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# SwitchedOn

News for the industry from The Electrical Safety Council

ELECTRICAL  
  
SAFETY  
COUNCIL



**Health  
& beauty  
products  
put to  
the test**

# WELCOME



The economic recovery is upon us. Well that's what the more optimistic of the economic experts would have you believe. It was announced in April that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the UK increased by 0.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2011, following a decrease of 0.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2010. Looking at the detail behind the headline figure, construction output fell by

4.7 per cent during the first quarter so for many electrical contractors the difficult times are by no means over.

It is all the more gratifying then that, against the ongoing difficult trading conditions in the construction sector, our trading company and key sponsor Ascertiva Group Ltd, has been able to increase its gift-aid to the ESC from the surplus it generates through the services it provides to NICEIC-registered contractors and NQA customers. This strong financial support allows the ESC to provide support to its beneficiaries and you can read about many of the things we do to raise awareness of electrical safety issues in the rest of this edition. On behalf of myself and the team at ESC, I would like to thank colleagues at Ascertiva for their ongoing support.

In April we saw the arrival of a new Chairman of the ESC, Charles Tanswell. Charles has been a long-standing Trustee of the Charity and takes over from Bill Wright. On behalf of the staff and Trustees of the ESC, I would like to thank Bill for his hard work and commitment over the two, very successful years that he was Chairman. The new financial year also saw the launch of a comprehensive three-year, rolling business plan that will support the implementation of the ESC's strategy. The business plan provides clear performance indicators that will be used to measure the effectiveness of the work of the Charity. The ability to measure our effectiveness is crucial as we need to demonstrate the impact we have on the public and report on this impact through our annual report.

Communicating what we do is key to raising awareness of the Charity's activities and generating support from stakeholders. Much of our communication is achieved via the Internet and our new website went live in February and we are already seeing positive results. The development of the new site provides us with a platform to be better able to communicate with our beneficiaries and stakeholders. The website also provides the foundation for the development of a comprehensive digital communications strategy so watch out for us on Facebook and Twitter in the not-too-distant future.

On the subject of websites, the Government has launched the Red Tape Challenge, which follows on from the Your Freedom website. The Red Tape Challenge invites you to have your say on current regulation in the UK, and includes regulation on health and safety including fire safety. My concern about this latest initiative is that there is a risk that 'the baby could be thrown out with the bath water' if the Government's desire to reduce the perceived burden on business results in perfectly sound regulation being reduced or scrapped altogether. The ESC will be reviewing the comments on regulation concerning fire safety and other relevant regulations and commenting where it believes removal of such regulation could put the public at risk. If you want to comment on any regulation, the Red Tape Challenge website address is [www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/about](http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/about).

In the meantime the ESC is canvassing the views of non-registered electrical contractors and electricians about *Part P* with a view to including the findings in its submission to the Government. If you would like to complete the survey, please go to the industry section of our website ([www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk)), where you will find a link to the short questionnaire.

As always, we would welcome feedback on *Switched On*, to help us improve the content. Email [feedback@esc.org.uk](mailto:feedback@esc.org.uk)

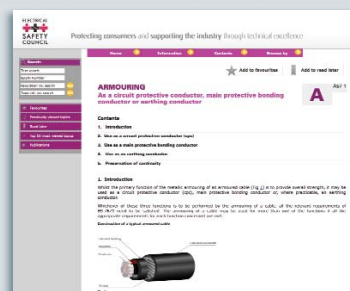
**Phil Buckle** Director General

## ESSENTIAL GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE FOR JUST £35

The CD version of the Essential Guide expired at the end of April, leaving the online version as the only source of reference. The good news though is that for those whose subscription is not included in their registration body's fee, the annual subscription for the online version is now just £35 (plus VAT) – a fantastic bargain compared to other guidance on the Wiring Regulations.

### Would you be interested in an offline version of the Essential Guide?

The Essential Guide is now accessible online only, which means that users need to be connected to the internet whenever using it.



Last year, we asked whether there was any interest in subscribing to an enhanced version of the online version of the Guide that could also be used on laptops, netbooks etc offline when internet access is not available, such as may be the case when users are away from their office or base.

At that time, only 50 or so users registered such an interest, which meant that it was not economically viable for us to develop an offline version. However, now that the standard CD version (which effectively gave offline access) is no longer available, the Council is reviewing users' needs.

To register your interest in subscribing to an enhanced, offline version of the Guide (at an additional cost yet to be determined), please go to [www.esc.org.uk/industry/essential-guide](http://www.esc.org.uk/industry/essential-guide)

If the level of interest is sufficient, the ESC will look further into the cost of developing such an enhanced version and the effect this might have on the subscription rate for that version.



Installation of cooker switches and cooker control units - see page 18

# switchedon

issue 21 Summer 2011

your insight into the electrical safety industry

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### Letters

I'm sure that there are many within the electrical industry that will have strong feelings about some of the issues raised in *Switched On*. So feel free to shout about them.

Please email your letters to the Editor of *Switched On* at: [andrewbrister@gmail.com](mailto:andrewbrister@gmail.com)

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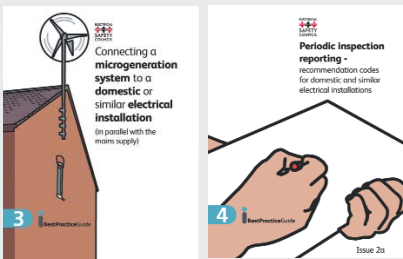
# IN BRIEF

## Revision of Best Practice Guides 3 & 4

Since the spring issue of *Switched On* was published, work has been underway on updating two of our Best Practice Guides (BPG), in collaboration with other interested parties:

- BPG3 – *Connecting a microgeneration system to a domestic and similar electrical installation (in parallel with the mains supply)*, and
- BPG4 – *Periodic inspection reporting – recommendation codes for domestic and similar electrical installations*.

The revision of both Guides has taken into account the imminent publication of Amendment 1 to *BS 7671: 2008*.



The revision of BPG3 has also taken into account Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) requirements relating to Feed-In Tariffs (FITs) and updated information on legal requirements such as planning permission and building regulations, and energy metering arrangements. A number of new photographs are also included in the Guide, showing examples of the latest types of microgeneration equipment.

The title of the revised issue of BPG4 will be *Electrical installation condition reporting: classification codes for domestic and similar installations* to reflect changes to the model forms being introduced in Appendix 6 of Amendment 1. A wide range of examples of the use of the new Classification Code system are included.

The revised versions of both these Best Practice Guides are expected to be published shortly after this issue of *Switched On* is distributed. Copies can be downloaded free of charge from the 'industry' section of the Council's website: [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk)

## Council appoints new Chairman



Charles Tanswell CEng MIET MCIBSE has been appointed Chairman of the Council's Board of Trustees for the next two-year period of office with effect from 1 April. He was previously Deputy Chairman.

Charles is a Chartered Electrical and Building Services Engineer with over 40 years' experience relating to electrical and mechanical installations. He has been a Trustee since 2001.

He represents the Society of Electrical & Mechanical Engineers serving Local Government (SCEME) on several national bodies including the UK Wiring Regulations Committee (JPEL/64) and the Electrotechnical Assessment Specification Management Committee.

Charles takes over from Bill Wright, who was the Council's Chairman from April 2009.

## Switched On comes of age

This is the 21st issue of *Switched On* to be published since the Electrical Safety Council was officially launched at the House of Commons in April 2005.

Much has happened since then. For those interested in catching up on those events, we've made all the back issues of *Switched On* available to view and/or download from the 'industry' section of the Council's website at [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk).



