

Electrical socket inserts in schools

Socket covers should not be used as the first control to reduce the risk of electrocution.

Where the need for socket covers has been identified as a required control measure, insert types should not be used. Instead, alternative 'complete' socket covers will be more appropriate.



These can be purchased from Amazon, other online outlets or from retail electrical outlets.

What to consider

Schools should think carefully about:

- The type of sockets that are installed (Are they fitted with integral shutter covers?)
- Their condition
- The maintenance of existing socket and RCD (residual current device) protection installed and
- Whether these controls (in addition to adequate supervision of children) are deemed sufficient to adequately control the associated risks.

Potential dangers of electrical socket inserts

Electrical power sockets made to BS 1363 incorporate a shutter mechanism which prevents inappropriate access to the live and neutral connections. Properly maintained RCD protection, adequate supervision of children and the use of sockets made to BS 1363 (i.e. ones that include a shutter mechanism) can be used to adequately control the risk of children electrocuting themselves. The Royal Society for the Protection of Accidents does not consider it necessary to recommend the use of electrical socket covers and nor does the Electrical Safety Council.

Electrical socket inserts should not be used because they come in a variety of sizes and many will not meet the exact dimensions that the electrical sockets are made to. This can cause the automatic shutters to be forced apart and then the shutters no longer provide the safety protection that they are designed to give. The inserts can also cause socket contact damage which may result in overheating and possible fire.

Contact:

Raj Chowdhury- Schools Health and Safety Adviser, Corporate Health and Safety

Tel: 020 8825 7287 Mobile: 07568 130 165

Email: chowdhuryr@ealing.gov.uk