

## Electrical safety

We use electrical appliances, plugs and cables everyday. They can become worn out or dangerous. You may not notice hazards when it's something that you see in your house every day. Here are a few things to be aware of. If you notice any of these issues it's time to replace or repair your electrical items, sockets or cables to help keep you and your home safe.

If you have any doubts about the safety of a piece of electrical equipment **DO NOT USE IT** and get a qualified electrician to carry out any repairs for you.

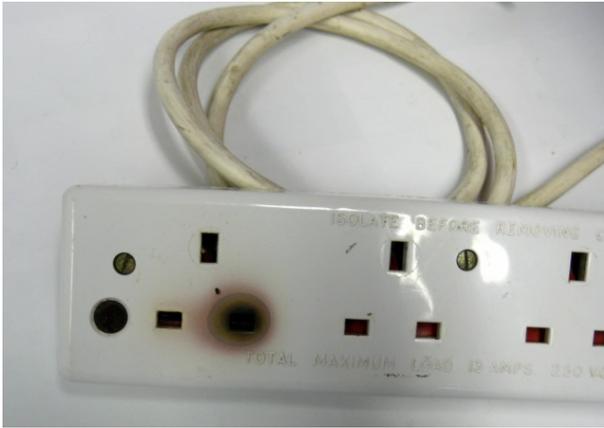
---

### Heat Damage

Heat damage can often be seen on electrical equipment such as a plug sockets or an extension cables. You can see signs of overheating on or around the live pin of the 3-pin plug. In this case the excessive heat has scorched the live output of the wall socket.



If you notice and heat or physical damage to sockets, stop using that socket and get a qualified electrician to investigate the problem.



## Physical Damage to Electrical Equipment

If your electrical item is damaged it's dangerous to use it. This example shows an iron which has part of its case missing, giving easy access to the electrical cables inside. You are at risk of an electric shock if you continue to use an item in this condition. Please dispose of any items like this and replace it as soon as possible.



## Damage to Cables/Cords

Cables and cords are an essential part of most electrical appliances. They can also be a weak link if not cared for correctly. The cable insulation on this iron has come away from the plug because it was not secured correctly. An appliance in this state should not be used. This kind of fault can be fixed by removing the plug, shortening the cable and securing both the cables and the insulation to the plug.



Many of us will have attempted to 'repair' a cable with tape. Tape is not a permanent repair and appliances in this state should not be used. Unfortunately most cables on appliances such as irons cannot be replaced and the appliance has to be replaced.



### Homemade Extension Leads

Homemade extension leads are fine when made by a qualified person. This home made extension lead was poorly built with the use of tape protecting the cable from sharp edges.



A closer look highlights that the extension lead was made without an earth cable! (Using a 2-core

cable, brown and blue only). The earth cable is needed to protect you from an electric shock in the event of a fault developing within the appliance. Please do not use homemade leads or appliances.



---

### Out of Date Equipment

Some older equipment is not safe for using with modern electricity supplies. This extremely old adapter was found in a home in Newcastle in 2013. This was used before we had wall sockets! This kind of equipment should no longer be used.



**If you have any doubts about the integrity or safety of a piece of electrical equipment DO NOT USE IT.**

---

### Other Useful Information

- [The Electrical Competent Person website](#) supported by the government provides an easy to use and single information point for you to find a registered, competent electrician in your area, or to check that a company you are planning on using is registered.
- [Electrical Safety for older people handbook](#) – Electrical Safety First have free advice and a helpful guide to download.
- [Affordable electrical goods](#) are available in Newcastle if you need to replace any of your

white goods, or are looking to purchase computers or tablet devices.

---

Thank you to Newcastle Trading Standards for their support to develop this article.

Last updated: April 8, 2020

---

## Useful Organisations

### Five Lamps

**Email:** [Info@fivelamps.org.uk](mailto:Info@fivelamps.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.fivelamps.org.uk](http://www.fivelamps.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 111 0556

**Address:** Eldon Street, TS17 7DJ

### The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

**Email:** [help@rospa.com](mailto:help@rospa.com)

**Website:** <http://www.rospa.com>

**Telephone:** 0121 248 2000

**Address:** RoSPA House, B15 1RP

### Smarterbuys

**Email:** [info@smarterbuys.org.uk](mailto:info@smarterbuys.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.smarterbuys.org.uk](http://www.smarterbuys.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0191 5656216

### Electrical Competent Person

**Email:** [info@electricalcompetentperson.co.uk](mailto:info@electricalcompetentperson.co.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.electricalcompetentperson.co.uk/>

**Telephone:** 0191 5656216

---

## Related Articles

[Gas and electricity](#)

[Making your home safer](#)

[Energy saving tips](#)

[Affordable electrical goods](#)