

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL ELECTRICAL SAFETY – DO'S AND DON'TS

It has come to light through health and safety audits that multi-gang extension cables and coil extension leads are often being used as a method of getting power from the electric socket to the electrical appliance. The photos in this document show some bad practise found in the council. The following advice is provided to ensure that you manage the use of these and other devices safely and do not increase the risk of fire.

Of course the ideal situation is to have one socket for each piece of equipment but many of our buildings were not built to handle the amount of electrical equipment now in use.

The methods covered are

- Multi-Gang Extension Cables
- Coil Extension Leads
- Multi Plug Adaptors

Advice is also provided on:

- Isolation Switches
- Cable Management

Multi-Gang Extension Cables



- **Do not** add one extension to another (i.ee. daisy chain the extension cables).
- **Do** keep the length of the extension cable as short as possible.

Why (a) Each point of contact is a point where overheating can occur therefore the more in a chain the greater the risk.
(b) The longer the cable the greater the voltage drop, which can affect the operation of the equipment and can cause overheating of cables.

Coil Extension Leads



- **Do** avoid the use of this type of extension if possible.
- **Do** make sure that the cable is fully unwound.
- **Do** make sure you do not exceed the maximum wattage for the coil extension.

Why (a) a wound up cable will overheat.
(b) an exceeded wattage will overload the fuse.

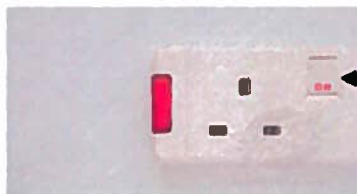
Multi-plug Adaptors



- **Do not use**

Why (a) they are too easily overloaded.

Isolation Switches



Isolation Switch

- **Do not** block the access to these switches.

Why (a) in an emergency you may need to quickly isolate the socket

Cable Management

- **Do** make sure cables are not coiled, tangled, knotted or have equipment/furniture sitting on them.

Why (a) internal fractures or thinning of the core wires may occur. Consequently hotspots can develop in the cable resulting in a fire risk.