



To: Heads of Department/Section, Executive Deans, HSLOs and DHSOs, Faculty Managers

For information and action

Electrical safety

This bulletin gives advice on how to use extension leads and electrical appliances safely. There was an incident on campus where an employee unplugged a heater from an extension lead under their desk without turning it off first. The surge of current caused a bang and a flash, startling the employee who hit their head on the desk. The incident blew the plug fuse and tripped the miniature circuit breaker resulting in offices being without electricity for a period of time.

Extension leads

- The best solution is to avoid the need to use extension leads by providing an adequate number of permanent wall sockets and in suitable locations. If there is a heavy reliance on extension leads investigate the provision of additional wall plug sockets with your line manager.
- Place extension leads and the plug where you can easily access them.
- Plug appliances that generate heat direct into the wall and not into an extension lead, for example kettles, coffee machines, microwaves and heaters should always be plugged into a wall socket.
- An extension lead must be plugged into a wall socket. Avoid 'daisy chaining' where extension leads are plugged into one another or multiway adaptors.
- The extension lead should be fully supported. Do not allow extension leads to dangle on the leads of plugged in appliances.
- Fully unwind cable reel and cable drum extension leads when in use.
- Do not overload your extension leads. Use this [socket overload calculator](#) to find out if you are.
- Extension leads should have a current portable appliance testing (PAT) sticker on them.
- The extension lead PAT testing frequency should be the same as the appliances that plug into it. For example, an extension lead on a 3 yearly PAT cycle is acceptable provided the equipment being plugged into it is also of a type that required PAT on the 3 yearly cycle, such as computers.

Electrical appliances

- Turn off appliances before you unplug them.
- Do not use damaged equipment. You can identify the majority of potentially dangerous electrical equipment through [simple visual checks](#) (.pdf).
- Check the appliance has a current PAT sticker on it. If it has a fail tag on it turn the appliance off immediately. Remove it from use and dispose of it safely through the University's [waste electrical equipment arrangements](#). If it is an extension lead, turn off the appliances plugged into it and the extension lead and unplug them.

Further information

For more information, visit [Electrical safety](#) and [Portable Appliance Testing](#) on the University's health and safety website. For advice on socket provision or arranging PAT contact the Estate Management Helpdesk or your Facilities Management provider.