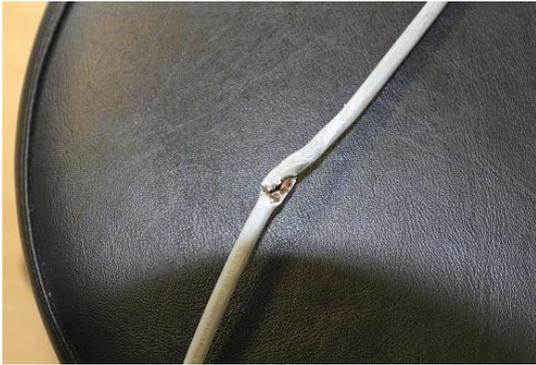


 Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte Health Service Executive	<h1 style="margin: 0;">SAFETY ALERT</h1>		
<b>Ref: SA:001:00</b>	<b>RE: - Electrical Equipment e.g. Treatment Couches, Chairs &amp; Beds - Potential Risk Of Injury From Damaged Electrical Cables</b>		
<b>Issue date:</b>	December 2014	<b>Review date:</b>	December 2016
<b>Author(s):</b>	National Health & Safety Function - Training Team		
<h2 style="margin: 0;">S</h2>	<b>SITUATION:</b> The purpose of this Safety Alert is to highlight the importance of managing potential risks presented by electrical equipment and associated cables.		
<h2 style="margin: 0;">B</h2>	<b>BACKGROUND:</b> <p><b>Figure 1:</b> Illustrates mechanical damage to the insulation of an electrical cable has the potential to cause serious electrical shock or electrocution.</p> 		
<h2 style="margin: 0;">A</h2>	<b>ASSESSMENT:</b> <b>Electrical Cable Hazards:</b> The insulation on electrical cables can become damaged and frayed, exposing internal conductors, which may present a risk to staff, patients, visitor and others. Potential injuries arising from contact with live electricity can be severe and may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electric shock or Electrocution</li> <li>• Burns sustained at the point of electrical contact</li> <li>• Fires caused by overheating, or the ignition of explosive atmospheres.</li> <li>• Secondary injuries as a result of muscle spasms or, for example, falling after an electric shock</li> </ul> <p>A number of factors may cause electrical cables to become damaged or severed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trapping/pinching of the cable, e.g.:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ By contact with moving components of the equipment, e.g. wheels</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

	<p>and brakes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When raising or lowering equipment or its parts, e.g. bed/seat frame, leg support, backrest, headrest, etc</li> <li>● Rolling or resting equipment over/on the cables, e.g. when positioning a bed or patient hoist</li> <li>● Overstretching cabling when repositioning equipment, e.g. during cleaning procedures</li> <li>● Unsafe placement of cables across work areas, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Traffic routes and doorways and under carpets and rugs where cables may be subject to foot, vehicular and/or trolley traffic</li> <li>○ Contact with hot equipment, e.g. heaters and toasters</li> <li>○ On, or along the walls of narrow corridors where cables/plugs may be vulnerable to impact damage, e.g. due to contact with trolleys</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Cabling positioned so that it severely bends at a single point</li> <li>● Incorrect storage of electrical equipment and cabling</li> <li>● Use of equipment and cabling in an inappropriate environment, e.g. wet environment/outdoors</li> </ul> <p>Additional hazards created by electrical cables may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Trip and fall hazard due to a taut or stretched cable positioned close to, or across a walkway</li> <li>● Dislodgement of a plug from a wall socket, which could result in arcing/sparking, resulting in fire or explosion, e.g. where there may be an oxygen rich environment</li> <li>● Extension leads or flexes left in an area which may be accessible to children – risk of electric shock</li> <li>● Overheating of a cable/flex if not fully unwound, or if wrapped around a piece of furniture (e.g. table leg)</li> <li>● Overheating of a cable/flex if placed under too much electrical load</li> </ul>
<p><b>R</b></p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <p><b><u>Service/Department/Ward/Line Managers Actions:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediately undertake a review of the use (working procedures), positioning and condition of electrical equipment and cabling. Faulty or damaged equipment should be removed from use and labelled as described in 6(iv) below</li> <li>2. Ensure risk assessments take into account the risks associated with electrical equipment and cables</li> <li>3. Ensure that equipment/cabling is positioned, checked, used and maintained, etc., so as to avoid risks such as those described in this Alert</li> <li>4. A competent person must undertake periodic inspections and servicing of electrical equipment and cabling as per the equipment manufacturer’s instructions</li> <li>5. A written record must be kept of all inspections, maintenance and servicing of equipment</li> <li>6. Information and instruction should be provided to relevant employees and others regarding:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Hazards and risks presented by electrical equipment and cabling</li> <li>(ii) The safe usage of the equipment as per manufacturer’s instructions</li> <li>(iii) The visual checking of electrical equipment prior to use</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>(iv) The actions to be taken should electrical equipment appear unsafe. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The line manager should be informed immediately</li> <li>○ Equipment must be taken out of use and labelled: “DAMAGED DO NOT USE”</li> <li>○ The relevant competent persons should be contacted to arrange a repair or replacement</li> <li>○ The safety of staff, service users and others shall be maintained at all times</li> </ul> <p>7. All incidents and near misses involving the electrical equipment must be reported and investigated in accordance with the current version of the HSE Safety Incident Management Policy</p> <p><b>All Staff Should:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Observe risk assessments and adhere to safe working procedures and manufacturer instructions</li> <li>2. Undertake a visual inspection of electrical equipment and cables prior to use.</li> <li>3. Report damage/defects to the manager immediately - Do not use damaged/defective equipment (see 6(iv) above)</li> <li>4. Report incidents and near misses to the manager</li> <li>5. Any damaged or faulty equipment is immediately removed from use, labelled and either repaired or replaced as appropriate</li> </ol>
<b>Distribution:</b>	<p>Each Member of the Directorate and National Director HSE                  Each Chief Officer, HSE                  Each Assistant National Director, HR                  Each Employee Relations Manager, HR, HSE                  Each Hospital Group CEO                  Divisional and Corporate Management Teams                  Senior Managers                  Service Managers /Designated Local Managers</p> <p><b>Please ensure that this Safety Alert is brought to the attention of all relevant persons in the workplace.</b></p>
<b>Acknowledgments:</b>	Julie Keegan, Health & Safety Advisor, National Health & Safety Function.