The cover of the first edition of *Switched On* magazine

If in future you would like to receive a paper copy of *Switched On* directly or receive email alerts when a new issue is published, please register on the website.



## 'Qualified electrician' ruling

In March, the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland made a ruling on a contractual dispute concerning the meaning of the expression 'qualified electrician' in contractual documents.

In finding for the defendant that a requirement in a contract that an electrical operative should be "qualified" must involve some objective standard, the judge said that, "in the absence of government intervention it falls to the industry to set a common standard that will secure recognition" for 'qualified electricians'.

The Electrical Safety Council has since proposed that the Electrotechnical Assessment Specification\* (EAS) Management Committee takes the lead in developing and publishing such an objective standard that will secure recognition for 'qualified electricians' in future contractual arrangements.

\*Details of the EAS may be found by searching the internet for 'EAS specification'

## Kitting out the future in Scotland

The ESC has teamed up with the Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT) to provide free lock out kits to electrical trainees north of the border.

Lock out kits implement safe isolation practices when working on electrical installations and can potentially save lives. Both the ESC and SECTT are dedicated to supporting the electrical industry and believe that providing lock out kits to new electricians is a great way to promote safety practices from the very beginning.

The kits are being distributed at various colleges throughout Scotland and will be received by 800 electrical students.

## EVENTS - WHAT'S IN THE CALENDAR?



The Electrical Safety Council's 2011 events programme has been developed to give the team access to consumers, landlords, electricians, and wider stakeholder groups such as Fire and Rescue Services, Trading Standards officials, product manufacturers, local government and those working in the electrical industry.

It is important for the Council to meet with all these groups if it is to achieve its aim of improving electrical safety in the UK's homes and protecting consumers from electrical accidents and injuries. The key messages this year will focus on improving electrical safety in the private rented housing sector, encouraging consumers to check the condition of their electrical installation, promoting the benefits of RCDs (via the Plug into Safety campaign) and improving electrical product safety.

Providing advice to consumers when they are embarking on higher risk activities or at specific life stages ensures that they are more receptive. Attendance at local events and working with key stakeholders and partners enables the ESC to reach the highest number of people at the right time and forms a key part of the activity the Council has planned for this year.

Additionally, landlords' exhibitions and forums provide the platform for the ESC to raise awareness of the importance of electrical safety and provide guidance at seminars and through distribution of its *Landlords' guide to electrical safety* and the new *Guide to electrical safety in communal areas (residential)*. Working with landlords' representative bodies also gives the Council the opportunity to talk directly to this important group.

The ESC's attendance at the four Elex shows this year ([www.elexshow.com](http://www.elexshow.com)) means the Council gets to talk to electricians and industry bodies about its consumer safety campaigns and

to distribute literature and best practice guidance. The ESC is again hosting the industry forum which brings together a panel of experts from Elecsa, IET, NAPIT and NICEIC to discuss topics of relevance to electricians, which this year includes changes to Classification Codes. These well-attended and lively debates continue to be a popular part of the Elex show.

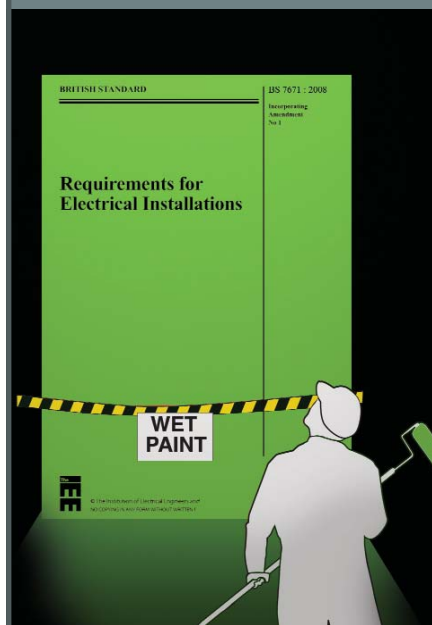
Other events and exhibitions that the ESC will attend this year include:

- **Trading Standards Conference**
- **Citizens Advice Services Annual Conference**



Visit the Events section of the website at [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk) to keep up-to-date through the year

## AMENDMENT 1 TO BS 7671: 2008



*BS 7671:2008 incorporating Amendment No 1 is due to be published on 1 July.*

Following a six-month transition period, it will come into full effect for the design of installations on 1 January 2012.

The amendments have been incorporated in a new full version of the regulations which, for the first time, will be referred to as the 'IET Wiring Regulations'. In accordance with tradition, the first amendment will have a green cover.

### Significant changes include:

- The introduction of a new numbering system for UK-specific

regulations (to differentiate them from harmonised European/International regulations). For example, the current regulation 422.3.14 relating to flexible cables will become 422.3.100

- The inclusion of a new Section 710 covering medical locations
- The inclusion of a new Section 729 covering operating or maintenance gangways
- A new model Electrical Installation Condition Report form replaces the Periodic Inspection Report form in Appendix 6, using a new system for classifying observations.

# ROSEPARK CARE HOME INQUIRY - ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION

The findings of an inquiry into an electrical fire at the Rosepark Care Home in Lanarkshire that claimed the lives of 14 elderly residents in January 2004 were published in April. The fire also left four people injured.

The fatal accident inquiry, the longest in Scottish legal history, was told that in terms of numbers of lives lost, it was the most significant fire in the UK since the King's Cross fire in 1987.

The main purpose of the inquiry was to ensure lessons were learned for the future. For complex legal reasons, no criminal legal action had been taken against the owners of the care home.

The inquiry found that numerous factors had contributed to the deaths, but deficiencies in the construction, alteration and maintenance of the electrical installation were key amongst them.

The inquiry determined that the fire resulting in the deaths was caused by an

earth fault occurring as the result of abrasion at the point where a cable (supplying two commercial washing machines) passed through a knockout at the back of a metal-

enclosed electrical distribution board located in a cupboard in a corridor.

Amongst other things, the inquiry determined that the reasonable precautions whereby the accident and the deaths might have been avoided included:

- The fitting of a grommet or other protection against abrasion or damage over time where the cable passed through the enclosure of the distribution board when the installation was constructed, and in any event when the cable that suffered the fault was subsequently installed
- The cable being installed in such a manner that the cable sheath was protecting the insulated conductors as they passed through the knockout
- The distribution board being inspected and tested in accordance with BS 7671 at least on the following occasions:-
  - On completion of the electrical installation at Rosepark Care Home in 1992



BBC coverage of the Rosepark inquiry

## Lighting up the Web...

Since the re-launch of [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk) in February this year, the Charity has seen

- 50% more visitors;
- Viewing 50,000 more pages
- and downloading twice as many PDFs as this time last year

A poll commissioned by the ESC also revealed that –

- Over 90% of visitors think information is presented clearly and simply
- 70% think the website looks good
- 70% find it easy to navigate
- And 86% would recommend it to a friend



Don't miss out. Visit [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk) to discover tailored electrical safety information that will help you stay safe at work and at home.

## CONTRIBUTED TO DEATHS

- When the installation was modified in 1998 to add the cable to supply a new washing machine arrangement, and
- Not later than the fifth and tenth anniversaries of the completion of the electrical installation
- The storage of combustible materials in the cupboard being minimised
- The doors to the cupboard being fire-resisting
- Having an effective system of electrical maintenance.

Tests arranged by the Health & Safety Executive at the Health and Safety Laboratory at Buxton indicated that thermal movement of a cable, such as would have been caused by the cyclic loads of the commercial washing machines at the care home, can be sufficient in some circumstances to abrade or damage the insulation if it is in contact with a sharp surface, such as an unprotected knockout in a distribution board. Over an extended

period of time, the sharp edge can migrate into the insulation, eventually causing insulation failure.

