

## **SAFE USE OF POWER BOARDS**

Legislation in each State of Australia requires that electrical multi-outlet power boards be approved by an Electrical Regulatory Authority before a manufacturer, importer or retailer is able to supply, or offer to supply, power boards to the general public.

This approval process ensures that the design complies with relevant national electrical safety standards, namely:

AS/NZS 3820 - Essential safety requirements for low voltage electrical equipment

AS/NZS 3105 - Approval and test specification - Electrical portable outlet devices.

The standards require that all power boards incorporate minimum safety requirements as well as a circuit breaker to prevent overloading. It should be noted that some older models might not incorporate a circuit breaker and consideration should be given to having them replaced.

Despite their inherent overload protection, the use of multiple or cascaded power boards is no substitute for permanently installed socket outlets (power points or GPOs). Because of their portability and upward facing sockets, power boards may be more prone to damage, contamination and wear and tear than fixed socket outlets, for example mounted on walls.

The OCEI recommends that owners and users of electrical multi-outlet power boards use them in the following way:

- check from time to time to ensure that power board(s) show no obvious signs of damage and that socket contacts firmly grip the inserted plug (that is there is no sloppiness when inserting a plug)
- consider permanently installed fixed socket outlets (power points or GPOs) for long term solution
- do not use power boards outdoors or in dusty or polluted environments such as workshops and building sites
- do not use power boards in locations accessible by infants, children or pets
- do not continue to use any power board that shows damage, pollution or has been wet;
- do not use any power boards in wet areas; and
- always ensure that electrical circuits providing electricity supply for power boards are protected by a safety switch (residual current device).