

Toolbox Talk

Portable Appliance Testing



What?

- Portable equipment is a term used for movable equipment in the workplace and includes such things as power tools, grinders, and floor cleaners
- Extension leads, plugs and sockets, and cord sets that supply portable equipment, are also classed as portable equipment because they operate in the same environment and are subject to the same use as the equipment they supply
- Portable Appliance Testing or a PAT test is the process of checking an electrical appliance for safety through a series of visual inspections and electronic tests

Why?

- Nearly a quarter of all reported electrical accidents involve the use of portable equipment and the majority of these result in electric shock, which has the potential to cause fatal injury
- Portable appliances are required to be formally inspected at regular intervals depending on the conditions in which they are used. These inspections normally include check on damage to plugs, correct termination of conductors, reverse polarity on primary conductors, loose terminals, flex anchorage and effective glanding etc.
- Formal visual inspection should be carried out by a competent person and a detailed report kept of the results and any subsequent action
- Users should also check equipment before each use

Do



- ✓ Check equipment is fit for purpose
- ✓ Look out for the label which confirms the last formal inspection
- ✓ Present portable equipment you may have for inspection
- ✓ Immediately report any defects you find
- ✓ Visually inspect equipment prior to use and follow manufacturer's instructions
- ✓ Use equipment for its intended purpose
- ✓ Make sure guards are in place and secured
- ✓ Follow the correct safe system of work
- ✓ Check safety devices and interlocks work properly before using equipment
- ✓ Make sure any power source is compatible with the equipment before connecting to the supply

Don't



- ✗ Interfere with portable equipment
- ✗ Use defective or damaged items
- ✗ Use electrical appliances not displaying an inspection label
- ✗ Change components unless trained
- ✗ Hide portable equipment when it is due for inspection
- ✗ Operate portable equipment if you are not sure how it works