The tests illustrated that, although the cable was nominally overloaded, the diversity factor associated with the operation of the washing machines meant that it would not have reached temperatures capable of causing thermal damage to the insulation. The tests also illustrated the potential for incendive sparks to be expelled from distribution boards under fault conditions, particularly through cable holes and through unused circuit-breaker ways if blanking plates are not in place.

As reported in previous issues of *Switched On*, the ESC is working with the Fire and Rescue Service and the electrical supply industry to introduce a new label to warn householders and others not to store combustible materials near electrical equipment, to help avoid fires such as the one at Rosepark Care Home.

## CALLING FUTURE TRUSTEES

If you're a reader of *Switched On*, then you've already got an interest in electrical safety. Would you like to take that interest further? Would you like to help shape the important campaigns and initiatives at the heart of the Council's work to raise awareness of electrical safety?

The ESC is on the lookout for potential new Trustees. The Electrical Safety Council is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board is responsible for setting the strategic goals of the Charity to ensure that it fulfils its consumer safety mission, adheres to principles of good governance and remains true to its values.

The Council is inviting those with a passion for electrical safety to register an interest in becoming a Trustee, should a vacancy arise.

Interested parties should respond to the ESC's company secretary, Judith O'Connell at [judith.oconnell@esc.org.uk](mailto:judith.oconnell@esc.org.uk)

## ENGAGEMENT OF THE WAG: THE COUNCIL'S WORK IN WALES

After the Council's extensive work with the Scottish Parliament (*Switched On*, Spring 2011, page 9), the ESC will be looking to build on this success over the coming months, increasing its engagement with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

The Welsh Labour Party has committed to "working with councils and landlords to improve housing standards and tenants rights in the private rented sector." This provides a perfect opportunity to introduce a requirement for a regular inspection of electrical installations in private rented properties, similar to the requirements discussed in Scotland.

Support for improving standards in private rented housing is also solid from Plaid Cymru, who have stated that the party would "increase the capacity of the private rented sector by working to tackle poor landlords and encourage best practice [and] legislate to introduce compulsory written tenancy terms."

There is a real opportunity through the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales to dramatically improve safety for tenants, and reduce the risk of damage through fire to property. The WAG has recently been awarded greater powers to introduce legislation, and will have new powers to improve housing under the Localism Bill, due to pass into law in the autumn.

The Localism Bill also gives more power to local authorities in England, and the ESC will build on its work in Scotland and Wales to work with willing councils throughout England to introduce similar requirements for electrical inspections, helping good landlords to protect their properties and their tenants, and helping local authorities to crack down on the minority of bad landlords.



## STAKEHOLDERS TOAST ESC'S WESTMINSTER RECEPTION

The ESC's recent annual parliamentary reception in Westminster was an opportunity for the Charity's team to interact with key stakeholders and toast some of its achievements over the last 12 months. It was well attended, with representatives from the electrical industry, consumer groups and government departments making for an interesting mix of guests and guaranteeing some energetic discussion.

In his address, ESC director general Phil Buckle outlined the direction of the organisation by sharing its new strategic priorities with the audience. He also highlighted the real and present danger of electrical fires and the important work that the Council carries out to reduce the risks – such as granting funds to vulnerable individuals and groups, public education and gathering evidence.

"The direct cost to the public of fires from electrical products and installations is over

£100m per year - which doesn't include costs to fire services, hospitals or social services," pointed out Buckle. He added that "landlords should be empowered to keep their tenants and properties safe."

Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group Roger Williams MP sponsored the event. In his remarks he

outlined his increasing concern about electrical fires and paid tribute to the importance of the Charity's work.

The ESC is committed to influencing the Westminster safety agenda and will continue to seek support from elected representatives and like-minded organisations.



Phil Buckle, director general of the ESC with Roger Williams MP, host for the reception and joint chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group.

## NEW ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION CONDITION REPORT FORMS

As reported in previous issues of *Switched On*, the ESC has taken a number of initiatives in collaboration with others to help improve the general standard of domestic periodic inspection reporting.

One of these initiatives was to propose changing the title, format and content of the model periodic inspection report form given in Appendix 6 of *BS 7671* to make it more informative and easier for householders to understand, and to provide a framework to enable inspectors to report more clearly and comprehensively on the condition of an electrical installation.

The committee responsible for the technical content of *BS 7671* (Joint IET/BSI Committee JPEL64) subsequently developed a new set of model forms based on the Council's proposals, which are being included in Appendix 6 of *BS 7671: 2008 incorporating Amendment 1*.

The name of the report has been changed from 'Periodic Inspection Report' to 'Electrical Installation Condition Report', to make it more meaningful to recipients.

The classification codes to be used for each recorded observation have been made clearer and more direct, as follows:

- **Code C1** - Danger present. Risk of injury. Immediate remedial action required
- **Code C2** - Potentially dangerous - urgent remedial action required
- **Code C3** - Improvement recommended

The condition of an electrical installation must be reported to be 'unsatisfactory' if any observation is classified as C1 or C2.

There is no longer a separate code for 'requires further investigation' as it will be

possible to indicate separately against each observation whether or not further investigation is required.

Also, there is no equivalent to the existing Recommendation Code 4, 'Does not comply with *BS 7671: 2008*. This does not imply that the electrical installation inspected is unsafe.' Such observations are no longer considered relevant for a report on the condition of an electrical installation, the purpose of which is to record any damage, deterioration, defects, dangerous conditions and non-compliance with the requirements on the current edition of *BS 7671* which may give rise to danger (Regulation 634.2).

As with the existing Periodic Inspection Report, the new Condition Report consists of three parts, the first two parts being custom-designed for condition reporting purposes:

- A generic, two-page summary recording, amongst other things: for whom the report has been produced; details of the installation inspected and the extent and limitations of the inspection; a summary of the condition of the installation; and

# PART P WORKING GROUP AND OPINION SURVEY

One of the actions arising from the ESC *Part P* round-table event reported on in the spring issue of *Switched On* was to establish a Working Group to develop an agreed industry contribution to the government's review of *Part P*. The aim was to help shape the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) consultation document, which is due to be issued towards the end of this year.

The Working Group met in April primarily to address the question: 'How can *Part P* be made more effective – reducing costs and bureaucracy whilst maintaining a reasonable standard of safety?'

The following organisations were represented at the meeting, which was chaired by the ESC:

**ABE, BEAMA, DCLG, EAL, ELECSA, IET, LABC, NAPIT, NICEIC**

The Working Group agreed an outline response to DCLG on the question posed, together with a number of related actions. These included *Part P* scheme operators pooling information about the number of notifications taking place under each work category, and looking into gathering data on electrical work notified direct to Building Control.

Another of the actions agreed by the Working Group was to invite members of *Part P* competent person self-certification schemes to give their views on the operation of *Part P* by means of an online survey, based on a standard questionnaire developed by Working Group members.

*Part P* scheme operators are understood to be contacting their members directly to invite them to take part in the survey.

For its part, the ESC agreed to bring the survey to the attention of non-registered electrical contractors and electricians, in order to provide an opportunity for that sector of the industry in England and Wales to express its views on *Part P*.

If you would like to complete the *Part P* survey, whether or not you are an electrical installer, please go to the industry section of the Council's website ([www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk)), where you will find a link to the short questionnaire.



the observations made that require action, together with their classification codes and whether or not each item requires further investigation.

- An inspection schedule for 'domestic and similar premises with up to 100 A supply'. The schedule lists the elements of a typical domestic or similar installation, against which the outcome of their inspection (their condition) can be recorded. Outcomes can be 'acceptable' (tick), 'unacceptable' (code C1 or C2), 'improvement recommended' (code C3), 'not verified', 'limitation' or 'not applicable' (to the particular installation). A further column is provided to indicate whether or not further investigation of each item is required.
- A generic schedule of test results.

