



using electrical equipment outdoors

What are the dangers of using electrical equipment in the garden?

Although electricity makes light work of gardening, wet conditions and physical contact with the ground means that the risk of injury or death from electric shock is greatly increased in comparison to using electrical equipment indoors.

Many garden accidents are the result of careless handling of equipment, lack of concentration and failure to follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. By following simple safety guidelines every time you work in a garden, serious accidents can easily be avoided.

This leaflet has been produced to assist you in avoiding garden accidents caused by faulty or mishandled electrical equipment.

What is the Electrical Safety Council?

The Electrical Safety Council is a consumer safety body supported by all sectors of the electrical industry as well as local and central government. It deals with all electrical safety matters associated with electrical installations and products on behalf of consumers. It is an independent, non-profit making organisation, registered as a charity.

The Electrical Safety Council is a driving force in the field of electrical safety for the protection of consumers, working with other organisations to improve standards and promote best practice.



Tips for working safely in the garden

Always...

- Use an RCD for all outdoor electrical equipment, and regularly check that it is operating correctly by the use of the 'test' button
- Check electrical equipment including plugs and extension leads before use, and if cables and plugs are damaged get them replaced
- Buy good quality electrical equipment from a reputable manufacturer (look for the BEAB label or kitemark safety symbol)
- Wear protective clothing and footwear to increase your protection, particularly in damp conditions
- Take care when digging – electrical, gas and water services may be buried below
- Follow equipment manufacturer's instructions – many accidents result from safety instructions being ignored
- Store electrical equipment in a dry place and safely out of reach of children.

Don't...

- Use electrical equipment in the garden when it is raining
- Clean, adjust or check equipment while it is connected to the electricity supply
- Touch equipment and cables damaged in use without first switching off the electricity supply
- Attempt to repair equipment or electrical installations yourself
- Wash equipment with water. Unplug equipment first and use a dry cloth to clean
- Use electrical equipment whilst barefoot or wearing sandals
- Leave electrical equipment plugged in while unattended.



Why do I need a Residual Current Device (RCD) when using electrical equipment outdoors?

Using an RCD when using electrical equipment outdoors can be a life saver – **without it** if you cut through an electrical lead, a simple job like mowing the lawn could turn into a deadly disaster. An RCD is a safety device that switches off electricity automatically if it detects an earth fault. All equipment when used outdoors, such as lawnmowers, hedge trimmers and other power tools should only be plugged into a socket protected by an RCD. There are several types of RCD but the most commonly found, permanently installed types in a home can be found either in the consumer unit (fusebox) or on a special socket which incorporates RCD protection. For protection against electrical shock, the rated tripping current of this RCD must be less than 30mA. If you haven't got sockets that are RCD protected, or there is any doubt whether the device in the fusebox is suitable and working correctly, you should purchase and use a good quality portable RCD from a reputable manufacturer. Check that any such RCDs are clearly

marked to confirm that they have been manufactured to the relevant British Standard, which is BS 7071, and that their rated current is 13A.

A more permanent and possibly safer solution than using a portable RCD is to get a registered installer to provide RCD protection for all sockets in your home that can be used for outdoor equipment. The provision of RCD protected sockets that can be used for supplying portable equipment outdoors is a requirement of the national safety standard for any new electrical installation. For details of who you should get to carry out any electrical work in your property, please see elsewhere in this leaflet or consult our website.

Whatever the type of RCD you have in your home, it must be regularly tested by use of the 'test' button on the device. This should be done at least every three months, and preferably more frequently, to make sure that it switches off the power immediately. For portable RCDs, these should be tested every time before use. If the RCD does not switch off the supply when the test button is used, the user should seek advice from a registered installer.

sponsored by:

GREENBROOK
ELECTRICAL PLC



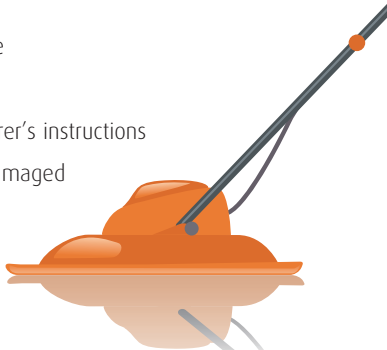
The Electrical Safety Council
www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk
18 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB Telephone: 0870 040 0561

Extension leads, cables and connections

Neglecting to check the condition and correct use of extension leads, cables and connections could result in an electric shock.

For safety make sure they are

- Suitable for outdoor use – weather resistant with moulded connections that prevent moisture seeping in
- Adequately rated to suit the equipment connected
- Uncoiled to prevent overheating
- Kept clean and free from damage
- Replaced if damage is found
- Used according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Routed to prevent them being damaged
- Kept dry



Who should carry out electrical work in my property?

Where there is a requirement to provide RCD protection for sockets in your home this work should be carried out only by a person with the necessary knowledge, skill and experience to do the job. It's easy to make an electrical circuit work – it's far harder to make the circuit work safely.

The Electrical Safety Council strongly recommends you using a registered installer to carry out any work that needs doing.

Registered installers should always work to the UK national safety standard (BS 7671) and inspect and test the electrical work and issue a detailed certificate for all new work carried out before the installation is safe to use.

Always work sensibly and safely when using electrical equipment in the garden.

The Electrical Safety Council is here to help YOU.