspections in facilities both on and off campus, electrical issues seem to always be part of the recommendations for repair or improvements. Listed below are some common electrical hazards we come across. If you see of these items in your work area or home correct them, or notify someone who can, before these hazards turn into an accident.

- **Check electric cords for fraying or cracking.** Cords on tools/equipment or extension cords that are used often may become worn over time. Check them for places where the outer insulation is cut, melted or damaged exposing the colored insulated or bare wires inside.
- **Ensure cord ends are securely attached to the cord.** The connector should fit securely around the cords insulated cover not exposing the individual wires.
- **Cord ends must have all prongs in place.** It is not uncommon for the 3rd bottom, ground prong to pull out. Replace the cord end if this happens (and check the outlet to ensure the broken off prong is not remaining in it).
- **Power strips & extension cords must be plugged directly into a wall outlet**, not another extension cord or power strip.
- **Don't use cheap extension cords & multiplug adapters**; these are common causes for a fire. Be sure any device like this is UL approved and sized for your intended use.
- **Maintain clear access and at least 36" of clearance around electrical panels** & other such components. If power needs to be turned off quickly, personnel does not need to clean-up to just get to it, and electricians need ample clear area to work safely.
- **Label all breakers & disconnects,** when installed, with the areas they power.
- **Empty breaker slots & openings in electrical panels, junction boxes or outlet drop boxes must have blanks installed.** Open holes are both potential for electrocution & debris getting inside electrical components causing problems.
- **Keep electric appliances and tools away from water**. Never reach for or unplug an appliance that has fallen into water; instead, turn the power off at the breaker before you unplug the appliance or remove it from the water.
- **Use GFCI outlets, breakers, or portable adapters around potential wet areas** (outdoor areas, locations that require wash down cleaning, near sinks or other water sources)
- **Watch for overhead power lines** when using use a ladder, working on roofs, operating machinery or equipment that can increase height, such as forklifts, dump beds, and many pieces of tall farm equipment.

For more info contact:
Leslie Woolington
MAFES/MSU-Extension
Risk Mgmt./Loss Control
662.325.3204

Sources:
http://www.eei.org/