ISOLATION AND SWITCHING — 537 AND TABLE 537.4

WHY ISN'T A SOCKET AN EMERGENCY SWITCH?

Table 537.4 is a horrible-looking table — a wall of BS EN numbers. It is also one of the most answerable tables in the book, because it tells you plainly which devices are suitable for **isolation**, for **emergency switching** and for **functional switching**. Learn to read it and a whole family of questions becomes a ten-second lookup.

DEVICE	ISOLATION	EMERGENCY SWITCHING
Circuit breaker	Yes	Yes
BS 1363 socket outlet with plug (switched or unswitched)	Yes	**No**
Cooker control unit / switch	Yes	Yes

The functional switching column, as printed (the On-Site Guide reproduces the table as Table J1, pp.229–231): **fuses No** · **disconnector No** · **switch-disconnector Yes** · **isolating switch Yes** · luminaire connecting device No · luminaire supporting coupler No. A device that can isolate cannot always be used for switching in normal use.

> ✋ **Why a socket outlet isn't an emergency switch.** Because **Table 537.4** says so: it lists a BS 1363 plug and socket-outlet as suitable for **isolation** but **not** for **emergency switching**. Answer these questions from the table. In practice, if the kettle plugged into it has gone live, you **pull the plug**.

That is the distinction the table is drawing: a plug and socket **can** isolate — unplug it and nobody can use that circuit — but it cannot remove the supply from the installation in an emergency.

THE COOKER SWITCH DOES ALL THREE

The switch on a cooker control unit will do **functional switching** (on and off in normal use), **isolation** of everything downstream of it — the outlet plate and the cooker's own connecting cable — and **emergency switching**. That's why it's the example worth remembering: one accessory, three duties.

> **BS 1363 has four parts.**
> BS 1363-1 plugs · -2 socket-outlets · -3 adaptors · -4 fused connection units.

537 · isolation and switching

Table 537.4 · which device suits isolation, emergency switching, functional switching ★

462 · 463.1.1 · isolation and functional switching (Part 4, Part 1)

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