



SUBJECT: ELECTRICAL SAFETY – USE OF PLASTIC SOCKET COVERS

RECIPIENTS: All Council Services (including Schools and Children's Centres)

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(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

There is currently a question mark over whether using socket covers as shown in photographs (a) and (b) above is a good idea.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Accidents: does not consider it necessary to recommend the use of socket covers, nor does the Electrical Safety Council. Does RoSPA recommend the use of socket covers?

13-amp power sockets made to BS 1363 incorporate a shutter mechanism, which prevents inappropriate access to the live connectors. Therefore, RoSPA does not consider it necessary to recommend the use of socket covers.

The Electrical Safety Council: Doesn't rely on socket blanking plugs for your child's safety. Regular sockets are generally safe and socket covers will not prevent electric shock if the installation is not safe.

Advice was sought from the HSE and Trading Standards about this and they commented: Properly maintained RCD protection and adequate supervision of the children, the socket is designed to be safe with a shutter that covers both the live and neutral connections when there is not a plug in situ and if a child does manage to poke something in then an RCD should prevent a fatal electric shock. The covers provide a false sense of security and can fail to danger.

Action to be taken with Lincolnshire County Council Premises where this potential risk's been identified:

1. Consideration must be given to the type of sockets that are installed within the building i.e. are they fitted with the integral shutter covers? Their condition and the maintenance of existing socket and the RCD protection (the "trip" function within the distribution unit) installed in the system and whether these controls along with full and adequate supervision of children can be provided to adequately control this risk.
2. Socket Covers should not be used as the first control to reduce risk. Where the need for socket covers have been identified, then consideration should be given to fitting alternative complete socket covers as shown in photographs (c) and (d) above on the sockets that pose the greatest risk of children gaining inappropriate access to live electrics. We do not recommend the use of sockets covers (a) & (b) above.

If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:

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