

Fire Safety Guidance Note 4 Electrical Safety

Guidance in the use of 13 amp, 4 gang extension bar adaptor

This Notice is part of a series of communications aimed at improving our Fire Safety management and arrangements to comply with current fire legislation. Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.

As you know a standard 4 gang extension bar adaptor is used to increase the number of appliances that can be plugged into a single 13 amp wall socket. However, although there is space to plug in 4 appliances, this does not mean it is always safe to do so.

Different electrical appliances use different amounts of power. To avoid the risk of overheating and possibly fire, you should never plug into an extension lead or socket appliances that together use more than 13 amps or 3000 watts of energy.

Typical amp values for everyday electrical goods;

Kettle 13 amps, - 3000 Watts

Toaster 9 amps - 2000 Watts

Standard home printer 0.5 amp - 50 Watts

Microwave 4.5 amps - 1000 Watts

The following link provides an animated socket overload calculator.

<http://www.esc.org.uk/public/safety-in-the-home/product-safety/overloading-sockets/>

This link provides some examples of typical pieces of equipment found in the home and office and demonstrates the combined loading when plugged into a single 13 amp extension lead.

Safety points;

- It is important not to overload individual sockets.
- Cables should not be left as to create a trip hazard, or placed next to water.
- Switch off and remove the plug from the extension socket when not in use.
- Never plug an extension lead into another extension lead.
- Consider having additional sockets installed if you rely on extension leads or for items permanently switched on e.g. fridge



If using an extension bar adaptor, ensure it complies with relevant British Standards BS 1363-3:1995, and has a CE mark. Do not purchase or use non-compliant products that could overheat and lead to a fire.

By working together on Fire Safety issues we can really make the difference.

Health and Safety Team