

## SAFETY NOTICE

# Charging mobile phones and other electronic devices in hospital

### Patient safety information

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We understand that mobile phones, tablets, laptops and other electronic devices have become an integral part of daily life. They are important to patients to stay in contact with family or friends, keep up to date with the news or just to fill the time.

### Where's the risk?

There has been an increasing number of incidents reported where electronic devices and in particular chargers have overheated and caught fire or been attributed as the cause of fires in the home, the workplace and hospitals.



### What can you do?

If you bring your mobile phone, tablet or similar battery operated device into hospital and expect to need to recharge it, we ask that you bring the original charger for that device (or an equivalent device from the same manufacturer) with you. This is less likely to cause a problem than a generic or replacement charger.

**Please help us to keep you, other patients, staff and visitors to the hospital safe by asking staff before charging any equipment and:**

- only using the manufacturer's designated charger (i.e. a Samsung charger with a Samsung phone or an Apple charger with an Apple device etc.).
- only using the white sockets near your bed or within your room.

#### **Please don't:**

- unplug any hospital equipment
- leave your charger plugged in to the socket when not in use
- use any damaged devices or chargers
- put a device under your pillow, even if not being charged
- leave your device on bed covers or other soft furnishings
- leave devices continuously on charge

**Charging of devices will not be allowed if you are on Oxygen therapy or other medical gases are being used. Staff will be able to charge devices for you in a safe place.**

The charging of e-cigarette/vape devices is not allowed anywhere on hospital property. If you would like advice and support in managing your smoking habits while in hospital please speak with a member of the nursing team.

## Safety Checks



While you are in hospital we will visually inspect your device and charger for any obvious damage.

If there is any apparent damage we will ask you not to use it in the hospital. We will help by asking your family or visitors to bring in another for you.

If you continue to use a damaged or unsuitable device or charger we will remove it, put it in a safe place and ask your relatives or visitors to take it home for you.

If your stay in the hospital is for an extended period or the nursing staff are concerned about your device, a technician will be called to inspect and test the device.

This is called portable appliance testing (PAT). It is extremely rare for his test to cause any damage to a device but if you have any concerns speak to the engineer or the nursing staff at the time.

## A lucky escape – a real incident.

In September 2018, a patient left the ward to visit the café. While away they left their phone charger plugged in and switched on with the phone end of the cable on a paper towel on the bed.

A few minutes later a nurse noticed a small plume of smoke coming from the bed linen. The nurse quickly identified the lead and was able to unplug the charger and raise the alarm.

In this instance it was not the original phone charger but a reputable generic replacement brand

It is estimated that if this had not been noticed a full fire could have developed within 90 seconds, which if allowed to develop, could have destroyed the room.

## Contacts

If you would like any further advice or information please contact:

### Trust Fire Safety Advisors

Tel: **01392 403256**

**[rde-tr.firesafetyadvisors@nhs.net](mailto:rde-tr.firesafetyadvisors@nhs.net)**

For advice about staying safe in your home and to see if you are eligible for a home safety visit contact:



**DEVON & SOMERSET**  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Monday to Friday 9:00 – 16:00  
Call Freephone 0800 05 02 999  
Text 078 00 00 2476  
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