



## Use of Portable Electrical Equipment in the Workplace

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### Approved by

Legal Services	✓ 12.02.16.
Policy Owner	✓ 01.03.16.
JJNCC	✓ 03.12.14

**Note:** By signing the above you are authorising the policy for publication and are accepting responsibility for the policy on behalf of the Chief Constables.

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**Note:** Please send the original Policy with both signatures on it to the Norfolk CPU for the audit trail.

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## Legal Basis

*(Please list below the relevant legislation which is the legal basis for this policy). You must update this list with changes in legislation that are relevant to this policy and hyperlink directly to the legislation.*

### **Legislation specific to the subject of this policy document**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Act (title and year)</b>
	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
	Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
	Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
	Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
	Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
	The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013
	IET Code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment 4th Edition

### **Other legislation which you must check this document against (required by law)**

<b>Act (title and year)</b>
<a href="#">Human Rights Act 1998 (in particular A.14 – Prohibition of discrimination)</a>
<a href="#">Equality Act 2010</a>
<a href="#">Crime and Disorder Act 1998</a>
<a href="#">Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated Regulations</a>
<a href="#">General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018</a>
<a href="#">Freedom Of Information Act 2000</a>
<a href="#">The Civil Contingencies Act 2004</a>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy document identifies the procedure for all staff who wish to use portable electrical equipment on Norfolk & Suffolk Constabulary sites.

## 2. Definition

- 2.1 Portable electrical equipment is any item which has an electric lead (cable or flex) and plug. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is the term used to describe the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure that they are safe to use.

## 3. Formal Inspection and Testing Responsibilities

- 3.1 Formal inspection and testing (see guidance Annex A).
- 3.2 The Facilities Manager in the Joint Estates and Facilities Dept. is responsible for scheduling site visits and recording to the required standard (with exception of ICT server room equipment which will remain the responsibility of the ICT Dept.).
- 3.3 A joint contract for Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies will be in place from 2014.

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## 4. User Responsibilities

- 4.1 Users should undertake a visual check prior to each use (see checklist Annex B). A formal visual inspection and testing by a competent person will also be required at appropriate intervals, depending upon the type of equipment and the environment in which it is used.
- 4.2 Some items may need more frequent testing if they receive frequent or heavy use or are used in hazardous environments, e.g., power tools and extension cables used in workshops. The more often an appliance is used, the heavier the wear and tear, particularly on the flex and plug.

## 5. Management Responsibilities

- 5.1 Heads of Departments must give due consideration to carrying out a risk assessment to establish inspection and testing requirements more frequent than the guidance in Annex A, and must be able to show that individuals will not be put at foreseeable risk, so far as is reasonably practical. The risk assessment should consider:

- Ensure Contractors PAT test sticker/certificate is valid on all equipment used in-service.
- The type of equipment (e.g. portable, hand-held, or transportable).
- The style of use (e.g. continuous, infrequent, rough, static).
- The age of the equipment.
- Whether the equipment is regularly moved or transported and by what means.
- Inspection and test results (i.e., faults found) over at least the previous 2 years.
- The environment in which the equipment is used (e.g. office, workshop, outdoors).
- Foreseeable abuse of the equipment (e.g., by staff, other users).
- Manufacturers' recommendations.

The Joint Health and Safety Unit and/or Joint Facilities Unit should be consulted for advice.

5.2 Battery-operated equipment (less than 20 volts) and other low-voltage equipment (less than 50 volts, e.g. telephone equipment) does not need to be PAT tested, but the manufacturer's guidance on the maintenance of the equipment must be followed.

5.3 Equipment that fails a user visual inspection or formal test should not be used, arrangements should be made with the equipment issuer for repair or disposal and replacement (in accordance with waste disposal procedures and asset tracking procedures).

5.4 Following repair the issuer will arrange retesting before return to use.

5.5 Whilst awaiting repair or disposal such equipment must be clearly marked as faulty and securely stored where practicable.

## **6. Inspection and Testing – New Equipment**

6.1 New equipment should be supplied in a safe condition and not require a formal portable appliance inspection or test. However, a simple visual check is recommended to verify the item is not damaged. If the item does not carry a "CE" mark and/or the item is not fitted with a British Standard plug it is to be tested prior to being put in use.

