

Childminding Forum

Socket Cover Policy and Procedure - Example

Please feel free to use the following ideas when writing your policy/procedure on the use of socket covers:

Having read the website www.fatallyflawed.org.uk and information from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) I have come to a decision not to use socket covers in my setting.

Research has proven that the risk from using socket covers is greater than the risk of not using them and I put the safety of the children above everything else.

RoSPA state, 'RoSPA does not consider it necessary to recommend the use of socket covers.'

British sockets are made in such a way that even if something is pushed into one of the socket shutters there is no danger of electric shock. BS 1363 sockets are designed to be child-safe.

As well as using British standard sockets I will also give added protection by:

- Where possible using furniture and equipment to block access to sockets
- Making sure that the socket shows no signs of damage
- Checking the operation of the shutters regularly as part of my

Risk Assessments using the Fatally Flawed help page: <http://www.fatallyflawed.org.uk/html/faq.html#Q10>

- Ensuring that no items or toys which could be poked into socket shutters are available or within reach of children.
- Teaching children, in age appropriate ways, the dangers of electricity when it is misused
- Using regular risk assessments to ensure my protective measures are working.

A few points quoted from *Fatally Flawed*:

- No responsible national body recommends using socket covers.
- That includes the UK Government, RoSPA, Ofsted, Child Accident Prevention Trust and Electrical Safety Council.
- Sockets are made to accept plugs which meet very exact requirements. Anything which is not a standard plug MUST be made to the same dimensions as required for plugs. No socket covers which meet those dimensions are available!
- ALL UK power sockets (three rectangular pins) have shutters, even those which are 60 years old!
- Socket covers introduce a variety of dangers; they make sockets less safe, not more.
- Some socket covers have many faults, some just a few, but none makes sockets safer than they already are.
- Ofsted (England), SCWISS (Scotland) and Estyn (Wales) do not require the use of socket covers! The requirement is that childminders show they are keeping children safe.

Other things you might consider when doing risk assessments and writing your policy to help demonstrate that the whole subject of electrical safety has been considered:

- Multi-way "block" adaptors are not used. (Ideally the bar type of multi-way adaptor is also not used where children are present, but if it is essential then only the type which is wide enough to prevent inverted insertion of standard plugs is used.)
- There are no appliances in use which can present a danger to children, eg electrical heaters, hair dryers and hair straighteners.
- There is no access to detachable power leads.

- Any standard plugs which are in use are of the modern type with sleeved power pins. (Any old type plugs with solid metal power pins should have been replaced by modern ones, the old type have not been supplied for over 25 years.)

- There are no free-standing table lamps or floor lamps in use, this avoids the danger of a toppled lamp and broken bulb.

See the Fatally Flawed Website "Other Dangers" page
www.fatallyflawed.org.uk/html/other_dangers.html

The Fatally Flawed website also has some good factsheets, two of the most important:

www.fatallyflawed.org.uk/Do_I_Need_Socket_Covers.pdf

www.fatallyflawed.org.uk/Does_Size_Matter.pdf

References

Fatally Flawed www.fatallyflawed.org.uk/html/references.html

Article about the use of socket covers - <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/5039454/Electrical-socket-safety-covers-are-absurd-and-dangerous-say-engineers.html>

ROSPA - <http://www.rospa.com/homesafety/policy/electricity.aspx>