



PAT Policy & Procedure

Brixham Town Council

1. Introduction

This PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) Policy and Procedural Guidance is an Appendix to the Health & Safety Policy.

2. Policy

It is a guide to both the legal implications and to the technical requirements.

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 programme of maintenance, inspection and testing. The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 places such an obligation in the following circumstances:

- Where appliances are used by employees
- Where the public may use appliances in establishments such as hospitals, schools, hotels, shops, care homes, village halls
- Where appliances are supplied or hired
- Where appliances are repaired or serviced

The level of inspection and testing required is dependent upon the risk of the appliance becoming faulty, which is in turn dependent 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”. This guide forms the basis for portable appliance testing in the UK.

3. Procedure

Brixham Town Council will be taking the following actions to ensure all persons are protected as far as reasonably practicable by following this policy/procedure.

All electrical equipment that is portable and moveable on Brixham Town Council premises or provided for employees use in their work for Brixham Town Council will be tested annually. Contractors or third parties who intend to use electrical equipment on Council premises must comply with the attached PAT standard. Any reference to 'contractor' includes those subcontractors or self-employed persons assigned to the work activity. A 'third party' includes visitors or service users who may wish to use their own electrical equipment.

4. Definition of Portable and Moveable Equipment

A portable or moveable electric appliance is any item that can be moved, either connected to or disconnected from an electrical supply. Portable or movable items generally have a cable and plug. Portable and moveable items include the following:

- Electrical equipment that can be easily moved around, such as kettles, vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, portable heaters, fans, desk lamps, radios, PC's and laptops, projectors, small appliances such as irons, hair dryers and kitchen equipment including food mixers, toasters, etc;
- Larger items that could be moved (but only rarely), eg. Water chillers, fridges, microwaves, photocopiers, electric cookers, desktop computers etc;
- Mobile phone and other battery-operated equipment that is plugged into the mains (but the phones themselves and any other battery-operated equipment would not be included); and extension leads, multi-way adaptors and connection leads;
- Hand-held items that do not have a plug but have been wired in (or fixed) are still considered to be portable appliances, but large electrical items, such as water boilers that are wired in, are not portable appliances as they are not designed to be moved and would come under the scope of fixed installation maintenance.

5. Ensuring the safety of Portable Electrical Equipment

The following standards reflect current guidance, but the inspection and testing regimes should be reviewed periodically to see whether inspection and/or testing intervals could be decreased or should be increased. Damaged or faulty equipment that is identified by these inspection and testing regimes will be removed from use immediately either repaired by a competent person or disposed of at a recycling centre to prevent further use.

6. User Checks

With the equipment disconnected, users of equipment should carry out checks before most electrical equipment is used. Individuals should look for:

- Damage to the lead including fraying, cuts or heavy scuffing
- Damage to the plug – to the cover, bent pins
- Tape applied to the lead to join leads together
- Coloured wires visible where the cable 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
- Signs of overheating, such as burn marks or staining on the plug, cable 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

7. Visual Inspections

All portable equipment should be visually inspected at intervals between six months and three years, depending on the type of equipment.

A visual inspection does not need to be carried out by an electrician, but the person carrying it out needs to know what to look for and, through training, have sufficient knowledge to avoid danger to themselves and others. Factors to be considered include:

- The electrical equipment is being used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- The equipment is suitable for the job;
- Whether there has been any change in circumstance;
- A user has reported any issues.

8. Portable Appliance Test (PAT)

The person carrying out PAT testing works needs to be competent to do it. When undertaking combined inspection and testing, a greater level of knowledge and experience is needed, and the person will need:

- The right equipment to do the tests
- The ability to use this equipment properly
- The ability to make visual checks and risk assessments
- The ability to properly understand and report on the test results
- The ability to communicate decommissioning or repair needs of equipment to the user(s) and Town Clerk
- The ability to maintain the relevant documentation.

PAT testing records are retained by the Council's nominated person or their delegate

PAT STANDARD

Contractors or third parties who intend to use electrical equipment on Council premises must comply with this PAT Policy and PAT standard. Any reference to 'contractor' includes those subcontractors or self-employed persons assigned to the work activity. A 'third party' includes visitors or service users who may wish to use their own electrical equipment.

1. Equipment checks

Simple visual check

A simple visual check of the electrical equipment should be carried out before it is connected for the first time to the Council's mains supply and when there is significant movement to a new location. Examples might include:

- a contractor using hand-held equipment such as drills, sanders or isolating transformers should visually check their electrical equipment on a daily basis before use, and also when moving their equipment around the building from one area to another. This could be detailed in their risk assessment or method statement
- a visitor bringing a personally owned computer or projector into a low-risk environment such as an office or conference room; the equipment can be easily and quickly checked by the visitor or their host on arrival and may require no further checks during their visit

Written confirmation and agreement

A contractor can be asked to provide written details to confirm that the electrical equipment they intend to use on Council premises has passed combined PAT within a reasonable period.

A written agreement may be in place which states that the lead contractor for a project or lead organiser for an event is responsible for ensuring all equipment has up-to-date combined PAT. Examples would include those carrying out construction works on Council premises.

Significant and foreseeable risks

A bespoke risk assessment may be required where there is a significant and foreseeable risk; this will depend on the nature and location of where the equipment is planned to be used. For example, some electrical equipment may need to be compatible with the environment where it will be used, for example in outside weather conditions, wet or dusty environments or areas where there is a higher risk of fire or explosion with flammable substances coming into contact with sparks from electrical equipment.

2. Dangerous electrical equipment

Electrical equipment which is found to be dangerous will be removed where it is safe to do so, or the owner requested to take the item/s out of use.

Tenants

Tenants have a legal duty to ensure electrical equipment is maintained and safe to use. They must also adhere to the Council's health and safety provisions.

Unless stated in the lease agreement, following the Council's PAT Policy and PAT Standard does not directly apply to tenants. This is because tenants may choose to meet their legal and contractual obligations in an alternative way, such as by assigning their own facilities management provider to manage their PAT arrangements or by following their own electrical safety procedures such as for the management of contractors or visitors bringing electrical equipment onto Council property.

In accordance with any notice required under a lease agreement and from time to time, the Council may submit a request for information to satisfy themselves that appropriate control measures are in place for the safety of electrical equipment used in Council premises. Tenants would be expected to respond to reasonable requests for such information.