



# Pins on plug tops

## Insulated pin requirements

*This information sheet explains why pins on electrical plugs must be insulated.*

As a general rule, all electrical appliances and equipment being offered for sale or hire must comply with the 'insulated pins' requirement. However, exceptions apply for plugs rated at 20 A and above (see AS/NZS 3112:2011).

A number of fatalities and incidents have been recorded in which thin metallic items (for example, slats of metal blinds) have contacted the active pins of plugs which were not fully engaged in socket outlets.

To counter this risk, live pins (active and neutral) on 240 volt plug tops and equipment with integral live pins must be insulated for a prescribed length of pin. This means only the tips of the pins engage with the live parts of sockets.

Implementation of this safety initiative commenced during 2000, with a nationally agreed compliance date of 3 April 2005.

Many stakeholders took the necessary steps to comply but some claimed substantial unexpected costs resulting from the changeover to insulated pins.

The scale of costs claimed resulted in most Australian and New Zealand appliance regulators agreeing to requests for temporary relief to allow sales of stocks of plugs with uninsulated pins that still existed on 3 April 2005.

Australian and New Zealand appliance regulators now consider that more than adequate time has elapsed for stakeholders to meet the insulated pin requirements.

Manufacturers, importers, distributors, agents, retailers and hirers are reminded that it is a breach of the *Electricity Act 1945* and regulations that plugs without insulated pins are sold or hired or offered for sale or hire.

**Note:** Energy Safety's Inspectors carry out inspections in the marketplace to ensure the requirements are met.

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