

BS6396:2008 + A1:2015

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In November 2008 the 5th edition of BS6396 extended the scope to include educational furniture and the 2015 amendment added requirements of 30mA RCD protection and the spillage protection for sockets.

All electrical systems and installations in the work environment must comply with the 'Electricity at Work Regulations'. This is a statutory requirement where failure to comply may lead to prosecution and Electrical systems installed in office and educational furniture must meet these regulations. BS6396 was established to provide a specification for the safe installation and use of electrical systems on or in office educational furniture where the electrical system is connected to the mains supply using a 13Amp plug. Where the connection to the supply is not via a 13A plug e.g. direct wired, or via an under floor track connector then BS7671 - The IEE Wiring Regulations - will apply to the installation and individually fused sockets are not Mandatory.

Electrical accessories used in office and educational furniture installations must be manufactured to relevant electrical Standards, as set out in BS6396, as part of the requirements for overall compliance, of the workstation or screen electrical system, to the Standard. Sockets installed in or on office and educational furniture are intended to supply power to equipment whose rating does not exceed 5Amp, the maximum fuse rating allowed in the sockets by BS6396. Most office electrical equipment will run within the 5Amp maximum. This does not include kettles, fan heaters or vacuum cleaners.

Below are some typical examples of office equipment and their running current requirements.

Desk top CPU	2.0 Amp
Workstation CPU	3.0 Amp
Monitor LCD/LED type	max 1 Amp
Lap-top Computer	0.5 to 1.0 Amp
Phone charger	max 0.2 Amp
Desk Lamp max	0.25 Amp
Desk top Laser Printer	2.0 Amp

The 2015 amendment stipulates that where a furniture power distribution system is connected to an existing building socket outlet which does not have residual current device (RCD) protection, the furniture socket outlets shall be protected by means of a 30 mA RCD incorporated in the furniture power distribution system. In addition it stipulates that socket outlets and connectors shall be oriented or provided with a means to prevent the risk of electrical hazards from liquid spillage that can be reasonably expected.

For compliance with BS6396 and the Electricity at Work Regulations all office and educational furniture electrical installations must be tested to ensure their safety before being handed over for use. This applies to reconfigured as well as new installations. Section 7 of BS6396 details the procedure.

Periodic inspection and tests to the same requirements should also be carried out to ensure the continued safety of the office installations. These tests must be carried out by suitably trained personnel and the results documented.

*BS6396 requires that all sockets installed in accordance with the Standard must be individually fused. The diagrams show the maximum number of sockets and their fuse ratings that may be connected to a single 13Amp mains plug feeding from the building supply.

If you have any doubts or concerns regarding present or future electrical installations within office furniture please contact us:
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