

Safety Advisory

Office of Health, Safety and Security
Office of Corporate Safety Programs, HS-31

Advisory No. 02-F2011

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This safety advisory is issued by the Office of Corporate Safety Programs, HS-31, Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health (FEOSH) Program for the guidance and protection of all Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) employees. If you or your organization is interested in receiving other advisories when issued, please contact the HSS FEOSH office at: 301-903-6991.

Possible Hazard: Potential electrical arcing and shock hazard, as well as potential fire hazard due to metal cover plates for electrical switches, receptacles and outlets becoming loose and slipping or falling, and contacting the prongs on an electrical plug or other conductive parts or devices.

Name of Product(s): No specific product name or manufacturer. Hazard involves any metal cover plates for electrical switches, receptacles and outlets.

Description of Product: Metal cover plates for electrical switches, receptacles and outlets.

Manufacturer: No specific manufacturer identified.

Incidents/Injuries: HS-92 staff has identified a near-miss incident in their office space where a metal cover plate contacted a plug and caused an arc.

Description: The screws on metal cover plates securing them to a metal outlet box or to the yoke of a switch or receptacles act to ground the plate by connecting it to a grounded outlet box. In cases where the screw(s) on metal cover plate securing it to a metal outlet box or to the yoke of a switch or receptacles becomes loose or are missing, a potential exists for the metal cover plate to becoming loose and slip or fall, thus contacting the prongs on an electrical plug or other conductive parts or devices. This may result in electrical arcing which may cause burns and/or electric shocks, and it creates a potential for ignition of combustibles and subsequent fires.

Required Action: Please examine your office space and work areas, and identify any instances where the screws on metal cover plates for either switches or receptacles appear to be loose or where screws are missing. Also, identify and report missing cover plates. A list of these instances should be communicated via email directly to the appropriate Facilities Helpdesk:

Forrestal: (202) 586-6100, e-mail ForFacOpsHelpdesk@hq.doe.gov

Germantown: (301) 903-4005, e-mail GTNFacOpsHelpdesk@hq.doe.gov

Please copy the Office of Resource Management, Sherry Main, sherry.main@eh.doe.gov, and the Office of Corporate Safety Programs, Carol Sikora, carol.sikora@hq.doe.gov, on all such requests for facility maintenance.

Contact: For additional information on this topic, contact Carol Sikora at Carol.Sikora@hq.doe.gov or (301) 903-8483.

