

Electrical Cord Near-Miss

I recently had a real near miss with an outside electrical cord at my home. I had been using the cord while it was still rolled up on a storage spool. Many times in the past I have unrolled only enough cord to reach the appliance I need to power. I felt this was a good practice in order to prevent a tripping hazard, and keep everything looking tidy and neat. However, electrical cords are rated in large part by their insulation factor. They are designed to be used in environments without extreme ambient temperatures such as what we normally experience on a day to day basis. By not un-spooling the entire cord before each use, I had unknowingly altered the temperature the cord was exposed to tremendously. The temperature in the center of this cord bundle became hot enough to melt all of the insulation from portions of the wire. The first thing I looked for when I discovered this was a caution on the spool indicating the proper use of the device and there it was, molded right into the side of the spool "Caution: Unreel cord before use". I am attaching pictures so you can see what I am talking about. Also, I am asking you to please send this to everyone in your distribution list so they will realize this is a very dangerous practice. So many people I have talked to about this do the exact same thing. As you can see in the last picture, the portions of the wire that were exposed (that I could see) were not damage. It wasn't until I was unreeling the entire cord that I found this.

Here is the real kicker: When I told my 21 year old Son he said "I knew you weren't supposed to do that." I immediately asked him why he had not told me this. His response was "I thought you knew something I didn't." PLEASE stop someone if you see them doing something you know is wrong or unsafe. Even if they have much more "experience" than you. There are many ways you can respectfully explain to someone they are doing something unsafe, so use one of them and let's watch out for each other. Thanks.

Larry D. Spears
LSpears@Dow.com