As with the existing Periodic Inspection Report, there are brief guidance notes for both the recipient and the person producing the condition report.

Following criticism from some quarters that the new approach will result in more paperwork and checklists for inspectors to

complete, it was decided not to publish a generic model inspection schedule for installations other than 'domestic and similar with up to 100 A supply'. However, a 'list of examples of items requiring inspection for an electrical installation condition report' has been included in the appendix for reference.

It is hoped that the completion of condition reports based on the new model forms will not be viewed by inspectors as a 'bureaucratic paper-chasing exercise', but that they will be found to be a valuable and greatly improved aid to providing a professional service to their customers, for whose benefit the new forms have been designed.



# Health and beauty products

**The Council's recent analysis of the EU Injury Database revealed the need to evaluate the safety and compliance of hair care and other health and beauty products. Also, the Council's research into electrical risk categorisation indicated that electrical appliances for health and beauty care are a high priority for further investigation regarding safety and compliance with product standards.**

This product category regularly appears on the European Commission's RAPEX scheme for consumer products being notified as unsafe. There is also a recent trend in the marketing of hair care products having features that might appeal to children.

As part of the Council's ongoing electrical product safety screening programme, it commissioned an independent laboratory to carry out safety inspection and testing of 17 products. All products were bought from the high street or online, given the rapid growth in the purchase of electrical products over the internet. They were a selection of hair clippers, curling tongs, hair dryers, massage devices and hair straighteners. The products and number of samples selected are shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Health and beauty products under test**

Product type	Samples
Hair clippers	2
Curling tongs	3
Hair dryers	4
Massage devices	3
Hair straighteners	5

The ESC's investigation revealed that only one of the 17 products tested passed the test programme with no departures or observations being noted. Eight samples failed to meet the requirements of the relevant product standard. Problems found included:

- absence of information in the manufacturer's instructions concerning vulnerable users
- incorrect or missing markings such as vendor's name or trademark and crossed wheeled bin symbol
- loose live pin in the fitted plug
- accessible hazardous parts after a drop test

# Child beauty put to the test

- hazardous enclosure temperature
- features that appeal to children, which are likely to present a hazard if played with like a toy
- poor internal construction leading to a reduction in creepage and clearance distances
- insufficient electrical insulation for protection against access to live parts.

The remaining eight samples passed the standard requirements in general but observations were made as follows:

- Omission from the manufacturer's instructions of information concerning vulnerable users and the need to supervise children to ensure that they do not play with the product
- Mains on-off switches missing markings indicating third-party testing
- Possibility of inadvertent contact with hot surfaces above 200°C
- Product markings in same colour as enclosure.

## Product selection

The products ranged from basic to high-end samples with notable performance or functionality. Some of the hair care samples in particular were chosen for their potential appeal to children. There is considerable debate among the EU Member States as to what constitutes an electrical product that appeals to children. The Council continues to participate in the various EU committees on this subject. The samples for this investigation were chosen with the intention of raising awareness of this recent trend and to perhaps question how such products are marketed.

## Product testing

Each sample was subjected to testing and inspection under the EN 60335 series of standards with fitted plugs being assessed under the UK national standard BS 1363-1. The generic EN 60335-1 standard has been amended recently to reflect the possibility of child usage and to cover the electrical insulation construction of hair straighteners.

The instructions section of the generic EN 60335-1 standard now requires the substance of the following wording for manufacturers' instructions:

*"This appliance is not intended for use by persons (including children) with reduced physical, sensory or*

*mental capabilities, or lack of experience and knowledge, unless they have been given supervision or instruction concerning use of the appliance by a person responsible for their safety. Children should be supervised to ensure that they do not play with the appliance."*

The construction clause 22.44 also states that *"appliances shall not have an enclosure that is shaped or decorated like a toy."* An accompanying note says that *"examples of such enclosures are those representing animals, characters, persons or scale models."*

A further construction requirement, which applies to hair straighteners, states that *"insulating material in which heating conductors are embedded is considered to be basic insulation and not reinforced insulation."*

We asked the test laboratory to include the above aspects in its assessment.

## Product testing results

### Hair clippers

No standard departures were found for the two hair clipper samples. Only an observation was made for a lower-cost sample, that the instructions did not contain the substance of the standard wording for vulnerable users. Although the absence of such information may not necessarily be considered as safety critical, in certain circumstances it may give rise to a hazard.

### Curling tongs

One of the basic samples stopped working after a few minutes. This sample was also



missing most of the wording in the user instructions for vulnerable users. The product markings are the same colour as the moulding and not easily discernable. The mains on-off switch was missing the typical approval markings indicating testing by a third party, and the pilot light described as an "LED" on the packaging is actually a neon.

The barrel of one of the samples reached temperatures above 200°C in normal use. While this is a functional surface, it suggests the need to place the product away from soft furnishings or potentially combustible items. An observation was also made that the hot part of the

**"The ESC's investigation revealed that only **one** of the **17** products tested passed the test programme"**

## Health and beauty products put to the test

thumb press button might be touched inadvertently. The user would then be exposed to a surface temperature of around 100°C.

A bright pink moulding and other features of the third sample resulted in a failure under the construction clause of the product standard, as the sample could be treated as a toy by children. The sample is shown here. →



### Hair dryers

Two of the samples were missing a warning in the user instructions to replace the supply cord if it shows signs of damage.

A sample having a pink enclosure with character printing was considered appealing to children and a failure to the product safety standard. There are ample warnings in the instructions for adult supervision, but it cannot be assumed that such instructions will be followed. The live plug pin on this sample was also loose and considered a failure under the UK plug standard *BS 1363-1*. The sample is shown here. →



Markings on the handle for the high performance hair dryer were embossed and in the same colour as the moulding making them difficult to read. The markings are shown here. →



A power rating of 1800W was stated for one sample but measured only 1523W on test. This exceeds the allowed standard tolerance of 10%. This sample also failed the drop test with a part detaching and exposing the printed circuit board and electrodes. An ionic feature is fitted into this sample and the exposed electrodes are connected to a high voltage generator, which could be hazardous. The sample and the exposed parts after the drop test are shown below.



### Massage devices

All three samples passed the main safety requirements but important safety information was missing from the manufacturer's instructions for each sample.

Markings on the moulding were not clearly discernable for the device having an infra-red source. The

instructions should also contain a warning to avoid excessive eye exposure to the infra-red source.



The foot spa sample was missing a mark indicating the maximum water level and the recommended maximum water temperature. An observation was also made that the internal wiring to the vibrator coil is very close to a metal bracket. Vibration of the foot spa in normal use could damage the insulation of internal wiring. This sample also had a cracked base preventing a satisfactory mechanical strength test.

### Hair straighteners

A significant number of product standard failures were found for the hair straighteners. One sample was missing the vendor's name or trademark. Four of the five samples had some or all of the safety information for vulnerable users missing from the instructions. Two of the samples were missing a warning in the user instructions to replace the supply cord if it shows signs of damage. This is a particularly important warning, as supply cords might come into contact with the heating plates. In one case, the edge of the heating plates measured over 115°C five minutes after unplugging the product from the mains supply. This temperature is sufficiently high to damage the PVC insulation of the supply cord in this instance.

The sample below is described on its packaging as a mini detailer. While smaller than the other samples it is still required to satisfy the marking requirements of the product standard.

The sample was not marked however with its model name, class II symbol, AC voltage symbol and the crossed wheeled bin indicating not for disposal in household waste.