6.2 If it is suspected that an item is damaged or faulty it must not be used. Return/replacement of the item should be made immediately.

6.3 Arrangements should be made to ensure in-service equipment normally kept away from the building is tested in accordance with the guidance (see Annex A).

## 7. Inspection and Testing – Non-new Equipment

7.1 Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that all non-new portable electrical equipment introduced to their departments is tested before initial use and thereafter against the guidance (see Annex A).

## 8. Record Keeping

8.1 Keeping records of inspection and tests for portable appliances is important in order to provide evidence that equipment is being maintained and to determine if a review of the current assessment is needed.

8.2 The following records are kept:

- A record of individual items formally inspected and/or tested. A sticker or tag will be affixed to the appliance or plug. Detailing:
- Date of inspection
- Equipment ID
- Status of item PASS/FAIL (failed items will clearly indicate the equipment is not to be used)
- Name of inspector/tester
- Electronic records are held by the Joint Facilities Unit and retained for 6 years.

8.3 Test report summaries are sent to the Joint Facilities Unit by the testing contractor. Copies of which are forwarded to individual departments. Responses are required confirming action has been taken to dispose of, or arrange repairs to, failed equipment.

## 9. Use of Private and Personal Electrical Equipment

9.1 Private/personal electrical equipment including mobile phone chargers should only be brought to the workplace if there is a specific work-related justification for its use in the workplace. Bear in mind that such use creates a demand on publicly-funded resources in the form of management requirements (as per this Policy) and the use electricity.

9.2 Staff are only permitted to bring their own electrical equipment into work if their line manager has given permission. If the line manager has given permission, the manager is then responsible for ensuring the requirements of this document are followed.

9.3 Staff may be charged for the testing or repair of personal equipment that has been permitted on site.

## 10. Appliances with a Heating Element

10.1 Heaters required to supplement building heating systems are permitted only if authorised and recorded through Estates & Facilities.

## 11. Use of Extension Cables and Adapter Blocks

### 11.1 Extension Cables

- The use of extension cables should be avoided where possible, through the use of socket outlets.
- If extension cables are used, they must be tested and inspected.
- Extension cables must not be connected together (i.e., an extension cable feeding another extension cable 'daisy chaining').
- The manufacturer's guidance on loading (i.e., the total amperage of appliances that can be plugged in) must be followed.

### 11.2 Adapter Blocks

- Multi-plug adapters ('adapter blocks' that fit directly into a socket outlet) must **not** be used. In addition to the risk of overloading, adapter blocks may cause mechanical damage to the socket due to the weight of the adapter block and plugs fitted into it.

## 12. Annex A: Frequency of Inspection and Testing

Guidance on frequency of Inspection and Testing of Equipment (IET Code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment Edition 4)						
Equipment Environment	Type of Equipment	User Checks	Class I (Earthed)		Class II (not earthed)	
			Formal Visual Inspection (Note 1) Recorded	Combined Inspection and Testing Recorded	Formal Visual Inspection (Note 1) Recorded	Combined Inspection and Testing Recorded
Construction Sites 110 V Equipment (Note 1)	S – Stationery Equipment	None	1 month	3 months	1 month	3 months
	IT – Information Technology Equipment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	M – Movable Equipment (Note 2)	Weekly	1 month	3 months	1 month	3 months
	P – Portable Equipment (Note 2)	Weekly	1 month	3 months	1 month	3 months
	H – Hand-held Equipment (Note 2)	Weekly	1 month	3 months	1 month	3 months
Industrial including Commercial Kitchens (Note 1)	S – Stationery Equipment	Weekly	None	24 months	None	24 months
	IT – Information Technology Equipment	Weekly	None	24 months	None	24 months
	M – Movable Equipment	Before Use	6 months	12 months	6 months	12 months
	P – Portable Equipment	Before Use	6 months	12 months	6 months	12 months
	H – Hand-held Equipment	Before Use	6 months	12 months	6 months	12 months
	F – Fixed Equipment	3 months	12 months	24 months	12 months	48 months
Offices and Shops (Note 1)	S – Stationery Equipment e.g. refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, vending machine and photocopier	None	24 months	60 months	24 months	None
	IT – Information Technology Equipment e.g computer monitors, data terminal equipment, power packs, mains powered telecommunications equipment, mobile phone charging units, projectors, printers, scanners and televisions.	None	24 months	60 months	24 months	None
	M – Movable Equipment e.g food processor, kettle, desk fan, hot plates.	Weekly	12 months	24 months	24 months	None
	P – Portable Equipment	Weekly	12 months	24 months	24 months	None
	H – Hand-held Equipment e.g power drill, hedge cutter, soldering iron, hair drier	Before Use	12 months	24 months	12 months	None
	F – Fixed Equipment	3 months	24 months	48 months	24 months	None

