October 5, 2015

Q: I’ve heard there is confusion with regard to power strips and their location in a resident bedroom. What are the requirements for placement of a power strip? Do they have to be “secured”?

A: Power strips are allowed in certain circumstances pursuant to S&C 14-46 – LSC (click here). There is no code reference to require all power strips to be permanently mounted or secured. The concern lies with the power strips in the means of egress. If there is a probability the power strip could end up in the means of egress that needs to be prevented. Part of the S&C memo allowing power strips requires that precautions be taken to “prevent cords from becoming a tripping hazard.” To that end, a deficiency will be written if the power strip ends up in the means of egress. If power strips are located on shelves or on to top of furniture or similar locations, it is reasonable to say the power strips ending up in the means of egress is remote. If the power strip is on the floor or under a bed, it is reasonable to say the power strip could end up in the means of egress. The power strip does not necessarily have to be permanently mounted or secured to prevent it from ending up in the means of egress, there just must be a way to make that happen that is reasonable and logical. If a provider says he has a policy to keep the power strips out of the means of egress and the surveyor cites it as an obstruction, the provider’s policy does not appear to be adequate and more drastic measures may be required to ensure compliance.