

# Electrical Cord Near-Miss



**By Chris Loomis, Safety Expert**

Last November my neighbor had a near miss with an outside electrical cord at his home. He had been using a 100 foot extension cord while it was still rolled up on a storage spool.



**Rolled Up = Fire Hazard!**

Many times in the past have you unrolled only enough cord to reach the item you needed to power. If you have done this I'm sure it was to prevent a tripping hazard and keep things looking neat.

What many folks don't know is that one way electrical cords are rated is by their insulation factor. They are designed to be used in environments without extreme temperatures that we experience in North America.

When my neighbor didn't un-spool the entire cord before he used it, he had unknowingly altered the temperature the cord was exposed to. The temperature in the center of this cord bundle became hot enough to melt all of the insulation from portions of the wire.

When he smelled burning insulation, he unrolled the entire cord and found that insulation had melted from some of the wire. It wasn't until after this incident he discovered that a caution on the spool indicating it's proper use. On the side of the reel was molded "Caution: Unreel cord before use".



My neighbor threw away his electric cord before I heard his story. The pictures that accompany this article came from an engineer in Texas that works at a large chemical plant. He had a near identical accident and captured that experience on his camera.

Share this article and pictures with your friends and let them know of the dangers of not taking the entire cord off of the reel or spool holding it. Over that last several months when I shared this story with audiences that I give safety presentations to, only 5% were aware that all the extension cord needs to come off the storage reel or spool before using it.

Developing a safety attitude is always being aware of what can cause you or someone you know an accident or injury.

Chris has more than 20 years of professional safety experience. As the marketing manager for DuPont's environmental and safety services, he has seen first-hand the safety challenges faced by plant personnel while working with more than 600 chemical, petrochemical, and manufacturing facilities. Chris is an award-winning international safety speaker and author.

**For more information or to book your next safety speaker, please visit <http://www.safetyattitude.com> or call Chris Loomis at 713-927-6592.**