

Consumers report dangerous incidents with electronic devices to VDE

- **One year of VDE's electricity incident reporting campaign**
- **Particularly frequent was the reporting of incidents with plugs, adapters and power supplies**
- **"White spot" in incident of accidents to be shed light on**

(Frankfurt a. M. 04.07.2023) A year ago, VDE called on people to report dangerous incidents involving electric current on the Internet via our [online portal](#). Since then, numerous consumers have made use of the opportunity and informed us of 61 accidents or near-accidents, i.e. incidents involving electric current, in their household. Whether a broken plug pin of a power supply unit that got stuck in the socket, a burnt-out circuit board in an electrical appliance or a short circuit: near-accidents or incidents in which appliances were damaged or users suffered an electric shock were reported. Potential sources of danger were also pointed out.

Fire or fire hazard due to electrical appliances

26 reports were related to a fire or fire hazard caused by an electrical appliance. Mainly affected were kitchen appliances, chargers and plugs. Some of the appliances and installations were somewhat older, but new appliances were also affected. Main cause for the overheating or also previous damages were predominantly short circuits. However, incorrect handling was also the cause in some cases. In 20 reports, according to the assessment of the reporting persons, there was a risk of electric shock or one person had even suffered a slight electric shock. Plugs, adapters and power supply units were mainly affected. Particularly striking are cases in which pins of plugs have broken off, leaving live residues in the socket. The mechanical strength of these power supplies was insufficient or already severely affected. Fortunately, all reported incidents did not have any serious consequences.

Cheap products often affected

Among the incidents reported to us are also a number of supposedly cheap products purchased from online stores. The defects here also clearly indicate cheap production, because inferior materials were used or the insulation was too thin. However, branded products can also be found among the reported incidents. The defects here, however, are often due to long-term and continuous use. There are exceptions, however. Particularly in the case of plug-in power supplies, the quality does not always appear to be reliable in all price segments. VDE recommends preparing the purchase of an electrical device well. This includes reading reviews or paying attention to safety symbols such as the VDE mark.

Dust and dirt can also be the reason for a short circuit

Daniel Schädel is an electrical engineer and consumer protection expert at the VDE Institute. He has processed most of the reports and contacted the people who reported them in order to clarify the incidents further. For him, the cause of electrical accidents and fires is not always just in the appliance: "Dust and other dirt are often the reason for a short circuit and overheating. When cleaning the house, therefore, electrical appliances should always be considered, and multiple sockets should be vacuumed out regularly, for example." In general, he recommends that electrical appliances, as well as multiple sockets and extension cords, should always be carefully inspected before use and checked to see if any parts are loose or porous. If this is the case, the appliance should definitely no longer be used: "If strange smells or noises arise during operation, then the appliance should definitely be disconnected from the mains immediately." And what to do if the plug pin gets stuck in the socket? "Then the first way is to go to the fuse box to disconnect the socket. The pin should then be pulled out in any case only with insulated pliers."

Continue to report dangerous incidents with electrical current to VDE

Consumers will continue to have the opportunity to send their incidents via www.vde.com/Stromvorfall-melden (in German). VDE will collect them, experts will evaluate the hazards and take them to the appropriate committees, where the hazard potential of specific devices will be further examined.

With this campaign, VDE wants to shed light on the "white spot" in the incident of accidents. This is because there is no reliable knowledge about such dangerous incidents and near-accidents in the home, they are not analyzed in detail, causes and backgrounds are not evaluated. Only fatal and commercial electrical accidents are systematically recorded in Germany. If a person dies, the doctor must report the accident with the death certificate. In the case of incidents in the commercial environment, the employers' liability insurance associations become active, but little is known about all other incidents.

About the VDE Institute

The VDE mark is synonymous with safety and quality in electrical devices, components and systems for more than 100 years. The VDE Institute - a subsidiary of the VDE Group - is a worldwide partner for industry customers, business, government authorities, the electrical trade and consumers. More than 100,000 devices per year are subjected to product, quality and safety tests by the VDE Institutes independent testing engineers before they receive the VDE mark. Around the globe, VDE experts monitor more than 7,000 production facilities.

Cooperation agreements with more than 50 countries ensure that the tests performed by the VDE Institute are internationally recognized. 200,000 types of products with millions of model variants bear the VDE mark worldwide. The VDE Testing and Certification Institute GmbH, a non-profit organization, employs more than 500 people in Offenbach am Main.

For more information, visit www.vde.com/institute

About VDE:

VDE, one of the largest technology organizations in Europe, has been regarded as a synonym for innovation and technological progress for more than 130 years. VDE is the only organization in the world that combines science, standardization, testing, certification, and application consulting under one umbrella. The VDE mark has been synonymous with the highest safety standards and consumer protection for more than 100 years.

Our passion is the advancement of technology, the next generation of engineers and technologists, and lifelong learning and career development “on the job”. Within the VDE network more than 2,000 employees at over 60 locations worldwide, more than 100,000 honorary experts, and around 1,500 companies are dedicated to ensuring a future worth living: networked, digital, electrical. Shaping the e-dialistic future.

The VDE (VDE Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies) is headquartered in Frankfurt am Main. For more information, visit www.vde.com

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