

Hardware Tip 5-19-12

I am putting a couple of more outlets in my garage. Can I use 14-gauge wire?

While 14-gauge wire is the minimum for most house wiring, it can only be used for 15-amp circuits. Number 12-gauge wire is recommended for general home use and is for 20-amp circuits. There is often a chart on boxes of wire that will show you recommended gauges for specific applications. Never overload a circuit.

To figure out the load you take watts divided by volts. For example, a 1500-watt heater (divided by) 120 volts equals 12.5 amps. Never use more than 80% of a circuit. For example, the maximum amps you could use on a 20 amp circuit would be 16 amps ($80\% \times 20 \text{ amps} = 16 \text{ amps}$).