### Notes to Table:

1. Hired equipment, in use for periods in excess of 1 week, should be included on an equipment register and a risk assessment carried out to determine the future frequency of inspections and testing, unless the equipment is covered by a supplier's lease and maintenance contract, providing the maintenance contract is robust and satisfactory.

2. 110 V earth centre-tapped supply. 230 V portable or hand-held equipment is required to be supplied via a 30 mA RCD and inspections and tests may need to be carried out more frequently (e.g., a check of a portable RCD via its manual test button).

It is normally not necessary to test new items of equipment as the manufacturer has already tested them.

"Battery-operated equipment less than 40 volts require no visual or in-service inspection and testing. Note that specific guidelines for battery drills etc., are not within the scope of this procedure."

The information on suggested initial frequencies given in the table is more detailed and specific than HSE guidance, but is not considered to be inconsistent with it.

### 13. Categories of Portable Electrical Equipment

#### Hand-held Equipment

A hand held appliance or equipment is portable equipment intended to be held in the hand during normal use e.g. power drill, hedge cutter, soldering iron, hair drier.

This is the most hazardous type of equipment as current can flow from hand to hand and will pass close to the heart. Appliances are also gripped so the operator will find it almost impossible to let go of an appliance under shock conditions. The situation could be worse where a person is working hard and sweating or working outdoors in wet conditions. Moisture will reduce the contact resistance and a large current could flow.

#### Movable Equipment

Mobile equipment is intended to be moved while in operation e.g. vacuum cleaner, floor polisher, or an appliance that can easily be moved from one place to another e.g. food processer, kettle, desk fan, hot plates.

#### Stationary Equipment

Equipment that has a mass greater than 18kg and is not provided with carrying handles e.g. refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, vending machine and photocopier.

#### IT Equipment

IT equipment includes computer monitors, data terminal equipment, power packs, mains powered telecommunications equipment, mobile phone charging units, projectors, printers, scanners and televisions. Plugs and leads to this equipment should be tested but the equipment itself may not be suitable for testing. Server room equipment will be subject to appropriate testing intervals overseen by the ICT Dept.



## 14. Annex B: User Checks

The person using the equipment should be encouraged to look at it before use and check for signs that it may not be in sound condition, for example:

- damage (apart from light scuffing) to the supply cable, including fraying or cuts;
- damage to the plug or connector, e.g. the casing is cracking or the pins are bent;
- inadequate joints, including taped joints in the cable;
- the outer sheath of the cable is not effectively secured where it enters the plug or the equipment. Evidence would be if the coloured insulation of the internal cable cores were showing;
- the equipment has been subjected to conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g. it is wet or excessively contaminated;
- damage to the external casing of the equipment;
- loose parts or screws;
- evidence of overheating (burn marks or discolouration);
- the electrical equipment is being used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- the equipment is suitable for the job;
- there has been any change of circumstances;
- the user has reported any issues.

These checks also apply to extension leads, plugs and sockets. A user check should be made when the equipment is taken into use and during use. Any faults should be reported to the relevant manager and the equipment taken out of use immediately. Managers should take effective steps to ensure that the equipment is not used again until it is repaired by a person competent to carry out the task (e.g. the defective equipment could be labelled as 'faulty' and if it has a rewirable plug this could be removed).

User checks should **not** include taking the equipment apart.