

Safety Alert for Unsafe Cable Reel

A typical portable cable reel is made up of a switched socket outlet enclosed in a reel with a flexible cord and a 13A three-pin mains plug. Cable reels which meet safety requirements are registered with SPRING Singapore and bear the SAFETY Mark on the mains plug and socket outlet, with the statement "for portable cable reel".



Self-assembled portable cable reel

Routine checks by SPRING have found that some cable reels in the market may be unsafe. While the SAFETY Mark was found on the mains plug and socket outlet, it did not carry the "for portable cable reel" statement. (see below)



SPRING also found a similar shortcoming in another Controlled Good – the portable socket outlet. The product also had the SAFETY Mark on the plug and socket outlets but without the "for three-pin portable socket outlet" statement (see below).



Self-assembled portable socket-outlet



Further inspection showed that other than the price tag and the SAFETY Mark, both the portable cable reel and portable socket outlet did not carry the manufacturer's name or trademark, or the electrical rating or safety instructions.

The products were in simple plastic wrap which indicated that they were made up of a registered switched socket outlet and a 13A three-pin mains plug (both are Controlled Goods) but the whole assembly had not been tested, certified and registered with SPRING and were likely to be unsafe.

SPRING then commissioned an independent testing laboratory to conduct product safety tests. Samples were purchased and sent to the lab for testing.

Why unsafe?

The tests revealed that the portable cable reel and portable socket outlet failed to meet the Singapore product safety standards SS 307 (Specification for portable cable reels for domestic and similar purposes) and SS 145 Parts 1 and 2 (Specification for 13A plugs and socket outlets).

The tests also showed that there was no cord anchorage on both the portable cable reel and portable socket outlet. Instead, the flexible cord was secured by tying a knot. A good cord anchorage is necessary to prevent stress to the electrical connections when the flexible cord is subject to pull action.

During the pull test, the cord for the portable socket outlet broke off from the assembly, exposing live wires. Anyone coming into contact with the portable socket could get an electric shock.

More safety issues for the portable cable reel

In one of the tests on the portable cable reel, the temperature of the flexible cord rose to 162.2K, beyond the permissible rise limit of 45K. Burn marks could be seen clearly on portable cable reel after the test.

The tests further showed that the wires used were too small (0.75mm² in diameter instead of 1.25mm²). The power drawn by the portable socket outlet exceeded the permissible limit of the wires used. This resulted in overloading and heating and would likely start a fire.

What Suppliers and Consumers can do?

Suppliers can help ensure that portable cable reels and portable socket outlets meet safety requirements. They should obtain supporting evidence in the form of test reports and Certificate of Conformity to show that the products they sell have met the safety standards, and to register the products with SPRING.

Consumers are advised to stop using the unsafe products immediately.

Consumers should look out for the following when buying appliances:

1. The products should bear the SAFETY Mark with the words “for portable cable reel” or “for portable socket outlet”.



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Always insist on the SAFETY Mark

2. SPRING reminds all consumers to look for the SAFETY Mark when buying Controlled Goods. For more information, please visit <http://www.spring.gov.sg/safety>.
3. Manufacturer or trader name on the product and/or the packaging. This information would assist the consumer to seek redress for any damages in the event of product malfunction.
4. The product model number on the product as it can help the consumer to react quickly to a safety recall and avoid exposure to the faulty or harmful product.