

<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDANCE REGISTER</b>		<b>Guidance</b>	<b>G003</b>
 <b>PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>Portable Appliance Testing Guidance</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>1</b>
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### Introduction

The following guidance provides additional advice and support to colleagues in the interpretation of Aberystwyth University's Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Policy. This document should not be considered in isolation, and should be considered in conjunction with the Policy document.

### Key Considerations

Portable Electrical Appliances are generally considered as anything moveable with a plug e.g. kettle, till, computer, pressure washer etc.

The key considerations for all electrical appliances are:

- The equipment has to be well maintained by competent staff;
- Visual inspections undertaken regularly – this is the best way of detecting faults;
- Undertaking formal portable appliance testing – frequency depends on many factors e.g. age of equipment, how often it is used, type of equipment;
- It is important to keep records, and/or mark equipment to show that it has been tested.

### Responsibilities

Each Faculty or Professional Service Department is responsible for the testing of their own portable electrical appliances. In accordance with best practice, all potable electrical equipment should be subject to annual testing.

The arranging of Portable Appliance Testing can be organised in one of two ways:

1. The Faculty or Professional Service Department may arrange for a competent external contractor to undertake the Portable Appliance Testing of their electrical items;
2. The Faculty or Professional Service Department may arrange training to ensure that a competent member of staff undertake the Portable Appliance Testing of their electrical items.

When Faculties or Professional Service Departments are undertaking their own Portable Appliance testing, a Portable Appliance tester, along with an interactive training DVD, is available for loan from the Health, Safety and Environment Team. Colleagues should contact the Health, Safety and Environment Team at [hasstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:hasstaff@aber.ac.uk) or on extension 2073 to make arrangements for the equipment loan.

### User Checks

User checks should be undertaken before any electrical equipment is used, while it is disconnected. Things to consider include:

- damage to the lead including fraying, cuts or heavy scuffing, e.g. from floor box covers;
- damage to the plug, e.g. to the cover or bent pins;
- tape applied to the lead to join leads together;
- coloured wires visible where the lead joins the plug (the cable is not being gripped where it enters the plug);
- damage to the outer cover of the equipment itself, including loose parts or screws;

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- signs of overheating, such as burn marks or staining on the plug, lead or piece of equipment;
- equipment that has been used or stored in unsuitable conditions, such as wet or dusty environments or where water spills are possible; and
- cables trapped under furniture or in floor boxes.

It is important to continue to carry out user checks on electrical equipment that has been tested. This is because portable appliance testing can only give an indication of the safety of an appliance at the time of the test and does not imply that the item will be safe for a further period of time.

### Visual Inspections

To carry out visual inspections, colleagues will need to know what to look for and must also have sufficient knowledge to avoid danger to themselves and others. Training will be required to equip staff with some basic electrical knowledge to carry out visual inspections competently.

As part of the visual inspection, it should be considered whether:

- 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; and
- the user has reported any issues.

### Additional considerations to ensure the safety of electrical equipment

- Encourage colleagues to look at the supply cable to the electrical equipment before they use it (user check).
- Encourage colleagues to look at electrical equipment before they use it (user check).
- Make sure that all portable equipment is visually inspected at initial intervals which could be between six months and four years, depending on the type of equipment.
- Arrange for equipment that is not double insulated to have a portable appliance test (including leads) at least annually, depending on the type of equipment.
- Ensure that damaged or faulty equipment is recognised, removed from use without delay and either:
  - repaired by someone competent (i.e. with suitable training, skills and knowledge for the task to prevent injury to themselves or others); or
  - disposed of to prevent its further use – consult your local authority about arrangements for disposing of electrical equipment.
- Review the maintenance system to determine whether you could decrease or increase your inspection and/or testing intervals. You may find it useful to keep records of all inspections and tests, and to label equipment with the result and date of the test, but there is no legal requirement to do either of these things.

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and Further Information

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) frequently asked questions relating to portable appliance testing are available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq-portable-appliance-testing.htm>.

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The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) *Maintaining portable electric equipment in low-risk environments* document is available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.pdf>.

Additional information relating to electrical equipment, including a socket overload calculator, is available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/proc-prac/electricity/>.