



## Safety Alert March 2020

### Electrical shock from disconnecting equipment

**A worker has sustained an electric shock whilst disconnecting equipment.**

#### Background

Whilst decommissioning a microscope from a lab, and attempting to remove the power adaptor plug, the plug snapped off (Photo 1) resulting in part of the plug remaining in the power board (Photo 2). The worker went to see what was in the power board when their hand came near and possibly in contact with the piece in the power board. The worker immediately felt tingling up the left arm and muscle tenderness lasting for the remainder of the day.

#### Cause of Incident

Contact with a damaged plug remaining live in a power board. Power had not been turned off prior to dismantling the microscope system.

The adaptor plug on the microscope power lead was poorly constructed and snapped during removal from the power outlet, leaving the live pins exposed in the power board.



*Photo 1: Power Adaptor Plug*



*Photo 2: Pins remaining in the power board*

#### What was done well

- The piece of equipment had a current test tag in place
- A contracted Electrician was engaged immediately to remove the broken adaptor from the outlet
- The desktop GPO was tested by the electrician and confirmed to be fully functional
- The offending power cable was cut by the electrician to ensure it could not be reused
- Power points were fitted with RCDs.

#### Call for local Areas to take

- Power is turned off (where possible) from the source prior to unplugging any electrical devices.
- Keep well clear of any potential electrical hazards until inspected by a qualified Electrician.
- Be aware of the definitions of a SafeWork NSW Notifiable Incident as found in Appendix A of [HS307 Hazard and Reporting Procedure](#) and escalate to your respective WHS Business Partner/Coordinator as soon as you are aware of the incident.
- Ensure medical treatment is sought following any report of an electric shock.

- Ensure damaged/faulty electrical equipment is isolated from use until inspected/repaired by a qualified Electrician.

**Further Information:**

Contact your Faculty HSE Business Partner or Coordinator  
<http://safety.unsw.edu.au/contacts>

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