

EC SAFETY SOLUTIONS NEWSLETTER



Topic of the Month – Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

August 2024

Welcome

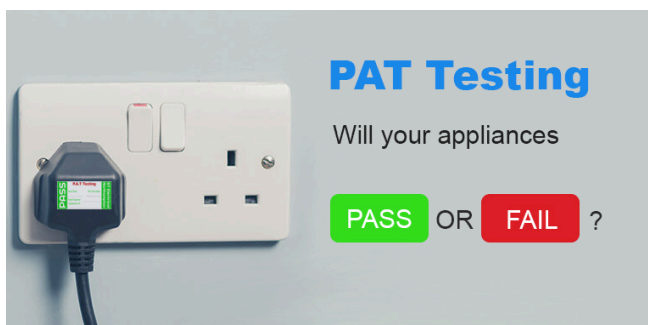
At EC Safety Solutions, we are dedicated to ensuring your workplace is safe and compliant with the latest regulations. This month, we focus on the essential topic of Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

As always, we hope you find this newsletter useful and welcome any feedback you may have. We would also like to encourage readers to actively contribute to the newsletter by providing company updates or by sharing your good news stories or safety initiatives.

Introduction:

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is the term used to describe the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use. It includes both a visual inspection by the user and formal testing of the equipment by a competent person at regular intervals. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 require that any electrical equipment that has the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition. However, the Regulations do not specify what needs to be done, by whom or how frequently. Confused? hopefully this newsletter will help clear things up and dispel the myths around PAT

Stay informed, stay safe, and prioritise safety in the workplace.



Why is PAT Important?

- 1. Safety First:** PAT is to prevent electrical incidents and ensure the safety of users. Faulty appliances can cause electric shocks, fires, and other hazards.
- 2. Legal Compliance:** Employers have a legal obligation to ensure that electrical equipment is safe. Regular PAT testing helps meet these legal requirements and avoid potential enforcement action.
- 3. Minimise Lost Time:** Identifying and repairing faulty equipment before it fails can prevent unexpected downtime and ensure smooth business operations.
- 4. Insurance Requirements:** Many insurance companies require PAT testing as part of their policy terms. Regular testing can prevent issues with claims in the event of an accident.

Who Needs Portable Appliance Testing?

Portable Appliance Testing is necessary for all businesses and organisations that use electrical equipment, including but not limited to:

- Offices and Retail Spaces
- Construction Sites
- Schools and Educational Institutions
- Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities
- Hospitality Industry

Steps involved in Portable Appliance Testing:

- 1. Visual Inspection:** Checking the appliance for any obvious signs of damage, wear, or misuse.
- 2. Combined Inspection and Testing:** Using specialised equipment to test the appliance for electrical safety.
- 3. Record Keeping:** Maintaining a log of the above tests, results, and any actions taken. (although not a legal requirement is considered best practice)



EC SAFETY SOLUTIONS NEWSLETTER



Topic of the Month – Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) August 2024

What can you do to help

How often should you test

Determining the frequency of inspection and testing is a matter of judgement by the duty holder, and should be based on an assessment of risk. The HSE have produced a table for suggested PAT intervals, as highlighted in Table 1.

As you can see the frequency of PAT testing depends on the type of equipment and the environment in which it is used. High-risk environments or frequently used equipment may require more regular testing.

ECSS Suggested Frequency Guidelines:

- **Construction Equipment:** Every 3 Months
- **Handheld Appliances:** Every 6 months
- **Stationary Equipment:** Annually
- **IT Equipment:** Every 2 years (if approved by your insurance provider)

Table 1 Suggested initial maintenance intervals

Type of business	User checks	Formal visual inspection	Combined inspection and test
Equipment hire	N/A	Before issue/after return	Before issue
Battery operated equipment (less than 40 V)	No	No	No
Extra low voltage (less than 50 V ac), telephone equipment, low-voltage desk lights	No	No	No
Construction	110V equipment	Yes, weekly	Yes, before first use on site then 3-monthly
	230V equipment	Yes, daily/every shift	Yes, before first use on site then monthly
	Fixed RCDs	Yes, daily/every shift	Yes, before first use on site, then 3-monthly (portable RCDs – monthly)
	Equipment site offices	Yes, monthly	Yes, before first use on site then yearly
Heavy industrial/high risk of equipment damage (not construction)	Yes, daily	Yes, weekly	Yes, 6–12 months
Light industrial	Yes	Yes, before initial use then 6-monthly	Yes, 6–12 months
Office information technology rarely moved, eg desktop computers, photocopiers, fax machines	No	Yes, 2–4 years	No if double insulated, otherwise up to 5 years
Double insulated <input type="checkbox"/> (Class II) equipment moved occasionally (not hand-held), eg fans, table lamps	No	2–4 years	No
Hand-held, double insulated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Class II) equipment, eg some floor cleaners, some kitchen equipment	Yes	Yes, 6 months – 1 year	No
Earthed (Class I) equipment, eg electric kettles, some floor cleaners	Yes	Yes, 6 months – 1 year	Yes, 1–2 years
Cables, leads and plugs connected to Class I equipment, extension leads and battery charging equipment	Yes	Yes, 6 months – 4 years depending on type of equipment it is connected to	Yes, 1–5 years depending on the equipment it is connected to

Is Portable Appliance Testing Compulsory?

No, The law simply requires an employer to ensure that their electrical equipment is maintained in a safe condition in order to prevent danger. It does not say how this should be done or how often. Having said that it is accepted that PAT can be an important part of an effective maintenance regime giving employers confidence that they are doing what is necessary to help them meet their legal duties and keep their staff and premises safe from electrical failure.

Useful Resources:

The [Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#) is the key legislation governing the use of electrical equipment in the workplace. It requires that any electrical equipment that has the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition. The [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) places a duty of care on employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the public.

The [BSI Code of Practice](#) for In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment (BS 7671) provides detailed guidance on how to carry out PAT testing.

By following these guidelines, we can maintain a safe and compliant workplace, by protecting everyone's health and well-being.

Remember: We can organise Portable Appliance Testing at a reduced rate for retained clients. You can purchase [Electrical Safety Awareness eLearning courses direct from our Website](#)

Do You Need To Test New Equipment

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.

EC Safety Solutions Updates:

- 42 x Construction site inspections
- 18 x Office compliance audits
- 7 x Emergency first aid courses
- 2 x Mental health first aid courses
- 35 x Face Fit Tests conducted
- 2 x Manual Handling courses
- 4 x new clients

In the News

- [Recycling company fined £3m after one man died and another seriously injured](#)
- [£240,000 fine for company after fall left man paralysed](#)
- [Council fined as school technician loses finger](#)
- [Charitable trust fined following death of volunteer](#)
- [Engineering firm fined after employee sustains serious injuries at HS2 site](#)
- [Ten HSE stories you might have missed this summer](#)

www.ecsafetysolutions.com