



FESHCom
Electrical Safety Subcommittee

ESS Determination D2012-2 25-Apr-2012

Recommendations for the Use of Major Appliance Cords for Major Appliances

Safety walkthroughs at Fermilab occasionally reveal that refrigerators and microwave ovens are located such that their cords will not reach the nearest wall outlet. In the past, multiple outlet strips were used to allow these appliances to get power, but clear OSHA interpretations and the fact that unused outlets on the strip would easily invite other equipment to be plugged in which could draw more power than the strip was designed for preclude their safe use.

The ESS feels that the OSHA interpretations should be followed, but since there are many locations where these appliances are desired, a 3-foot or 6-foot major appliance cord could be used until time and funding allow installation of appropriately positioned permanent wall receptacles. These cords are designed for this purpose, having 14 AWG minimum size conductors, tough insulation, and a right angle plug so that the plug is not subject to bending stress. The ESS has made private contact with UL regarding their position on the use of major appliance cords. Their response was that as long as the installation instructions for the appliances do not prohibit major appliance cords, and the Listed cord set is appropriately sized for the load, then there should be no Listing issue with the use of the major appliance cord set provided we follow the markings on the cord set.

If this approach is to be used, the user must assure that the appliance is approved to be used with an appliance cord and that the cord is properly rated for the appliance load.

Microwaves and space heaters in individual offices must be plugged directly into wall receptacles or removed.

Exceptions are subject to the approval of the D/S/C SSO and Electrical Coordinator.