



## Electrical Safety Policy

### 1. Introduction

Town Council has a duty to protect its staff, elected members and other people who use the Town Council's premises from the risk of electrical injury caused by electrical installations, use of fixed equipment and use of portable electrical appliances.

### 2. Policy Statement

All reasonable steps will be taken to secure the health and safety of staff and elected members in the Council who use, operate, or maintain electrical equipment. Town Council acknowledges that working with electrical equipment can be hazardous and the intention is to eliminate risks wherever possible.

A risk assessment is carried out for all Council premises and identifies electrical hazards and control measures.

### 3. Legal Compliance

Town Council is committed to ensure that all electrical equipment and installations meet the safety requirements of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 set out the need for electrical systems and equipment to be:

Constructed of materials that are suitable (both mechanically and electrically)

Regularly, effectively, and safely maintained.

Afforded suitable protection against damage.

Correctly installed and used.

Provided with suitable earthing and protective devices.

Provided with a suitable physical means for disconnecting and isolating the supply.

Covered by safe systems of work, including instruction and training.

#### 4. Policy Content

When a problem arises related to electricity at work, staff and elected members must inform the Executive Officer or the nominated responsible person immediately and they will take all necessary measures to investigate and remedy the situation.

To protect staff and elected members and others from the risks from using fixed and portable electrical equipment the Council need to:

- Consider all work activities and identify where and when staff and elected members may be exposed to risks to their health and safety from fixed or portable electrical equipment.
- Assess the risks from that exposure to fixed and portable electrical equipment, identifying control measures in place and any additional measure that may be required to avoid risk.
- Consider relevant issues including:
  - The competence of employees or contractors who install or maintain electrical equipment.
  - Inspection of fixed electrical installations as prescribed by the IET Wiring Regulations (18th edition) BS 7671.
  - The maintenance of electrical installations between inspections.
  - The maintenance and inspection of portable electrical equipment.
  - Using battery powered hand tools.
  - Whether hydraulic or pneumatic tools might be safer.
  - Reducing the operating voltage.
  - Residual current devices.
  - Use in flammable or explosive areas; use in wet and adverse conditions.
  - Equipment used by mobile workers.
  - Use of trailing cables.
  - Purchase robust equipment suitable for the environment in which it is to be used.
  - Arrange for the routine testing and inspection of portable electrical equipment.
  - Develop a procedure based on these considerations.
  - Keep a written record of significant risk assessments and the control measures and systems of work adopted.
  - Make sure that all staff and elected members understand the procedures and arrangements. Consider whether they need any training.
  - Explain procedures and arrangements and ensure they are understood and provide training where necessary.
  - Implement the procedure and ensure that it is followed in practice.
  - Monitor and review the operation of this procedure from time to time and after any electrical incident, make changes identified as beneficial or necessary.

To fulfil this duty, the following conditions will apply:

- All electrical equipment in use will be maintained to a satisfactory standard to minimise risk to employees.
- The appropriate use of residual current devices which automatically switch electricity off if there is a fault should be employed.
- Suitable inspection checks will be carried out on all electrical equipment (fixed, portable or transportable) so that it does not constitute a risk to staff, elected members or any other persons. These tests will be carried out by suitably qualified and competent external contractors. A record will be kept of each test and a tagging system will be used on all portable electrical equipment.
- No person may carry out work on any electrical equipment, including the fitting of plugs, fuses, and lamps, unless they have been suitably trained. Only competent persons trained and authorised by the organisation will be allowed to carry out these tasks.
- It is the responsibility of the Executive Officer to ensure that any employee or contractor undertaking work on electrical equipment is suitably qualified and classified competent by the organisation.
- Work on or near live conductors will not be permitted without the authorisation of the responsible person.
- All reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure that live conductors are isolated before work commences.
- Employees and/or contractors who work on or use electrical equipment should always ensure that all:
  - Electrical equipment is visually inspected for faults before use.
  - Portable electrical equipment has a valid and current test label attached to them (PAT).
  - Leads and extension leads have a valid and current test label attached to them (PAT).
  - Extension leads will be covered in walkways, so they do not present a trip hazard.
- Any electrical equipment found to be faulty will be taken out of service and clearly marked: DO NOT USE — FAULTY.
- Staff will be expected to carry out visual inspections prior to using any electrical equipment.
- Wherever possible, trailing leads will be restricted from use. Any trailing lead in use will be tested separately. Visual inspections will be carried out before use and on a regular basis.
- No personal mains-powered equipment will be used on any of the organisation's premises unless permission has been given for its use and the equipment has evidence of a current valid test (displayed on an adhesive label on the lead or the equipment itself).

## 5. Responsibilities

### Employers Duties

Employers must:

- Control the risks of death and injury from electrical appliances and systems.
- Control the risks of fire and/or explosion from electrical appliances and systems.
- Provide and maintain safe electrical equipment.
- Ensure that all work with and/or on electrical appliances, systems or plant is carried out in a safe manner.
- Provide for isolation of electrical appliances so work can be safely carried out, including precautions such as adding a circuit breaker to prevent inadvertent reconnection of the supply.
- Not install electrical equipment if its strength and capability may be exceeded.
- Ensure all people working on electrical systems are competent or adequately supervised.
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### Employees Duties

Staff and elected members are required to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others possibly affected by their activities at work.
- Co-operate with their employer's health and safety arrangements.
- Report faulty or damaged appliances.

## 6. Training

All staff and elected members will be trained in general health and safety awareness on induction. This will include awareness of electrical safety and of this policy. Staff will be trained in basic visual inspection of electrical devices.