Furthermore, the symbol warning against use in a bath or shower was shown on a label attached to the supply cord rather than being on the product. The symbol is also not in accordance with the standard. The safety information for vulnerable users required by the standard was also missing from the instructions and the brightly coloured enclosure was considered appealing to children.

When pushing the jaws of the product together, the enclosure reached temperatures above 120°C and inadvertent contact with the heating plates was considered likely where temperatures exceed 200°C.

Internal creepage and clearance distances were below permissible limits and the on-off switch did not appear to be suitable for use as a mains switch. The number of standard failures for this sample is concerning and may result in a hazardous situation for the user.

Three further samples had internal creepage and clearance distance issues. Some of these issues were a result of poor assembly techniques. In one case the pointed end of an internal screw had pierced the insulation sleeve around the thermal fuse. This fault was revealed after the sample failed an electric strength test at 1000V between the accessible plates and live parts. The sample's insulation is required to withstand 3000V for one minute.

The confined space of hair straighteners requires that particular attention is given during manufacturing and design to electrical insulation and construction methods. There must be sufficient electrical insulation between the accessible hot plates and the live heating element. This was not the case for the high performance sample, as the heating element is embedded in insulating material, which as specified by the product standard is considered to be basic insulation only.

Hair straighteners are subject to rough handling and may be dropped onto a hard floor from a height of more than one metre. This has the potential to weaken electrical insulation particularly where heating elements are embedded in a brittle insulating material. Supplementary insulation should be applied in this instance to provide the necessary protection against access to live parts.

### Conclusions

The number of significant failures and observations to the product standard suggests that standards written to support the UK *Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations* are either not understood or not properly followed.

The internal construction issues are a concern particularly where they affect the electrical insulation and protection against electric shock. While some of the construction problems were recorded as observations, they might develop into significant safety hazards over time.

It was disappointing to find that information for vulnerable users and in particular the possible use by children was missing from the instructions in the majority of cases. These products may be used by young children who are unsupervised, and particularly when some samples have attributes that appeal to children. We would advise parents to consider the potential hazards associated with child appealing products when deciding to buy.

Hot surfaces are expected for hair care products, but the high temperatures of areas held by the user and

the possibility of inadvertent contact with working surfaces is a concern. We would recommend in particular that hair straighteners are placed on, and stored in, heat-proof covers and that supply cords are not wrapped around hotplates until they have cooled down.

As with all our safety investigations, we will liaise with the retailers and manufacturers concerned and keep the authorities informed of our actions. If necessary, an update will be published in a future edition of *Switched On*.

A copy of the full laboratory test reports can be viewed on the Council's website: [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk)

### Supplementary Notes

Schedule 3 (Safety Objectives), item 1(b) of the *Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994* states that the "manufacturer's brand name or trade mark should be clearly printed on the electrical equipment." The absence of this information for hair straightener, sample code 11, is therefore quite significant.

The Part 1, *EN 60335-1*, clause 24 covering components states that "components shall comply with the safety requirements specified in the relevant IEC standards as far as they reasonably apply." Evidence of such testing is typically indicated by approval markings on the component from VDE, KEMA, IMQ, UL etc. The absence of such markings from the mains on-off switch for a number of the samples suggests that the switches may not have been previously tested. If this was the case during a type test by the laboratory, the switch would be tested under *IEC 61058-1* for a number of operating cycles, as specified by this standard. Other relevant tests may also apply such as glow wire. The switch would then be shown in the critical components table of the test report as 'tested in the appliance'.

The construction clause 22.32 of *EN 60335-1* states that "ceramic material which is not tightly sintered, similar materials or beads alone shall not be used as supplementary insulation or reinforced insulation." It might be argued that the material in which the heating element is embedded is deemed to be tightly sintered and therefore considered as suitable reinforced insulation. The additional wording introduced by Amendment A2 clarifies however that "insulating material in which heating conductors are embedded is considered to be basic insulation and not reinforced insulation." This confirms that supplementary insulation is required when embedding heating elements in insulating material, irrespective of its thickness or whether it is tightly sintered.

The marking of the crossed wheeled bin is a requirement under the *WEEE Directive*. The absence of such marking is therefore a departure under the UK implementing Regulations SI 2006, No. 3289 and associated amendments.

“The internal construction issues are a concern particularly where they affect the electrical insulation and protection against electric shock”



# Raising our profile and raising the bar

– increasing awareness of electrical safety issues

**Switched On has regularly reported updates on the ESC's flagship campaign – Plug into Safety – but the Council also runs a number of other campaigns and activities designed to gain media coverage and support consumer safety.**

The Safer Homes campaign, for example, is designed to make people – particularly those on low incomes – aware of electrical safety within the home; as well as to ensure landlords are aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to electrical safety. The campaign, in addition to media engagement, includes the provision of regularly updated consumer safety material. Most recently, the Council produced a new guide for tenants – *Protect yourself in your rented home* – and the *Landlords' guide to electrical safety* has become a respected source of information for responsible landlords. After the success of the English version of the Landlords' guide in 2009, a revised version for the Scottish market has been produced and achieved similar popularity.

One public relations activity used to support the Safer Homes campaign involved Aggie McKenzie, housekeeping guru from TV's *How clean is your house?* (see spring's edition of *Switched On*). Radio interviews with Aggie gained extensive coverage and the ESC even got a mention on Daybreak TV – bringing the safety message to millions of listeners and viewers.

True-life or human interest stories are the life-blood of any media or public relations campaign. Sadly, it is often the most tragic which produce the most interest. To support the launch of the *Protect yourself in your rented home* leaflet, Jane Andain – the mother of Thirza Whittall – kindly agreed to undertake some media interviews. Thirza, the mother of two young children, had been electrocuted while running a bath in her rented home – which she and her family had moved into only six days before the tragedy. Their rented accommodation had not been rewired or inspected for over 25 years.

Our recommendation is that rental homes should have a PIR carried out by a registered electrician at least every five years, or on change of tenancy. The ESC is working with Thirza's family to raise awareness of the disparity

between the inspection requirements for gas and electricity in the private sector and is urging Westminster and the Devolved Governments to make this a legal requirement. Currently, while landlords are legally obliged to provide an annual gas safety certificate, there is no equivalent legal obligation for electrical installations.

The Council often tries to use seasonal themes to increase awareness of electrical safety and this will include developing media stories and angles for anything from buying counterfeit presents online and using Christmas lights, to gardening safety in the spring. A mini-campaign has also been undertaken to make people aware of the electrical safety issues that can arise when a flood occurs. In addition to the damage that may have been caused to the electrical installation, electrical goods damaged in the flood can also pose a risk. Yet ESC research indicates that 40% of people are unlikely to turn off the electricity when leaving their property because of flooding.

By working collaboratively, the ESC also ensures it optimises its impact. One way in which it does this is through its Fire Safety Fund. The Fire Safety Fund provides a means of engaging with, and supporting, local organisations to undertake fire prevention work – with a particular focus on high-risk and vulnerable groups. This year, the Council provided just over £100,000 of funding to 23 organisations throughout the UK, including regional fire and rescue services, trading standards officers, councils and charities (see spring's *Switched On*).

As part of the requirements for funding, the Council asks all successful applicants to provide case studies and to undertake some PR or media activity to promote its initiatives. By raising the profile of the ESC on a regional and national level, we simultaneously increase awareness of the issue of electrical safety per se. We know that electrical safety isn't at the forefront of most people's minds until an accident happens. Our campaigns and the PR and media coverage they gain helps ensure individuals get the information they need before it's too late.

“Our campaigns and the PR and media coverage they gain helps ensure individuals get the information they need before it's too late.”

