

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

ELECTRICAL ACCESSORIES IN PARTITIONS TO PROTECTED AREAS WITHIN DWELLINGS

8.1/29 - March 2017

(First Issue)

QUESTION

Is fire protection required to electrical accessories in plasterboard partitions enclosing protected entrance halls/protected stairways situated within the private parts of dwellings?

CONSIDERATIONS

- Partitions to protected halls/protected stairways situated within the private parts of flats and houses up to three floors are required to be 30 minutes fire resisting.
- The installation of electrical accessories may impair the fire resistance of the partition.
- Additional fire protection may be required, depending on the size of the aperture created and whether accessories are placed back to back.
- The Electrical Safety First best practice guide 'Electrical installations and their impact on the fire performance of domestic premises used as single family houses', provides related guidance.

ANSWER

The following installation guidance applies to flush-mounted accessories (including switches, sockets, flex outlet plates, television, data and telephone points etc.) in plasterboard partitions, which enclose protected entrance halls/protected stairways within private parts of dwellings.

Accessories should be installed as follows:

- Where possible back to back accessories i.e. accessories located within the same cavity between two timber or metal studs, should be avoided.
- Where accessories are back to back (possibly at different heights but within the same cavity) the accessory on the side at risk of fire (the room side of the partition) should be fire protected.
- Fire protection is not required to an accessory which does not share a cavity with another accessory.
- An accessory larger than a double socket when installed on the side at risk of fire should be fire protected regardless of whether it shares a cavity with other accessories. This should also apply to consumer units and to individual accessories located within 150mm of each other within the same cavity.

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Acceptable fire protection measures (where 30 minutes fire resistance is required) include:

- Appropriately fire rated back box liners and cover pads that fit over the rear of the back box, or
- An additional layer of minimum 12.5mm plasterboard with appropriate edges seals which fully encase the recessed back box of the accessory, or
- An alternative fire protection method which is supported by manufacturer's test data.

