

BEAMA Position on socket-outlet 'protective' covers/protectors

BEAMA strongly advises against the use of socket-outlet 'protective' covers.

The British Standard for 13 Amp socket-outlets (BS 1363-2) and 13 Amp adaptors (BS 1363-3) mandates that these products incorporate safety shutters. The use of 'protective' covers can introduce a danger of electric shock¹ and fire by overcoming the safety features designed into the socket outlets and adaptors.

The UK BS 1363 13 Amp fused plug and socket-outlet system has been in use for many years with continuous improvements and is widely acclaimed to be one of the safest plug and socket-outlet systems, providing protection to the user against the risk of electric shock, overheating and fire.

The presence of the plug when engaged in the socket-outlet means there is no risk of the user making direct contact with the internal live parts of the socket-outlet contacts into which the inserted plug pins make electrical contact. The design of the BS 1363 socket-outlet affords protection to the user even when the plug is not inserted. This is achieved by the incorporation of a mechanical shutter which covers the internal contacts of the socket-outlet and prevents access to these without a plug being engaged. The shutter is displaced by the action of one or more plug pins when the plug is inserted into the socket-outlet. The incorporation of socket-outlet shutters is a safety requirement of all UK 13A socket-outlets.

Further supporting information and advice can be found at:

- IET: <http://electrical.theiet.org/wiring-matters/44/wall-socket-protectors.cfm?type=pdf>
- RoSPA: <http://www.rospa.com/homesafety/advice/electricity/policy.html>
- NHS: <https://www.cas.dh.gov.uk/ViewandAcknowledgment/ViewAlert.aspx?AlertID=102494>
- Barnardo's: www.fatallyflawed.org.uk/Barnardo.pdf
- Fatally Flawed: <http://www.fatallyflawed.org.uk>

BEAMA is the long established and respected trade association for the electrotechnical sector. The association has a strong track record in the development and implementation of standards, safety and product performance for the benefit of manufacturers and their customers.

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¹ Fatally Flawed: <http://www.fatallyflawed.org.uk>