

SAFETY ALERT



Alert: Electrical Fire Risk - Safety Alert 027
Subject: Electrical Appliances / Laptop
Chargers



Distribution: Red Insight team, social media, and current clients

Reference Number: Safety Alert 027

Description of incident or hazard:

While working at home, laptop was charging for approximately 10 minutes when a popping sound was made, and blue sparks observed coming from a brand-new laptop charger. As the room quickly filled up with smoke and the potential risk of fire e.g., unseen in the walls or power point, the house was evacuated, and the Fire & Rescue called.

History:

Being 'new to service,' the laptop charger was not yet due for an inspection. While an inspection was planned for the charger, being new (and not second hand), the charger had not yet been tested.

Extent of impact:

The RCD prevented further electrical damage to the house. If the equipment had been left unattended, the potential outcomes could have been devastating.

Immediate action taken (or to be taken) to eliminate or control the risk:

The worker unplugged the device and then immediately contacted 000. Power to the house was also isolated.

The wall and power point were tested with thermal scanner to verify there was risk of further fire. Power was not turned back on until an electrician confirmed there was no unseen damage.



Key messages:

If you are a business or employer (or other PCBU), you must ensure electrical equipment is regularly inspected if the electrical equipment is supplied with electricity through an electrical socket outlet ('plug in' equipment), and, used in an environment in which its normal use exposes the equipment to operating conditions that are likely to result in damage to the equipment or a reduction in its expected life span, e.g. conditions such as exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals or dust. Regular testing and tagging of electrical equipment (in accordance with AS/NZS 3760:2010) is necessary to detect electrical faults and deterioration that cannot be found by visual inspection. In addition to regular testing, electrical equipment should also be tested:

- After a repair or servicing that could affect the electrical safety of the equipment e.g., before return to service
- Before its first use if bought second hand.

A visual inspection of leads and equipment should always be conducted before use or contact to ensure there is no damage. Damage may include:

- Cuts, fraying, heavy scuffing,
- Damage to plug, bent pins, taped leads,
- Coloured wires are visible,

Signs of overheating such as burn marks or staining on the plug

Following an internal investigation and inspection of the unit by two competent persons, there was no evidence of reverse polarity - simply a faulty charger

For further information contact:

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