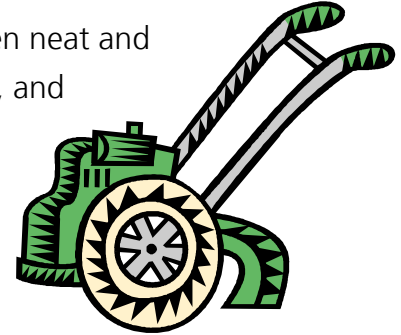


Gardening Safety

Electrical appliances can be a great help in keeping your garden neat and tidy; however, they must be used with care to prevent injuries, and taking basic safety precautions will help ensure your safety. Always use appliances in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.



Sockets and RCDs

You can connect gardening appliances to an indoor or outdoor plug socket. Outdoor sockets are especially convenient if you have an outhouse or greenhouse. Any socket installed outdoors must be waterproof and have a protective switch called a residual current device (RCD). An RCD can detect any leakage of current, and will quickly and automatically cut off the electrical supply in the event faulty equipment or the operator accidentally touching a live part.

Different types of RCDs

There are different types of RCDs, and which one you choose will depend on which socket you want to use to connect garden equipment.

Most electrical work involving mains wiring and fixed appliances, both in the home and garden, must be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations Part P. The best way to ensure compliance is to use a contractor or installer who is registered with a Competent Person Scheme – check your local phone book or service listing.

If you are unsure as to whether the Part P requirements apply, then refer to the Department for Communities and Local Government website (www.communities.gov.uk) or contact your local authority building control department.

- **Socket outlet RCD – when you use the same socket**

Use this RCD if you always use the same socket outlet for your gardening equipment. But it only protects the socket and circuit with which it is used.

- **Portable RCD – when you use different sockets**

Use this RCD if you want to use different sockets for your gardening equipment. Portable RCDs come in two types: an adaptor, and a 13amp plug with a built-in RCD. Always plug portable RCDs into a fixed socket outlet inside the house and **not** into an extension lead.

Before you plug in your equipment, test a portable RCD by pressing the Test button to make sure it has not been damaged.

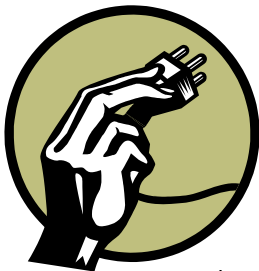
- **RCDs fixed at the meter position – when you want to use any socket**

This type of RCD protects the entire circuit, meaning that you can plug your equipment anywhere and be protected.

Safety tips when using garden equipment

- Always switch off and unplug equipment before checking, adjusting, cleaning or repairing it.
- If you accidentally cut the flex, an RCD may not trip out as there might not have been a current leakage to earth. Never touch the damaged flex until you have switched off at the socket.

Extension leads



The easiest way to get electricity to the garden is to run your extension lead through a door or window and plug it into a socket protected by an RCD inside the house.

If you're using an extension lead fitted with a connector, it's important to make sure the pronged half is fitted to the lead connecting to the equipment and not to the mains. Always fit the extension lead connections together before inserting the plug into the mains socket outlet. It is recommended that you always use a 3 core extension lead.

- Before you switch the appliance on make sure your extension lead is fully unwound, or it could overheat.

- Ensure that your lead has current capacity sufficient to power your appliance but checking the lead for the maximum wattage, and then checking the wattage of your appliance.
- Never use extension leads for permanent installations, such as greenhouse lighting.

Check the wiring of appliances

If you have a ready-fitted plug and it becomes damaged or faulty, you should cut it off and dispose of it. Do not leave it where children could find it and plug into a socket. A damaged plug should be changed immediately as it poses a safety risk.

Guide to gardening safely

Buying electrical appliances

Checking that the electrical appliances you buy carry a CE or BS Kitemark will help to ensure that they are safe to operate.

Dress sensibly

- Wearing wellingtons or rubber-soled boots will increase your protection against electrical shock.
- Never use garden appliances whilst barefoot, or wearing flip-flops or open-toed sandals.
- Never wear loose clothes that could get caught in equipment or trip you and cause an accident.



Keep children and pets away

Never allow young children to operate gardening equipment, and keep pets under control.

Make preparations

- Before plugging in equipment, check that there are no worn or loose parts and that the casing is not damaged. Also check that any safety guards are securely in place.
- Unwind the flex and extension lead carefully, and always check for any damaged insulation.
- Use proper rubber connectors when joining extension leads. Never use 'taped' joints.

Equipment maintenance

- Always switch off at the mains and remove the plug from the socket before you lift, adjust or clean the appliance.
- To clean, wipe equipment with a dry cloth. Never wash with water.

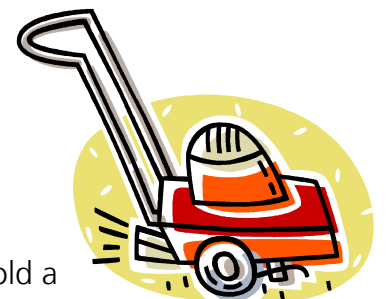
What to do...

- **If the cable becomes caught in the blades**
Before touching the cable always switch the power off at the mains and remove the plug from the socket.
- **If your equipment cuts out during use**
Before you check your equipment, switch off at the mains and remove the plug from the socket.

Using garden appliances safely

Lawn mowers

- Keep the flex behind you. Trail it over your shoulder or hold a short loop of flex in one hand, resting it on the handle while cutting the grass.



- Make sure you cut away from the flex, not towards. Be especially careful with hover-type mowers which can easily drift back over your foot or onto the flex.
- Before you mow, remove any loose stones or debris from the lawn as they could damage your mower or be flicked up and injure you, or someone near you.

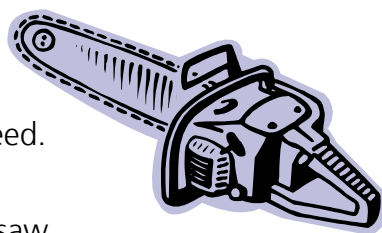
Hedge trimmers

- Keep the trimmer well clear of the flex.
- Always keep both hands on the handles of the hedge trimmer.
- Pass the flex over your shoulder and ensure you work so that the flex is behind you at all times.
- Always have enough flex to allow full mobility.
- Wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from dust and flying debris.

Chainsaws

Always wear protective clothing including strong gloves and safety goggles. Make sure you always read and follow all safety instructions.

- Keep a firm hold on the saw, using both hands.
- Keep your wrists straight with your left thumb positioned beneath the front handle.
- Make sure the timber being cut is securely positioned.
- Don't use the saw above waist height.
- Cut only with the chain running at full speed.
- Keep a firm foothold while operating the saw.



- Pass the flex over your shoulder and ensure you work so that the flex is behind you at all times.
- Always have enough flex to allow full mobility.
- Keep the saw close to your body, with the line of the saw to the right.
- Follow the manufacturer's maintenance instructions.

Self-certification schemes

Competent electricians who can carry out wiring work in accordance with Part P of the Building Regulations will be a member of one of the following self-certification schemes. Look on the website or telephone the scheme to find out electricians in your area.

BRE Certification Ltd Phone: 0870 609 6093 Website: www.partp.co.uk

British Standards Institution Phone: 01442 230442 Website: www.bsi-global.com/kitemark

ELECSA Limited Phone: 0870 749 0080 Website: www.elecsa.org.uk

NAPIT Certification Limited Phone: 0870 444 1392 Website: www.napit.org.uk

NICEIC Group Ltd Phone: 0870 013 0382 Website: www.niceic.org.uk