

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Electrical Hazards

If the power goes off it puts an abrupt halt to our normal activities. We have come to take electricity for granted. We use it and it is constantly around us lining the roads, in our hands through tools, and running through the walls of buildings. Never forget the life altering and deadly consequences if electricity is not respected and safety precautions taken.

Common Electrical Hazards to Avoid:

➤ **Exposed Electrical Parts –**

- Ensure all outlets & switches have proper fitting covers. Breaker boxes should have doors shut, with blanks in empty holes or breaker slots. This will prevent a person from accidentally contacting electrical parts and keep any arcing contained.
- Covers on all junction boxes and LB connectors. The connection of multiple wires naturally causes resistance to the flow of electricity, which in turn causes heat. Should wires, for whatever reason, overheat covers will prevent fire.

➤ **Damaged Insulation –** Insulation prevents conductors from contacting each other, contacting you, or arcing against other objects.

- Replace cords that have become worn or cut.
- Never run cords through walls, windows, doors, or place cords under rugs or carpet.
- Never hang cords by staples or bent nails.

➤ **Inadequate Wiring –**

- Extension cords are for temporary use only, not permanent wiring. When used, ensure they are properly sized for the load and plugged directly into a wall outlet, not a power strip or another extension cord.
- While most DIYers with a meter & proper safety precautions can handle replacing a switch or outlet, use a qualified electrician for additions or other issues. Electrical regulations & codes must always be followed.
- 12 volt automotive type connectors are for just that & not to be used for building wire connections.

➤ **Overloaded Circuits –**

- Avoid using multi-plug adapters. A better choice is powerstrips that are fused or equipped with a circuit breaker. Powerstrips must be plugged directly into a wall outlet, not an extension cord or another powerstrip.
- If a circuit breaker is tripping there is a problem. Try spreading out appliances/tools to outlets on separate circuits. Continuous tripping is a sign of larger issues and should be evaluated by a qualified electrician.

➤ **Improper Grounding –**

- Ever felt a tingle when using a tool/appliance? It could be a ground problem. Ensure the ground prong on cord ends are in place and secure.
- Avoid using tools/appliances in wet locations. But if necessary, have them plugged into GFCI outs or use a GFCI equipped extension cord.

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Written 10-18-17 with sources:

* International Fire Code 2012, section 605

* https://www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/fy08/sh-17792-08/electrical_english_r6.pdf