

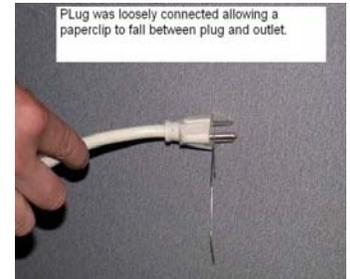
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Naval Facilities Engineering Command, MidLant

Safety Lessons Learned Accident Abstract

Accident Type: ELECTRICAL SHOCK
Injury: SHOCK
Damage: None
Type of Work: OFFICE/ADMINISTRATIVE
Equipment: Power Strip



DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT:

Employee was working at a standard cubicle desk, talking on phone, elbow resting on the desk. The chair was placed on plastic carpet protector mat, but the employee's feet were stretched out in front, on the carpet. The standard NMCI computer monitor was the only item plugged into a UL listed power strip. The power strip was positioned on the floor under the monitor and plugged into the cubicle wall outlet approx 2ft away. The power strip and cord was essentially stretched out. The outlets are mounted sideways (grounds facing left, powered prongs facing the floor/carpet, 2.5in away). As the employee was talking, they felt the power strip with their foot and attempted to move it out of the way. It is assumed that custodial vacuuming performed earlier moved the power strip, because the employee did not notice its positioning earlier in the day. **In the process of moving the power strip, the employee felt a shock through the entire right side of their body (leg, arm, cheek).** There was a 'pop' that other employees in the area heard. Employees noted a loss of power in their computer monitor. Employee was sent to the hospital for monitoring and electricians were called in. The responding electrician voltage tested the area prior to examining the outlets/power strips. **It was quickly noted that the power strip was not plugged in all the way. As the electrician unplugged it, it was noted that a not-completely straightened out metal paper clip fell away. It had wedged between the plug and the outlet.** The electricians can not recall whether the paper clip fell between the ground and prongs, or was simply leaning against the prongs or was straddling them. Upon examination, the power strip showed no signs of electrical or fire damage (outlets, plug, prongs, etc). **The paperclip showed burn residue, colorization of the metal, and a gouging). It is probable that custodial vacuuming earlier in the day bumped/hit the power strip and it moved.** What is not known is if the paper clip was always resting on the plug and needed only the movement of kicking the power strip before falling in place. Or did the vacuuming cause the clip to fall-in-place? Nor is it known if the plug was loose all along, and only recently did the paper clip fall.

INDIRECT CAUSE: Electricians examining the space found dozens of paper clips on the floor along the cubicle wall. Apparently an open box of clips fell over and spilled in the gap between the desk top and wall.

ROOT CAUSE: Poor House Keeping

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Maintain good housekeeping – Even in office environments.
- Employees that receive an electrical shock, regardless of voltage, should be taken to the hospital for monitoring.
- Continually monitor the use of power strips, surge protectors, etc.

YOUR SAFETY CONTACT IS....