



Power Strip Safety Dos and Don'ts

"Power strips" (as they are most commonly referred to) "Surge/Spike Protectors" or "Portable Outlets," typically consist of several components, such as multiple electrical receptacles, on/off power switch, a circuit breaker, and a grounded flexible power cord. There isn't a computer work station today that doesn't have at least one, the problem is we often see two or three power strips all connected together. Overloading of a single power strip creates a potential fire hazard, but connecting one power strip to another or a third or fourth referred to as "Daisy-Chaining" is an invitation to almost certain disaster!

Power strips are rated for a certain capacity, but not all things plugged into them have the same electrical current draw. A computer monitor may use more power than perhaps a cell phone charger for instance. The reality is the everyday user does not understand the capacity of the power strip or the appliance they are plugging into it - they just see a plug.

We ask you to please take a look around your workplace, under your desk or nearby work stations. If you see multiple power strips, make sure they are plugged into a single electrical outlet and not into one another. Evaluate what is plugged into the power strip. Portable heaters, refrigerators or large electrical draw appliances should never be plugged into the power strip, but rather a dedicated electrical wall outlet.

Power Strip Safety: A Quick Checklist of Do's and Don'ts

- **Do.** Only use light-load appliances on power strips. This can include computers, lamps, clocks, etc.
- **Do.** Ensure that you purchase power strips that are listed with Underwriters Laboratory (UL) and include an internal circuit breaker and surge protection. This is a *very important* safety measure designed to prevent property loss and risk of fire!
- **Do.** Use power strips sparingly. They aren't designed to maintain a load for extended periods of time, and can overheat quickly if used too frequently.
- **Don't.** Ever plug a power strip into another power strip (colloquially referred to as 'daisy chaining'). Doing this is a great way to short out appliances, or drastically increase the risk of an electrical overload and fire.
- **Don't.** Continue to use a power strip if it feels hot. That isn't supposed to happen!