Electrical Safety

Keeping you and your family safe in your home

Ashford Borough Council



What are the dangers of electricity in my home?

- Damaged plugs, sockets and flexible cables can cause electric shocks, burns and fires.
- Faults with appliances and electrical installations can cause fires.
- Electricity can potentially ignite flammable gasses in the atmosphere.
- Contact with live electrical parts can cause serious burns and be life threatening.

What are the signs that fittings and appliances may be a safety risk?

- Discoloration, burn or scorch marks on plugs, leads and fittings.
- Fraying appliance leads or exposed internal wires.
- Loose cord grips in plugs or appliances.
- Sounds of 'arcing' (buzzing or crackling), smell of burnt plastic or if it feels hot to touch.
- Lights flickering or flashes coming from power sockets or light switches when you turn them on.
- Fuses blowing or circuit breakers (RCDs) continuously tripping is a good indicator that an appliance could be faulty.

What is Ashford Borough Council doing to keep my family safe?

- We carry out an electrical safety check before you move in and continue to maintain the installation in a safe condition throughout the tenancy. Installations include things like plug sockets, consumer units, light fittings and electric heating systems.
- All electrical works and upgrades will be carried out by a NICEIC approved contractor in accordance with current British Standards and certified upon completion.
- A periodic inspection of the electrical installation in your property is tested for safety every 5 years, by a NICEIC approved electrical contractor and a copy of the report made available to you on request.
- All installations will have a Residual Circuit Device (RCD) installed within the consumer unit (fuse box) to provide additional protection against electric shock.

NICEIC APPROVED CONTRACTOR

What happens during the safety inspection?

The 'fixed' electrical parts of the property, like the wiring, power sockets, light fittings and consumer unit will be inspected. This includes permanently connected equipment such as showers and extractors.

The inspection will find out if:

- Any electrical installations are overloaded
- There are any potential risks of electric shock or fire hazards
- There is any defective electrical work,
- There is a lack of earthing or bonding – these are 2 ways of preventing electrical shocks that are built into electrical installations.

Where additional remedial works are required, the electrician will arrange and complete these works before a satisfactory electrical certificate for the installation is issued.

What safety measures can I take to keep my family safe when using electricity?

- Carry out regular checks of the condition of your cables, switches, sockets and other accessories. Replace damaged parts immediately and before use.
- Carefully remove plugs from sockets. Pulling out a plug by its cable puts strain on it and can result in damage to components. Wires that become loose can potentially cause an electric shock.
- Keep electrical leads, plugs and appliances away from water and never use electrical equipment and switches with wet hands.
- Never wrap cables around equipment while it is still warm, allow sufficient time for it to cool.
- Never "double up" on sockets and stick to one appliance - one socket rule.
- Avoid overloading adaptors and extension leads, particularly with high current appliances such as kettles, irons and heaters.
- Never use multiple extension leads to run appliances. They should be completely unwound to avoid overheating.
- Only use adaptors, extension leads and appliances showing the British Standard or European Standard kite marks pictured below. Avoid cheaper alternatives.

British Standards Kitemark CE European Standards

- Keep children and pets away from trailing cables and leads. Fit safety blank plugs to stop children putting objects into the wall outlets and avoiding the risk of electric shock.

What safety measures can I take when carrying out DIY?

- Seek advice from a professional before carrying out DIY in the home. Electrical work should be carried out by a registered qualified electrician, and certification provided to your housing officer.
- If you're doing any work near electrical wiring or power supplies, where possible, shut off the power in your fuse box/ consumer unit and use battery powered tools.
- When hanging pictures or shelves, check there are no cables or pipes within the wall where you are fixing.
- When using power sockets outdoors, only use suitable weather-safe electric sockets with a minimum rating of IP56, but an IP rating of 66 or 68 is preferable.
- Fully uncoil power leads and extension reels to equipment to prevent overheating.
- Do not mow the lawn in wet conditions and keep the cable clear of the cutting area.



What safety measures can I take when charging my devices?

- Always use the charger that came with your phone, tablet, e-cigarette or mobile device or an approved replacement.
- Don't leave items continuously on charge (after the charge cycle is complete).
- Do not cover devices in use, or batteries that are on charge to avoid overheating.

What safety measures can I take when using electrical appliances?

- Only use appliances with a recognised kite mark and as advised in the manufacturer's instructions.
- Only use the correct rating and size of fuse as stated for the appliance. Using the wrong fuse can cause a cable to overheat and the appliance may no longer be protected against an electrical fault.
- If an appliance appears faulty, do not use it. If in doubt get the appliance checked by a qualified electrician
- Keep appliances clean and good working order. Never clean an appliance while it is still plugged in.
- Unplug electric blankets before you get into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Hair straighteners/dryers get extremely hot. Always switch them off and let them cool on a heatproof surface.
- Power down appliances at the plug when you're not using them. Not only does this save you money, but it significantly reduces the chances of a fire starting.
- Electricity and water can be a deadly combination; do not use appliances such as hairdryers in bathrooms, unless suitable and stated in the manufacturer's user instructions.
- Ensure a second-hand appliance has passed a safety test by a qualified electrician before usage.
- When using portable electric heaters, never dry clothes over on them, leave unattended or turned on overnight. Always place the heater upright on a flat smooth surface.

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for electrical safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

housing.compliance@ashford.gov.uk

01233 331111