Staff will be trained to check that:

- Plugs are not damaged; cables are properly secured and there are no internal wires visible.
- The lead/cable is not frayed or damaged and that it has not been repaired with insulating tape or unsuitable connector.
- There is no physical damage to the appliance, i.e. dents or cracks.
- There are no burn marks, scorching or staining which may be signs of overheating.
- Electrical sockets are not loose, cracked, damaged by heat or in any way unsafe.

## 7. Reporting

All accidents or "near-miss" incidents involving electricity or electrical equipment should be reported and documented.

## 8. Portable Electrical Appliances

A regime of equipment maintenance supported by user checks and regular visual inspections by competent persons should ensure that electrical equipment is kept safe to use and most faults are detected before they cause an accident. However, some faults cannot be detected by simple visual inspection and will require some form of electrical testing. In many cases this is combined as a visual inspection and test and referred to as a portable appliance or PAT test.

The level of inspection and testing required is dependent upon the risk of the appliance becoming faulty, the type of use it receives and the environment in which it is used.

PAT testing will include checking:

- The correct polarity of supply cables.
- The correct fusing.
- The effective termination of cables and cores.
- The suitability of equipment for its environment.

The Health Safety Executive (HSE) states that combined inspection and testing requires a greater degree of competence and electrical knowledge than for inspection alone. For this reason, PAT testing is often completed by a suitably qualified and insured contractor. However, the HSE specifies that testing does not need to be done by a qualified electrician and can be completed by a member of staff provided they are suitably trained and equipped. It is the employer's duty to make sure that they are competent for the work they are to carry out.

Typical items of portable and transportable appliances used for work are as follows.

- All hand-held mains-powered tools including drills, soldering irons, pressure washers, hot air guns, e.g., paint strippers, heat shrink guns, plastic welding tools.
- Office equipment including computers, monitors, printers, fax machines, photocopiers, shredding machines, and vending machines.
- Kitchen appliances (white goods) including fridges, freezers, microwaves, ovens and kettles.
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All Portable Electrical Appliances shall be tested at regular intervals by a portable appliance tester. For home-based workers a visual inspection by the user is required until equipment cables are required to be brought in for testing by the portable appliance tester.

Any defects or problems must be reported to the user's line manager and the equipment not used until it has been replaced or fixed.

It is often believed that PAT tests must be completed on all equipment every year. However, there is no requirement in law to perform PAT tests annually. The HSE states that testing is justified:

- whenever there is reason to suppose the equipment may be defective and this cannot be confirmed by visual examination
- after any repair, modification, or similar work
- at periods appropriate to the equipment, the manner and frequency of use and the environment.

This table is for guidance only and is relevant to low-risk environments.

<b>Equipment/Environment</b>	<b>User Checks</b>	<b>Formal Visual Inspection</b>	<b>Combined Inspection and Testing</b>
Battery operated (less than 20 volts)	No	No	No
Extra low voltage (less than 50 volts) e.g. telephone equipment, low-voltage desk lights	No	No	No
Information Technology e.g. desktop computers, VDU screens	No	Yes 2–4 years	No if Class II — otherwise up to 5 years
Photocopiers, fax machines, etc and rarely moved	No	Yes 2–4 years	No if Class II — otherwise up to 5 years
Class II: not hand-held; moved occasionally e.g. fans, table lamps, slide projectors	No	Yes 2–4 years	No
Class II: hand-held: e.g. floor cleaners	Yes	Yes 6–12 months	No
Class I: e.g. electric kettles	Yes	Yes 6–12 months	Yes, 1–2 years
Cables (leads) and plugs connected to the above. Extension leads (mains voltage)	Yes	6 months to 4 years dependent upon type of equipment connected to	Yes, 1–5 years dependent upon type of equipment connected to

A full table of suggested testing frequencies is included in HSG107 (Third edition) Maintaining Portable Electrical Equipment, published by the HSE in 2013.

There is no legal requirement to label equipment as having passed a PAT test. However, many employers favour such a system, writing on the label the date of passing and the date when the next test is due.

### 8.1 Portable Appliance User Visual Inspection

A visual inspection of portable appliances will detect the majority of defects that can cause danger.

The typical defects to look for are:

- Damage to cable coverings: cuts and abrasions (apart from light scuffing)
- Damage to plugs casing cracked or pins bent.
- Non-standard joints in cables: taped joints, connector blocks
- Outer covering (sheath) of the cable not being gripped where it enters the plug or the equipment (look to see if the coloured insulation of the internal wires is showing)
- Equipment being used in conditions where it is not suitable: wet or dusty environments.
- Damage to the outer covers of the equipment or obvious loose parts or screws
- Overheating: burn marks or staining.

### 9. Competent Person

Any electrical work should be carried out by a competent person. Those who wish to undertake electrical testing work would normally be expected to have more knowledge and to be able to demonstrate competence through the successful completion of a suitable training course. Work which requires technical knowledge and experience, e.g. rewiring, should be carried out by a qualified electrician.

If there is no one competent within the organisation to carry out the work, then contact an electrician.

An electrician can demonstrate competence to perform electrical work if they have successfully completed an assessed training course which has included the type of work being considered and was run by an accredited training organisation. A successfully completed electrical apprenticeship, with some post apprenticeship experience, is a good way of demonstrating competence for general electrical work.

### 10. Review and Revision

Regular checks of accident and “near-miss” incidents as well as annual auditing of the organisation’s management systems for inspection, maintenance and use of electrical equipment should be conducted by the responsible person to help to identify whether the procedures for working with electrical equipment are sufficient.