

# SURGE PROTECTORS AND POWER STRIPS

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Although surge protectors and power strips may look alike, there is a difference in their capabilities and use.

## Surge Protector

Surges are sudden and unwanted increases in voltage that can damage, degrade or destroy the sensitive electronic equipment in your home or business, resulting in equipment damage or downtime, financial losses, and loss of data.

A surge protector is designed to protect your computer and other equipment from surges in power. The standard voltage in most outlets in U.S. offices is 120 volts. If the voltage rises above 120 volts, a surge protector helps prevent the increase from ruining your computer and its components.



To determine whether surges may be affecting your electrical equipment, look for:

- Computer lock-ups;
- An unexplainable corruption of data;
- Equipment shutdown;
- Loss of power; and/or
- Flickering lights.

## Power Strips

A power strip is a strip of sockets that attaches to the end of a flexible cable and allows multiple devices to be plugged in to the same outlet. However, they can very easily create a fire hazard if not used appropriately.



Power strips do not provide more power to a location, just more access to the same limited capacity of the circuit into which it is connected. The circuit likely also still serves a variety of other outlets and fixtures in addition to the multiple electrical items you might be supplying with the power strip.

## Safety Tips

Keep these safety principles in mind when using power strips and surge protectors:

- Remember that power strips and surge protectors are not the same thing. While some power strips are surge suppressors, be certain you are using the correct equipment for your needs.
- Be sure you are not overloading the circuit. A heavy reliance on power strips is an indication you may have too few outlets to address your needs. Know the capacity of the circuit and the power requirements of all the electrical items plugged into the power strip, and all the other outlets on the circuit. If you have questions or concerns contact your supervisor immediately and they can follow up with Physical Plant.
- Surge protectors protect equipment, but they do not protect from the potential hazards of an overloaded circuit. Make sure the electrical load is not too great for the circuit.

***If you have any questions regarding this safety tip or safety concerns, please contact your supervisor or Risk Management/EHOS at 310-243-2895 or 310-243-3012.***