

# Client help sheet 1

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## Electric Shock! What Should I Do?

What to do if you believe someone has had, or is getting, an electric shock

It may not be immediately clear that someone is getting an electric shock. Smoke won't be pouring from their ears! If you think someone is suffering from electric shock, approach with extreme caution.

The first step is to separate the person from the source of electricity as quickly as possible. The best way of doing this is to turn off the supply, for example by unplugging the appliance or by turning the mains off at the fusebox (consumer unit).

If this isn't possible, then try to remove the source of electricity from the person using a piece of insulating material, such as a length of wood.



NEVER TOUCH THE PERSON RECEIVING THE ELECTRIC SHOCK, OR YOU COULD SUFFER ONE TOO.

After removing the person from the source of electricity, if the person is unconscious call for an ambulance immediately. Only those with the necessary knowledge and skill should carry out first aid.

Where the person is conscious and seems well, it is still advisable to monitor their condition, as the effects of an electric shock may not be immediately obvious. In worst case conditions, an electric shock may lead to a condition known as electroporation, where cells within the body rupture, leading to tissue death. Additional problems might include deep-seated burns, muscle damage and broken bones.

Use an RCD. Using an RCD will help to protect you from dangerous electric shocks. Although not a guarantee of absolute safety, it limits the time current can flow through the body if a person comes into contact with a live source of electricity.

We strongly recommend that anyone using electrical appliances in the garden ensures that they are protected by an RCD, preferably one fitted in the main household fusebox (consumer unit). Alternatively, a dedicated RCD-protected socket or a plug-in RCD should be used.

If you or your family feel at risk then please contact a fully qualified electrician

Covering Coventry & Surrounding Areas:

Office: 024 7695 0145

Mob: 07967 696569

Email: [charles@electrical-experts.co.uk](mailto:charles@electrical-experts.co.uk)

Web: [www.electrical-experts.co.uk](http://www.electrical-experts.co.uk)

**SAFETY FIRST:** Before you attempt any work on your electrical system you must isolate properly the circuit you are working on. If you are in any doubt whatsoever then please call a qualified electrician who can advise you accordingly.