



for custodians

## DON'T BE SHOCKED BY ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

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Electricity is found throughout any school building. Electrical hazards can be found in classrooms, kitchens, staff lounges and offices. Electrical hazards may also exist any time a custodian uses a vacuum, power tool or other piece of electrical equipment.

Besides electrical shock, electricity can also trigger other hazards. Electrical shock can cause the startled victim to fall from a ladder. Electricity causes burns, including severe internal burns. Electricity can instigate fires, for instance when circuits are overloaded and the resulting heat sparks a fire. Electricity can set off explosions, as would be the case if an electrical shock occurred in the presence of a flammable vapor, gas or dust.

Here are some general points to remember to help keep you safe:

- Ensure that all hazardous energy sources are identified before beginning any installation, maintenance, service, or repair tasks.
- Always make sure all electrical equipment is in good repair. Never use defective equipment, or equipment with cracked, frayed, spliced, or worn electrical cord. Watch for wires and connections that are damaged, worn or broken. Periodically inspect cords and plugs for exposed or loose wiring or other types of damage. Report any problems so the equipment can be repaired or replaced.
- Use only correctly grounded equipment. Never use three-pronged cords which have had the third prong broken off. Make sure grounding connections are secure.
- Use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) when using electrical equipment outdoors or in a damp area. Do not use electrical equipment which is damp or which may have been submerged in water. Do not handle any electrical equipment including cords and plugs, with wet hands.
- When unplugging a cord, pull on the plug rather than the cord.
- Never use a ladder made of aluminum or one with metal reinforcement when doing any electrical work. This includes changing a light bulb.
- Determine if there are any overhead hazards such as power lines and electrical installations where you are going to work. Take precautions when using lifts, ladders, poles or pipes so as to avoid contacting overhead lines. Make sure you maintain at least a 10-foot distance from an electrical line.
- Use extension cords properly and only on a temporary basis and not as a substitute for permanent wiring. Cords must be UL listed. Do not run cords through walls, doors, under rugs, or across aisles. Extension cords must be plugged directly into an approved wall receptacle. Make sure the total number of watts connected to the cord does not exceed the rating of the cord.

*Always be alert to electrical hazards no matter what kind of work you do. Be sure to use electrical safety sense at home too.*