Press release from Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service and Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority
Making Derbyshire Safer

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ARE YOUR ELECTRICAL SOCKETS OVERLOADED? – THE 13AMP RULE

Did you get lots of new electrical gadgets and gizmos for Christmas? Are you overloading your electric sockets with the next must have item? TV’s, digital TV boxes, games consoles, cameras, phone/laptop chargers, coffee makers, hair straighteners and dryers; just a few of the everyday items we need to plug in to operate in an ever increasing technological world.

So how do you ensure that you are not overloading your electric sockets? How do you ensure you are not putting the safety of you and your family at risk?

With the award of £5,000 from the Electrical Safety Council (ESC), Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service (DFRS) has been able to purchase 1500 extension cables and 500 European conversion plug adapters which will support the launch of its electrical safety campaign to ensure everyone keeps sockets below the 13amp rule.

A schedule of posts to the Service’s social media accounts, increased media activity, an update of the electrical safety information on the Service’s website and a programme of Home Safety Checks will all facilitate this valuable electrical fire safety information being communicated to Derbyshire residents.

Follow our simple advice and everyone can stay safe:

- DO NOT overload sockets - remember the 13 AMP rule, a maximum of a total of 13 AMPS into 1 socket.
- Use sockets safely - it’s better to use a bar adaptor (multi board) on a lead than a block adaptor.
- Only use one adaptor per socket - don't plug one adaptor into another and try to keep to one plug per socket.
- Unplug appliances when not in use or when you are going to bed.
- Hot plugs or sockets, scorch marks, fuses that often blow, or flickering lights - they are all signs of loose wiring or other electrical problems.
- Badly wired plugs – any coloured wires sticking out could come loose and debris could also get into the plug.
- Getting frayed and damaged - make sure the outer covering of all power leads are in good condition and replace if necessary.
- Badly positioned cables - do not run extension leads under carpets where damage cannot be seen. Ensure they are not a trip hazard and are not too close to anything liquid or sources of heat.
- When you're fitting or replacing a fuse - it's important to use the right fuse for the appliance to make sure the fuse doesn't overheat. Check the manual or look for a sticker on the appliance to find out its wattage and then use the correct fuse.
- Keep liquids away from electrical appliances - ensure drinks and anything containing liquids are not left on top of or near electrical appliances or cables.
- NEVER plug 2 pin European plugs into 3 pin sockets without using a European adapter plug.

A good way to gauge if you are overloading your sockets is to visit the ESC’s website [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk) and have a go on their ‘Socket Overload Calculator’. Easy to use, you can soon see if you are overloading your sockets and at risk of fire. You can even get the children involved with a dedicated ESC website – [www.switchedonkids.org.uk](http://www.switchedonkids.org.uk)

Steve Helps, Group Manager for Prevention and Inclusion said “The award of £5,000 from the Electrical Safety Council means DFRS is able to provide extension leads and plug adapters to those identified as vulnerable and at risk of electrical fires, through Home Safety Checks carried out by operational fire crews and Community Safety Officers.

“I would like to encourage everyone to be more aware of the dangers of overloading electrical sockets and take ten minutes to consider the advice offered by both the fire service and the Electrical Safety Council.

“Ten minutes today taking the time to read this advice and also to test your smoke alarms could save not only your own life, but that of your families too.”

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service would like to remind everyone of the importance of having a working smoke alarm on every level of their home and where possible, fitted into all bedrooms. A planned and practiced escape route, that everyone in the home is aware of, is
also vital to your own safety. The Service would also encourage everyone to check on elderly relatives, neighbours and friends, testing their smoke alarms and ensuring they are not overloading electrical sockets.

NOTE TO EDITORS/REPORTERS

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Rachel Palmer, Press and Communications Officer on 07900 226081, alternatively rpalmer@derbys-fire.gov.uk

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