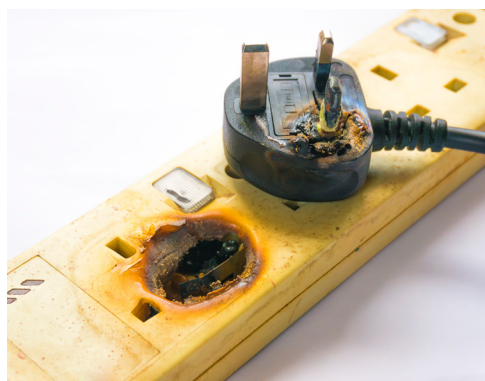


# RM Insight®

## Use of power boards, extension leads and double adaptors



There never seems to be enough standard electrical power outlets to supply the ever-increasing number of electronic devices in the modern workplace. To accommodate this power boards and double adaptors are regularly used. This practice can be extremely dangerous with an increased risk of electrical circuit overload that can damage equipment, cause injury by electrical shock or even start a fire. Each year in Australia hundreds of fires result from the inappropriate use of electrical power boards, extension leads and double adaptors<sup>1</sup>.



The hazards associated with the use of these items largely stem from:

- ▼ a lack of quality in product manufacture (not to Australian Standards)
- ▼ potential to overloading circuits by “piggy backing” devices
- ▼ electrical leads being used in areas that have increased risk of impact/damage and
- ▼ a lack of maintenance (compared to that of fixed wiring systems).

### Reducing the risk

#### Don't use the “piggy backing” method

This is when you plug in a double adaptor on top of another to create additional outlets from a single socket. Every power board has a maximum current rating based upon the design and structure of the power board. It does not factor in additional adaptors.

#### Don't use with appliances that are classified as high wattage

Heaters, gas or electric stoves, kettles & TV's are often classified as high wattage requiring more power to run properly. Many power boards are not designed for this load.

#### Don't use extension leads on a permanent basis

They are designed for temporary installations. Consider permanent wiring installed by a licensed electrician.

#### Select the proper equipment

Only use items provided with an approval certification number or marked with a regulatory compliance mark (RCM). Select power boards that have built-in overload protection.



*Regulatory compliance mark (RCM)*

### Properly maintain any power boards, extension leads and double adaptors

- ▼ Include all power boards, extension leads and double adaptors in the workplace electrical test and tag program. This work should be completed by a suitably qualified individual to the requirements of AS/NZS 3760:2010 In-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment.
- ▼ Always place the power board on its side to prevent the ingress of dust or spilt liquid into unused sockets.
- ▼ All plugs should be firmly set into the socket.
- ▼ Look for damage to power boards, extension leads and double adaptors and replace as necessary.
- ▼ Ensure power boards are positioned away from water, dirt, debris etc. and are freely ventilated.

### Regularly check the ACCC product safety website for recalls

Faulty power boards, extension leads and double adaptors will be listed on the recall section of the website: [www.recalls.gov.au](http://www.recalls.gov.au)

### Consider speaking with your electrician

A suitably qualified electrician should be engaged to expand fixed electrical outlets to accommodate your need. A permanent installation will be provided with relevant circuit protection.

1. Fire & Rescue NSW Fact Sheet – Electrical Power Boards, viewed 07/02/2019<<https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=630>>