

Surge Protectors are Electrical Outlets Too

Most child care operations are extremely diligent about protecting children from exposed electrical outlets, but this is not always the case with electrical surge protector strips. When these strips are turned on, they are just as hazardous as electrical outlets.

Keep small children safe by:

- Using every outlet on a surge protector or inserting a plastic safety plug cap into unused outlets.
- Placing surge protectors, electrical cords, and extension cords out of a child's reach.
- Turning the surge protector off when not in use.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) provides these tips.

- Look for a certification label from an independent testing lab, such as UL or ETL, on the package and product.
- Use electrical cords, power strips, and surge protectors that have polarized plugs or grounded three-pronged plugs. These features reduce the risk of electric shock.
- Use special, heavy-duty extension cords for high-wattage appliances, such as air conditioners, portable electric heaters, and freezers.
- Extension cords used outdoors should be specifically designed for such use to guard against shock.
- Insert plugs fully so that no parts of the prongs are exposed when the cord is in use.
- Never cover any part of an extension cord with rugs or other objects while it is in use. If the cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which can result in fire.
- Don't overload cords with too many appliances. Change to a higher-rated cord or unplug and relocate appliances to other outlets.
- If a cord feels hot to the touch, throw it away.
- Replace cracked or worn cords. Consider replacing cords that may be more than 10 years old.
- Use extension cords only when necessary and only on a temporary basis.

Some surge protectors and electrical extension cords may have counterfeit UL certification labels. Consult the CPSC website at www.cpsc.gov for any recalls or important consumer information. If cords don't have a label, consider replacing them.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.