

Introduction to P.A.T.

Pat testing or portable appliance testing is an important part of any health & safety policy. This page is intended as a guide to both the legal implications and to the technical requirements.

The Health & Safety Executive states that 25% of all reportable electrical accidents involve portable appliances. The Electricity at Work Regulations place a legal responsibility on employers, employees and self-employed persons to comply with the provisions of the regulations and take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that no danger results from the use of such equipment. This in effect requires the implementation of a systematic and regular program of maintenance, inspection and testing. The Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) places such an obligation in the following circumstances:

1. Where appliances are used by employees.
2. Where the public may use appliances in establishments such as hospitals, schools, hotels, shops etc.
3. Where appliances are supplied or hired.
4. Where appliances are repaired or serviced.

The level of inspection and testing required is dependant upon the risk of the appliance becoming faulty, which is in turn dependant upon the type of appliance, the nature of its use and the environment in which it is used.

The Institution of Electrical Engineers publishes the "Code of Practice for In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment" (ISBN: 0-85296-776-4). This guide forms the basis for portable appliance testing in the U.K.