

Surge Protector and Power Strip Safety Information from Yale University Office of the Fire Marshal

Every year, thousands of fires result from surge protectors, power strips and electrical cords. Listed below are some suggestions to help prevent a possible fire from beginning.

- Use only surge protectors or power strips that have an internal circuit breaker. These units will trip the breaker if the power strip is over loaded or shorted to prevent overheating.
- Surge protectors, power strips, or extension cords are not a substitute for permanent wiring.
- If at any time the surge protector or plug strip is hot to the touch remove and replace the unit. The electrical load for this strip should be evaluated for overloading.
- At no time should a surge protector or plug strip be placed in a situation that will allow it to be exposed to a moist environment
- Any surge protector or power strip that does not have an internal circuit breaker, has frayed wires, or has a unit that is not working properly, should be replaced immediately.
- **Do not plug a surge protector or power strip into an existing surge protector or power strip. This practice is called "daisy chaining" or "piggy backing" and can lead to serious problems.**
- All surge protectors or power strips need to be UL (Underwriters Laboratory) or ETL (Electrical Testing Laboratories) approved. The UL or ETL label must never be removed from the unit. On the underside of the casing, there should be the manufacturer's name and the name of the testing lab where the unit was tested.
- **There should only be one surge protector or power strip plugged into a single duplex electrical outlet.**
- Do not locate a surge protector or power strip in any area where the unit would be covered with carpet, furniture, or any other item that will limit or prevent air circulation.
- Do not staple, tack, or tape a surge protector or power strip.
- Visually inspect all surge protectors or power strips on a regular basis to ensure that they are not damaged or showing signs of degradation. During the visual inspection, ensure that the plug is fully engaged in their respective outlets.
- When the surge protector or plug strip is not in use, unplug the unit.
- The surge protector or power strips should always have either a polarized plug with one of the blades being larger than the other one or a three-prong grounded plug. Never use a three to two prong adapter to power the unit.
- **Surge protectors or power strips should have a cord of no more than 6 feet in length.**
- Never plug medical equipment into a surge protector or power strip unless it is approved for this purpose.

