

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

The proliferation of electrical equipment and appliances has made their presence a normal, almost unnoticed part of our environment. This has resulted in a very casual approach to their use and an apparent disregard for the potentially lethal current that operates them. This attitude, if carried into the hospital setting, could prove to be fatal, for patients and staff.

An accumulation of electrical equipment used near an electrically susceptible person is a very dangerous situation. In most industries it is avoided at much expense. In a hospital it is a way of life by necessity. There are patients in hospitals so vulnerable they can be killed by electric current they normally could not feel. It is possible for a staff member to electrocute such a patient and not even know it.

1. Never touch a patient and equipment at the same time. A dangerous fault current can result.
2. Never use the three prong to two prong adapters ("cheaters").
3. Extension cords are for emergency use only.
4. Visually inspect all equipment before using it. Do not use equipment that:
 - Does not function properly
 - Has fluid spilled on it
 - Has a frayed or cracked power cord
 - Has a damaged power plug
 - Has been droppedNotify your supervisor of any such condition and label the equipment with the "Danger, Do Not Operate" tag. Include problem description, date, and user name.
5. Unplug power cords by pulling the plug straight out. Do not pull the cord.
6. Never drape or lay power cords where they can be rolled over, stepped on, pinched or kinked.
7. Know how to operate and treat electrical equipment
 - Avoid jolts or vibrations
 - Plug and unplug it with the power switch "Off"
 - Do not set fluids or chemicals on equipment
 - Do not store or use it near a source of heat
 - Never assume it is "okay", always check it's condition and operation
 - Know what "clues" it can give you to potential hazards
8. Know what conditions make a patient ELECTRICALLY SUSCEPTIBLE
 - Indwelling conductor
 - Severe electrolyte imbalance
 - Fluids or chemicals that will reduce the skin's resistance to electric current
 - Extremely debilitated
9. Always be acutely aware of potential electrical hazards

10. Always ask if you're not sure
11. You should turn off, unplug and/or lockout electrical equipment before repairing or servicing the equipment.
12. If you drop a piece of medical electrical equipment, you should put a "Danger, Do Not Operate" tag on it and call Technology Support Services and have it checked out.
13. General safety rules for working with electrical equipment are:
 - Keep your work area clean;
 - Always use 3-pronged grounded plugs; and
 - Maintain equipment and electrical cords in proper condition.