

Number 16-01

Safety Alert – Electrical Power Boards

1 BACKGROUND

Recently the carpets were cleaned in the Human Resource Services area of the Chancellery building, following which it was found that some of the power boards that were in use had tripped out due to water from the cleaning process entering the power outlets on the boards.

When the incident was investigated a number of issues relating to the use of electrical power boards were noted which need to be communicated e.g.:

- ✧ Some power boards had no automatic overload protection (cut out for circuit overload);
- ✧ Not many power boards were the preferred type with individual switches for each power outlet; and
- ✧ Some power boards were being used in conjunction with extension cords and/or double adapters.

2 ACTION

- ✧ The immediate problem was rectified by replacement of the affected power boards.
- ✧ Long term, the use of power boards will be discontinued as campus refurbishments provide sufficient general power outlets (GPOs) for workstations e.g. 4 per workstation.
- ✧ As a result of this incident all staff are advised to check their power board (if one is used) and take the following action:
 - If the power board has no overload protection, immediately ask your Administrative support personnel to order a replacement with overload protection. This is the minimum requirement for power board use.
 - The preferred type of power board has overload protection and an on/off switch on each power outlet and this is the type that should ideally be purchased if buying a new power board as it has the best level of protection for users. It can be purchased from the Blackwoods catalogue on TECHOne through the e-Requisitions button from the Main Menu in Purchasing Processes and the part no is: 0086 1670.
 - If power boards are being used in conjunction with an extension cord, first of all see if equipment can be moved so the power board can be plugged directly into GPO. If this is not possible enter a Maximo request for IFS and IT to assess the situation to see whether an additional GPO should be installed so the use of the extension cord can be eliminated.
 - At no time should there be piggy backing of leads or double adapters used (see image #3 on page 2).
- ✧ IFS are instructing the principle maintenance contractor, Broadspectrum, to inform local areas when deep cleaning of floor coverings is to take place. When local areas receive this information the person in charge will ensure that items placed on the floor will be moved to prevent damage by water and chemicals.
- ✧ At no time should staff bring in their own power boards or extension cords to the University. If a power board or extension cord is required it should be ordered through your Administrative support personnel.

POWER BOARDS

1. Power Boards with overload protection – note the black overload protection switch. This type provides the minimum standard for working safely and should ideally be placed or mounted in an upright position to prevent dust from entering the power outlets.



2. Power Board with overload protection and on/off switches for each power outlet



3. Example of piggy backing power adaptors which is a dangerous practice

