

Weigh In!

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BY CHRIS ERMIDES



Connect and Protect Cords

Some of the most practical tool inventions come straight from the jobsite by innovative contractors. Woodworker Brooks Lawrence is one such innovator. Lawrence became frustrated by cord disconnects, wear-and-tear, and the occasional arc flash on his jobsites. Dissatisfied with taping cord ends together (doesn't last) or tying them (bulky knot snags on corners), he decided to devise a better alternative.

After several variations and his own personal investment, Lawrence came up

with the cord connector system shown in the photos above. His system consists of three parts: a hardened plastic shell, a rubber cord stop that attaches to the extension cord, and another rubber stop that attaches to the tool's cord. The rubber stops are available in cord sizes #10 to #16. Once attached to the cord end, the stop stays there until the next use. With the tool plugged into the extension cord, the shell wraps around the stops, and Velcro straps lock everything together. The stops interlock

with the shell so once the shell is in place, the cords cannot be pulled apart, protecting the joint that typically is a failure point on electrical cords. The system is compatible with after-market cord plug ends, as well. In addition to keeping the cords together, the outer shell will protect from the elements and won't mar most finished surfaces.

Cost: \$25 for a set, which includes one #14 and one #16 stop; \$7 for each additional stop. industrialcordconnector.com

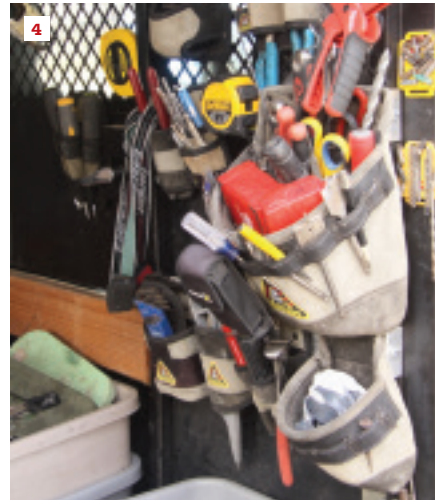
Modular and Customizable Tool-Pouch Rig

While visiting a jobsite of New Dimensions Construction, in Millbrook, N.Y., I struck up a conversation with the lead carpenter, Ryan Labrenz, about the tool-pouch rig he was wearing (1). He was equipped with pouches of varying sizes and a suspender system that looked like it worked better than most other suspenders I'd seen, and I couldn't help but ask him what it was. His reply was enthusiastic: "Iron Dog, and I love it because it's fully customizable."

With so many tools to organize and job needs that vary weekly, daily, and sometimes multiple times within the same day, Labrenz has gotten the most out of this system. It all starts with the waist strap, which is secured via Velcro and a nylon band that can be cinched down for a tighter fit. Then, each pouch connects to the waist strap, and to each other, via loops and clips (2). Once attached to nylon loops, the pouches—like this nail bag that he modified by adding a magnetic bit holder (3)—can cascade in any order and manner as the job demands.

A handy feature of this system is that it has pouches that are designed specifically for certain tools, like a layout square or a bottle. Labrenz has put to use the many pouch styles to hold tools for specific tasks—like electrical, plumbing, metal work, and so on—and keeps them stocked and at the ready clipped inside his van (4). When the task at hand changes, all he does is swap one pouch out for the other. He even keeps multiple screws and nail sizes stocked in their own pouches.

Adding aluminum straps to the van doors offered Labrenz another place to clip the Iron Dog Tool Gear (5). Here, specialty bits, layout tools, hand saws, and other items are easy to access whenever needed. His last point was that when smaller jobs require only a few tools, the pouches can be clipped to a standard belt, for a lighter load (6). irondogtoolgear.com



Photos on this page: Chris Erndes