Have you ever been asked...

▶ what is the difference between a legal duty being 'absolute' and 'so far as is reasonably practicable'?



**This question arises in the context of the *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (EWR)*, which impose duties on employers, self-employed persons, and employees to take precautions against the risk of death or personal injury from electricity in work activities.**

**Duties in some of the regulations of the EWR are subject to the qualifying term 'reasonably practicable'.**

**Where qualifying terms are absent, duties are said to be absolute.**

**Absolute duty**

If a requirement in a regulation is 'absolute', the requirement must be met regardless of the cost, time or effort incurred in doing so.

For some of the regulations with absolute requirements, regulation 29 offers a defence where criminal (but not civil) proceedings have been brought against a person or persons considered to have failed in their duty. The defence puts the onus on the accused person(s) to demonstrate that 'they took all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence to avoid' committing an offence. In effect, the persons are assumed guilty until proven innocent.

**Reasonable practicability**

Where the term 'so far as is reasonably practicable' is used in a regulation, this allows a balance to be struck between, on one hand, the level of risk reduction considered acceptable and on the other hand, the cost, time and effort of reducing the risk to such an acceptable level. Remember that the risk associated with electricity is death – that is, the risk is very high, so the measures to be adopted are demanding.

In order to apply reasonable practicability, it will be necessary for a risk assessment to be performed in accordance with the requirements of the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*.

It should be remembered that the risk assessment could be the subject of scrutiny in the event of an accident or incident. It is therefore important to keep a record of the risk assessment process, proportionate to the nature and severity of the risk being considered.

Where a person is charged with an offence relating a regulation where a duty of reasonable practicability applies, the prosecution would need to demonstrate that the defendant had 'beyond reasonable doubt' failed in their duty, whilst the defendant need only demonstrate that their duty had been met 'on the balance of probabilities'. It should be noted, however, that a lack of finances to properly implement those safety measures deemed necessary to reduce the risk to a reasonable level would never be an acceptable defence.

Where a charge is brought, it will be for a court of law to decide whether or not the defendant has met the duties imposed upon him or her.

Although little guidance is available from the courts on what is meant by reducing a risk as low as is reasonably practicable, the Health and Safety Executive cite the following examples of comments made by the judge in the case of *Edwards v National Coal Board* (1949):

*"... in every case, it is the risk that has to be weighed against the measures necessary to eliminate the risk. The greater the risk, no doubt, the less will be the weight to be given to the factor of cost."*

and

*"'Reasonably practicable' is a narrower term than 'physically possible' and implies that a computation must be made ... in which the quantum of risk is placed on one scale and the sacrifice involved in the measures necessary for averting the risk (whether in money, time or trouble) is placed in the other and that, if it be shown that there is a gross disproportion between them – the risk being insignificant in relation to the sacrifice – the person on whom the obligation is imposed discharges the onus on him."*

Further guidance on the duties imposed on persons by the EWR can be found in paragraphs 56 to 60 of the *Memorandum of guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (HSR 25)* which is downloadable free of charge from the HSE website.





## Collaborating with Trading Standards to identify unsafe mobile phone chargers

In the Spring 2010 issue of *Switched On* the Council reported on its investigations into plug-in mobile

phone chargers. The report concluded that there were many pitfalls and potential safety risks resulting from buying cheap unbranded chargers on the market, particularly those purchased online. This prompted the Council to issue several media press releases to raise consumer awareness of the issues and to the development of consumer safety advice.

### An ongoing challenge

With an estimated 1.8 million mains plug-in mobile phone chargers bought online by UK customers each year and with many more being bought direct from market traders and budget stores, the Council remains concerned that many thousands of UK lives, particularly young lives, are being put at risk whenever cheap unsafe mobile phone chargers are used.

Fortunately, the ESC's safety concerns are shared by many local trading standards authorities, in particular by London's Lambeth Borough Trading Standards, who recently approached the Council to collaborate with them in carrying out safety screening of plug-in mobile phone and games console chargers.

### The same old problems

After seeking technical advice from our product safety division on how to maximise the effectiveness of the safety screening, Lambeth Trading Standards commissioned an independent laboratory to carry out safety screening and performance testing on plug-in chargers – branded and unbranded – purchased randomly from local shops, market stalls and the internet.

Of the 28 samples that were screened, over half were found to have departures from the relevant product standards such that they failed to meet the principal safety requirements of the *Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994*.



### Summary of results and action taken

In summary, of the 15 chargers that failed the product screening, the majority had several departures from the products standards, as follows:

- Twelve samples had three or more departures;
- Five samples had four or more departures;
- One sample had five departures.

Only two of the samples were identified as having a failure due to inadequate markings only.

Subsequent to receipt of the results and consideration of the implications, Lambeth Trading Standards took swift action and seized over 120 mobile phone chargers from a local market. The market traders responsible for selling the unsafe chargers were ordered to provide details of their suppliers.

Further analysis of the results and comparison with existing records revealed that some of samples had been subject to safety screening more than once in the past and although they had failed, they were still in the market place. This serves to highlight the difficulty in completely eradicating unsafe chargers from the market and reinforces the need for further action to be taken against those in the supply chain responsible for manufacturing and supplying unsafe consumer electrical products.

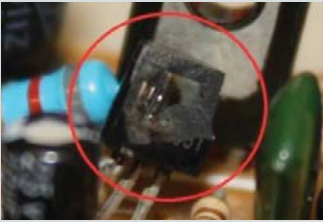




### Conclusions and next steps

It is clear from the investigations that potential safety risks from buying cheap, often unbranded, plug-in chargers continues to be a threat to consumers.

The Council is planning further collaboration with Lambeth Trading Standards to help them raise consumer awareness of the safety issues of buying cheap chargers. The Council will report on progress in a future issue of *Switched On*.

Our advice to anyone who has reason to suspect they have purchased an unsafe plug-in charger is to contact their local consumer help organisation, such as Trading Standards.

Of the 15 chargers that failed, the departures were as follows:

Number of chargers	Details of departure from product standard	Potential consequence	Photographic evidence
2	Under short-circuit testing samples showed signs of internal component damage, with soot and metallic deposits covering insulated surfaces within the housing. Internal short-circuit protection had failed to operate (or operate safely) to prevent internal damage	Failure of short-circuit protection can lead to a significant risk of fire	
4	Inadequate mechanical strength. During the tumble barrel test – to simulate dropping the charger – the cover of three chargers broke away from the base and for one charger, an internal wiring connection had become detached.	Had the enclosure failed whilst the charger was being removed from the socket, it would have left exposed live parts – a serious electric shock hazard. A detached internal wire could cause a short-circuit, resulting in a fire hazard or mains voltage appearing on the charger output	
8	Insufficient separation between live parts, due to insufficient insulation or inadequate distances between live parts and between input/output circuits	A breakdown of the insulation barrier could cause the output voltage of the charger to reach mains voltage, leading to a risk of fire and electric shock – only a very thin enamel coating separated the primary and secondary transformer windings	
8	Incorrect plug pin alignment, oversized/undersized pins and/or incorrect positioning of pins in relation to charger body.	Plug pins are required to be not less than 9.5 mm away from the edge of the charger body. Any less than this can lead to electric shock from finger contact, although this is less likely (but still possible) where adequate sleeving has been applied to the live plug pins – a requirement of the product standard.	
9	Inadequate construction. The internal conductors connecting the plug pins to the circuit boards were attached using solder only.	Should a conductor break free (as shown), its movement could cause a short-circuit, resulting in a fire hazard, or could lead to mains voltage (230 V) appearing on the charger output	
15	Inadequate markings and lack of user instructions to ensure that chargers could be used safely.	Whilst not a safety concern, the omission of standard markings is a departure from the British Standard. Also, the <i>Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994</i> require the manufacturer's brand name or trade mark to be clearly printed on the electrical equipment. Their absence is therefore a technical breach of these Regulations.	

