

Electrical fittings near cookers, sinks and wash basins

(Withdrawn – January 2024)

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Question

How far should an electrical accessory be located from a gas or electric cooker, hob, kitchen sink, or wash basin?

Considerations

- BS 6172 'Specification for installation, servicing and maintenance of domestic gas cooking appliances' says 'the cable, plug, socket, switched fused spur, double pole switch or control unit shall not be in contact with hot surfaces or directly exposed to products of combustion'.
- Electrical Safety First 'Wiring Regulations Advisory Group' have considered this matter and have given their interpretation of BS 7671 'Requirements for electrical installations' in their frequently asked questions and answers on their website.

Answer

In the absence of any advice in the appliance manufacturer's installation instructions, an electrical accessory such as a socket outlet, switch, control unit, consumer unit etc. should be positioned to enable safe operation and to avoid the harmful effects of heat and steam from cooking activities or splashing from use of a sink or wash basin.

A minimum distance of 100mm, measured horizontally from an electrical accessory to the edge of a free standing cooker or individual hob (see diagram 2) is considered acceptable for the purposes of avoiding adverse effects from using a cooker or hob. An electrical accessory should not be located immediately above a cooker or hob due to the possibility of people reaching over suffering burns or the flexible cable of connected equipment being damaged.

A minimum distance of 300mm, measured horizontally from an electrical accessory and/or consumer unit or distribution board to the edge of the bowl of a sink (see diagram 3) or wash basin opening (see diagram 1) is considered acceptable for the purposes of avoiding splashing from using a sink, or wash basin.

General guidance is to avoid positioning a consumer unit immediately above or alongside a sink and where space exists an accessory should be located beyond a drainer.

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