

Electrical Safety First:

- Electrical Safety First is the UK charity committed to reducing the number of deaths, injuries, and fires caused by electricity in domestic settings.

Background:

- There has been a ten-fold increase in online shopping between 2006 and 2020ⁱ.
- Consumers are increasingly using new online marketplaces such as Instagram and Facebook Marketplaces.
- “Brexit” means that the UK has a unique opportunity to redefine its product safety regulations to ensure that consumers are adequately protected when shopping online.

The Government has committed to ensuring:

- That only safe products can be placed on online markets now and in the future.
- The UK is the safest place in the world to be online.
- That the product safety framework is fit-for-purpose.

Findings:

- Electrical Safety First has undertaken a series of investigations into the safety of electrical products sold on online marketplaces.
- One investigation found that 93% (14 out of 15) sampled electrical products sold on online marketplaces were unsafeⁱⁱ.
- Electrical Safety First has also found recalled white goods being sold on online marketplaces, including Facebook Marketplace and eBayⁱⁱⁱ.
- Separate analysis of OPSS research, found that 63% of electrical products sold on online marketplaces were unsafe, with 23% being non-compliant^{iv}.

Consumer Concerns:

- Nearly ¼ of all consumers had bought a counterfeit electrical product when shopping online^v.
- Consumers have a high level of misplaced trust in online marketplaces; 92% of consumers believe the electrical products sold on online marketplaces are safe^{vi}.

Legislative Reform:

- A Bill must be introduced to hold online marketplaces responsible for the products sold on their platforms.
- This needs to recognise that traditional supply chains are outdated and should account for new methods of supply – including e-commerce and m-commerce (conducted on a mobile phone).
- The Bill should ensure that:
 - Online marketplaces should have a duty of care towards consumers.
 - Online marketplaces should have a verification procedure for sellers and a complaints procedure for consumers.
 - Online marketplaces should have to remove unsafe products on their platforms.

ⁱ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/timeseries/j4mc/drsi>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2019/11/online-marketplaces-failing-to-tackle-sale-of-potentially-deadly-electrical-items-as-investigation-reveals-serious-product-failures/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Electrical Safety First – Online Marketplaces: The Evidence and Impact

^{iv} Office for Product Safety and Standards Delivery Report 2019/2020 Appendix – Product Safety

^v Censuwide survey conducted for Electrical Safety First in October 2020.

^{vi} YouGov survey conducted on behalf of Electrical Safety First in January 2021.