Further guidance about buying electrical products, particularly about buying products online, is given in the ESC publication *Safe shoppers guide*, which is available as a free download from the Council's website: [www.esc.org.uk/public/guides-and-advice/safe-shoppers-guide/](http://www.esc.org.uk/public/guides-and-advice/safe-shoppers-guide/)



## Installation of cooker switches and cooker control units

**Either a cooker switch or a cooker control unit (incorporating a socket-outlet) is usually installed where a cooking appliance is to be connected other than by means of a plug and socket-outlet**



The cooker switch or control unit is often used to serve the following functions relating to the cooking appliance.

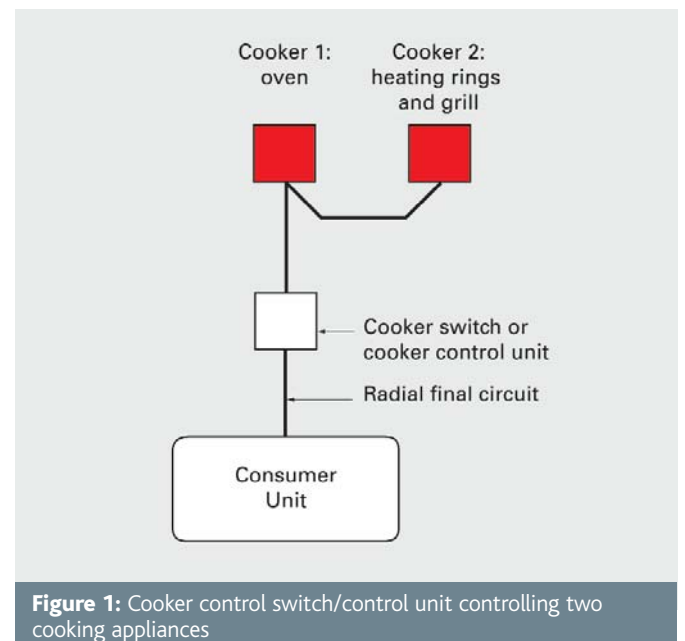
- **A means of isolation** (Regulation Group 537.2), such as to facilitate electrical connection or repair of the appliance without having to isolate at the consumer unit or distribution board  
*Note: To meet the requirements for a device for isolation, a switch that is used as a cooker switch in household and similar fixed installations must comply with BS EN 60669-2-4. The switch of a cooker control unit complying with BS 4177 meets the requirements for a device for isolation in household and similar fixed installations.*
- **A means of switching off for mechanical maintenance** (Regulation Group 537.3), such as to avoid the risk of burns or mechanical injury (from an oven fan, for example) as a result of a switch on the appliance being accidentally turned on during cleaning or mechanical repair of the appliance

A current rating of 30 or 32A at 230 V single-phase is generally suitable for a cooker switch or control unit (and the associated dedicated final circuit) supplying most household cookers in domestic premises – typically having four heating rings, a grill and an oven. A higher current rating may be necessary for a cooker having additional cooking facilities and/or a large capacity oven.

An assessment of the likely maximum demand of a household cooker in domestic premises can be made by taking the first 10 A of

the rated current, plus 30 % of the remainder of the rated current, plus 5 A for the socket-outlet of a cooker control unit if one is fitted.

A cooker switch/control unit may be used to control two or more cooking appliances in the same room (such as an oven/grill and a separate hob unit), as shown in figure 1, provided it has sufficient current rating.



**Figure 1:** Cooker control switch/control unit controlling two cooking appliances

### Positioning

The cooker switch or control unit should be positioned so it is accessible and convenient for use. It should not be positioned behind or above a cooking appliance such that a person would have to reach over the appliance to access the switch/control unit.

The horizontal distance between a cooker switch or control unit and the appliance(s) it serves must be sufficiently short for the switch to be under the control of persons relying on it for safety. This requirement is likely to be met if the distance is 2 m or less, as shown in figure 2.

In a new dwelling, the height of a cooker switch or control unit should be suitable to facilitate access by persons in wheelchairs and others whose reach is limited (as should the heights of all wall-mounted switches and socket-outlets). Based on the recommendations of *Approved Document M*, applicable in England and Wales, the height of the switch or control unit should not exceed 1.2m above floor level (see figure 2).

A cooker switch or control unit should not be installed in a cupboard or cabinet unless it will be accessible and convenient for use. In any event, wiring and other electrical equipment should not be fixed to any part of a cupboard or cabinet that is demountable in normal use.

It is not recommended to locate a cooker switch or control unit in a central wall-mounted control panel together with other switching devices, as this may result in the cooker switch or control unit not being under the control of persons relying on it for safety or otherwise not being suitably accessible.

Where a cooker switch or control unit is positioned in such a central control panel, then, as for any other item of switchgear or controlgear, a label or other suitable means of identification must be provided to indicate the purpose of the cooker switch/control unit, except where there is no possibility of confusion (Regulation 514.1.1 refers).

**Particular considerations for cooker control units**

The installation of a cooker control unit can lead to accidents due to trailing cables and/or portable equipment being located near to or on hot surfaces. Where a cooker control unit is provided, it should be

positioned so as to minimise the risk of such accidents. If this is not practicable, it is better to install a cooker switch (without a socket-outlet), bearing in mind that a modern kitchen installation should have an adequate number of socket-outlets provided from the dedicated socket-outlet circuits.

Like any other general-purpose socket-outlet, the socket-outlet of a cooker control is subject to the requirement of Regulation 411.3.3 to be provided with additional protection by an RCD. The RCD must have a rated residual operating current ( $I_{\Delta n}$ ) not exceeding 30 mA and an operating time not exceeding 40 ms at  $5 I_{\Delta n}$ .

