Avoid Electrical Hazards

Your workplace probably has countless electrical tools and devices capable of delivering a fatal electrical shock.

That’s why it’s a good idea to have frequent reminders about electrical safety – like this safety talk.

Here are some practices to help you work more safely around electricity:

- Do not work near electrical equipment or outlets when hands, feet, counters, floors or equipment are wet.
- Consider defective any device that trips a circuit breaker and prohibit its use until inspected.
- Do not use electrical equipment, appliances or wall receptacles that appear to be damaged or in poor repair.

Report all shocks immediately. Even small tingles may indicate trouble and precede major shocks. Do not use the equipment until it has been inspected and repaired. Use a sign-out system for extension cords to help track the number and location of extension cords in use.

Equipment with these characteristics must be considered incorrectly grounded and unsafe:

- Three-wire plugs attached to two-wire cords
- Grounding prongs that are bent or cut off
- Ungrounded appliances resting on metal surfaces
- Extension cords with improper grounding
- Ungrounded, multiple-plug “spiders” typically found in offices
- Personal electrical appliances, such as radios, coffeepots, fans, power tools and electric heaters – brought by workers from home – that are not grounded, have frayed cords or show other signs of wear or damage.

Toasters, blenders, hand mixers, fans, refrigerators and radios should be grounded or double-insulated. Items designed for

household use should be checked to ensure proper grounding for workplace application.

Here’s more good advice:
Turn off switches and pull plugs before adjusting or cleaning power equipment such as slicers, grinders and mixers. Equipment being serviced or cleaned should be tagged as “out of service.”

When permanently-wired equipment is being serviced by qualified personnel, the electrical power to the equipment must be disconnected and safe lockout procedures must be followed. To prevent someone from unintentionally turning the power on while the unit is being serviced, a lock and a tag should be placed on each disconnecting means used to de-energize the equipment. Each worker should apply his own lock and only the person who applies the lock should remove it.

Electrical repairs must be carried out only by persons who are qualified and authorized to do so. Makeshift repairs of electrical equipment have resulted in many deaths in the workplace. Remember, you are in danger of electrocution if testing and repairs are done incorrectly.