



PRESS RELEASE

ELECTRICITY CAUSES FIRE, DEATH & INJURY IN THE HOME

Middlesex, March 2005 – There were 29 deaths and 908 injuries due to the 6,000 dwelling fires started by electrical appliances in the UK during 2001.

There were 12 deaths and 271 injuries due to the 2,600 dwelling fires started by electrical distribution (leads to appliances, wire and cable) in the UK during 2001.

There were 44 deaths involving electric current in the UK, during 2000.

[Government statistics]

We take our labour-saving electrical appliances and installations for granted but they must be treated with respect. Here are some dangerous situations found by ONE gas-elec Safety Inspection Engineer in ONE year.

- Cracked steam irons and leaky kettles – potentially lethal when filled with water.
- Plugs wired up by the tenants the wrong way round – live in neutral and neutral in live.
- Lawn mowers, strimmers and other grass cutters with damaged cables. Tenants regularly mow over the cable, not cutting right through it so it is noticeable but enough so that they could electrocute themselves if they run their hand down the cable or drape it across damp grass.
- Trip switches that don't trip when they should, or fast enough to comply with the Regulations.
- Plugs drawing too much current and overheating/burning.
- Electric hobs rusted through, so that every time a pot boils over water could go straight into the electrics.

- Showers where the light on/off pull cord is within arm's reach of the shower, against the Regulations. Or showers where the cord is actually *inside* the shower cubicle.
- Breached seals on the shower box on the wall so water can get into the electrics.
- Double wall sockets wired up the wrong way round. That means if the plug is attached to an appliance, that appliance may still be live, even with the socket switch in the Off position.
- Sockets not earthed.

Post Script: Even brand new properties sometimes infringe the Regulations e.g. the kitchen sockets found within arms reach of the kitchen sink. And then there was the quaint old cottage featuring a 'brand new re-wire'. In fact, the new cables from each socket were sunk just a few inches into the wall and beyond that it was pure 1920s!

ENDS/...

Editor's Notes

Founded in 1996, **gas-elec** carries out impartial safety inspections and light remedial works. Its unique inspection service provides the residential lettings market with multiple inspections of the gas and electrics in just one visit. **gas-elec** has over 126 franchisees operating from 18 regional offices, who this year will carry out more than 120,000 safety inspections in domestic properties throughout the UK. For more information visit www.gas-elec.co.uk.

Issued by: gas-elec Safety Systems
Contact: Pauline Chandler
PR & Marketing Manager
Tel: 01892 782068
Email: pauline.chandler@gas-elec.co.uk