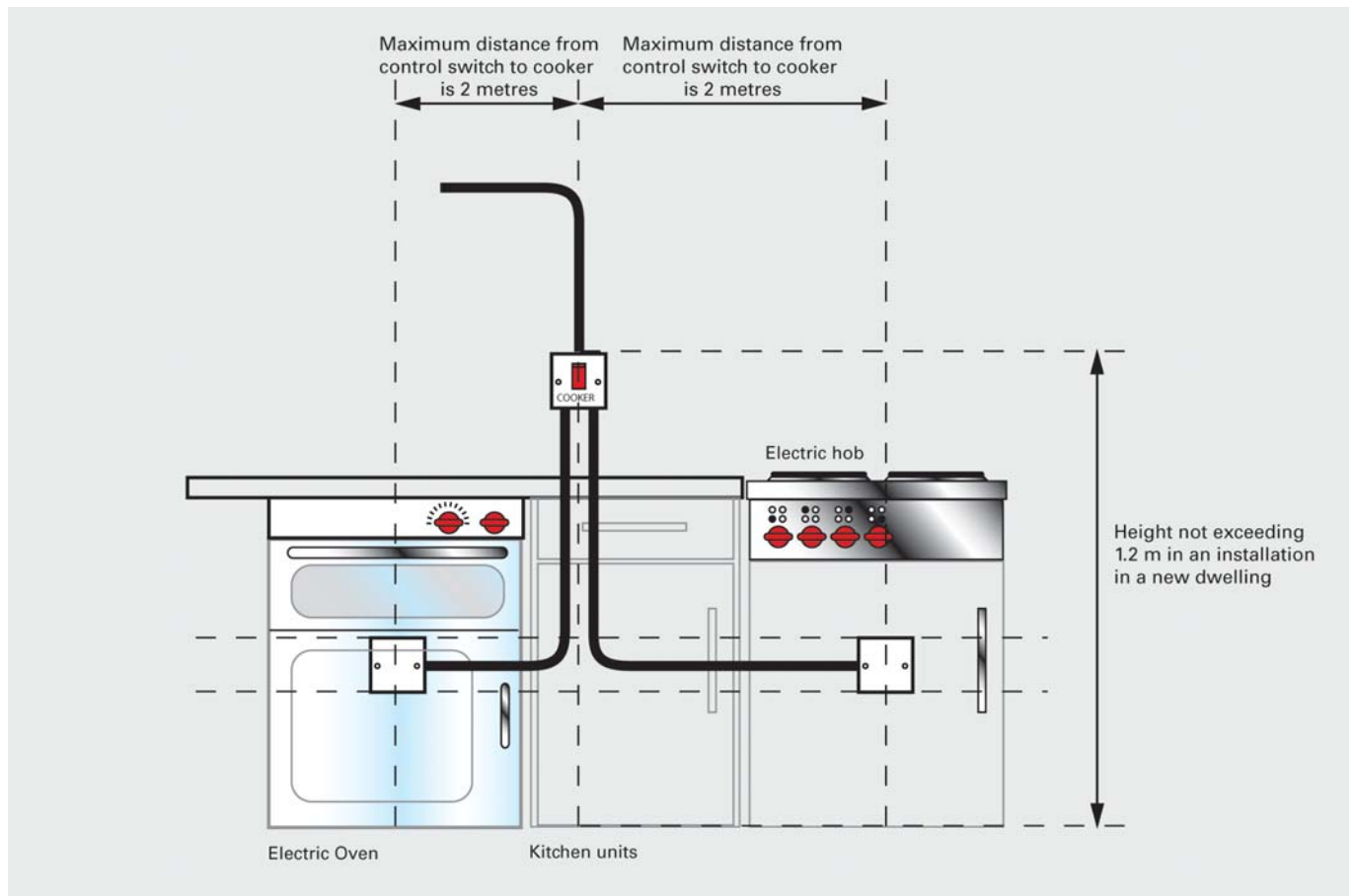
**An exception is permitted for:**

- socket-outlets for use under the supervision of skilled or instructed persons (but this is not usually the case in domestic premises), and for
- a specific labelled or otherwise suitably identified socket-outlet provided for the connection of a particular item of equipment.

However, if the circuit cable supplying the cooker control unit or cooker switch is concealed in a wall or partition, additional protection by an RCD is likely to be required in any case by Regulation 522.6.7\* or 522.6.8†, except where these regulations make it clear that such protection is not required (such as where the cable is enclosed in earthed metal conduit).

\* Number changed to 522.6.102 by Amendment 1 (2011) to BS 7671: 2008

† Number changed to 522.6.103 by Amendment 1 (2011) to BS 7671: 2008



**Figure 2:** Diagram showing position of cooker switch/control unit relative to cooking appliances and floor

# COUNCIL TO HOLD SECOND ELECTRICAL PRODUCT SAFETY CONFERENCE

In order to raise the profile of the Council's product safety activities, the ESC is pleased to announce that arrangements are being made for the Council to stage its second Electrical Product Safety Conference in October.

The theme for the conference "UK market surveillance – overcoming the cut-backs through a combined approach" recognises the need for the product safety community and stakeholders to actively seek opportunities for working together to help ensure that market surveillance remains effective during these challenging times of austerity.

The conference, to be held at the Church House Conference Centre in London on 26 October, will provide an opportunity for consumer product safety professionals to exchange ideas and share information on issues of common concern. The day will see a wide range of topics discussed that will encompass the economic, legislative and global aspects of market surveillance and consumer electrical product safety.

The programme aims to address the current big issues facing consumers and the electrical product industry by tackling:

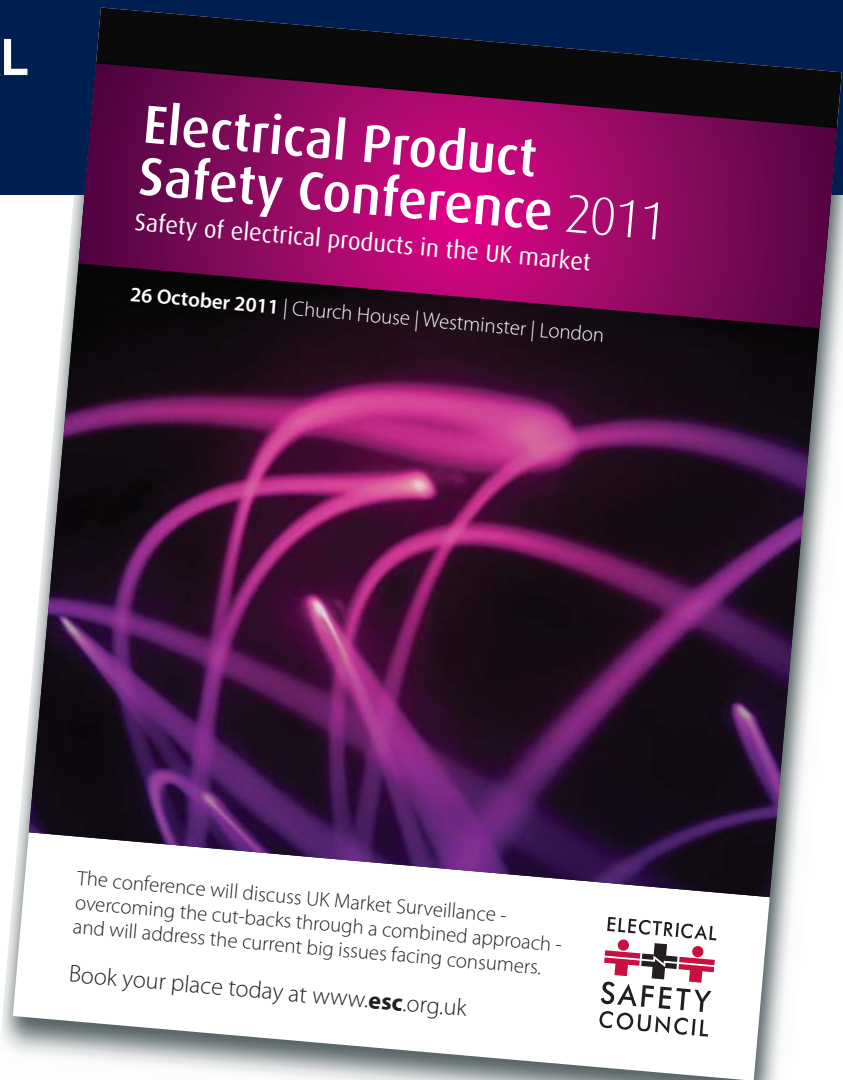
- initiatives in market surveillance
- the safety of imported goods
- local enforcement – dealing with reduced funding
- product testing and third-party certification
- sub-standard products – the consequences

- industry-led standardisation rather than regulation
- protection of consumers.

Such a comprehensive programme is expected to attract delegates from a wide range of disciplines including regulators, consumer product safety professionals, lawyers, consultants, standardisation personnel, designers, manufacturers, retailers and people from consumer protection organisations. Everyone is

welcome to attend, but please note that registrations are limited and will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

For further information on the conference programme, details on how to register or the opportunity to become a sponsor or exhibitor at the conference, please visit the Product Safety section of the Council's website: [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk) or call: **0870 040 0561**



## BACK ISSUES OF SWITCHED ON

All the previous issues of Switched On are available to read or download from the 'Business & Community' section of our website.

