

What is Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT Testing) is the inspection and or testing that is required of all portable electrical appliances to assess their operational safety and the safety of personnel operating the equipment.

What is classed as a portable appliance and what requires PAT Testing?

Portable appliances are any item of electrical equipment that has a power lead with a plug that is intended to be connected to the mains electricity supply.

These items are required to be tested on a regular basis to ensure that they are in a safe working condition.

Should the equipment be labelled to show it has been tested?

Each appliance should be appropriately marked to record the examination date and display the date for re-testing and the results of the test (pass or fail).

PAT Testing is required to ensure your premises comply with The Electricity At Work Regulations 1989 and other regulations, many insurance companies will insist this is done before they will start or renew a policy. It can also void any existing insurance cover if these regulations are not met.

Who should carry out the Inspection and Testing?

The Electricity at Work regulations states that:

"No person shall be engaged in any work activity where technical knowledge or experience is necessary to prevent danger, or where appropriate, injury, unless he possesses such knowledge or experience, or is under such degree of supervision as may be appropriate having regard to the nature of the work"

The IET Code of Practice states 4th Edition states those carrying out the inspection and testing must be competent to undertake the inspection and, where appropriate, testing of electrical equipment and appliances having due regard of their own safety and that of others. What should be considered is that the 'danger' to be prevented, includes not just the dangers which may arise during the testing procedure to the tester and others, but also the dangers which may arise at a later date as a result of using equipment which has not been effectively tested.

The tester must have an understanding of the modes of electrical, mechanical or thermal damage to electrical equipment and appliances and their flexes which may be encountered in any environment.

It has become accepted practice for individuals operating as PAT Testers to hold a 2377–12 City and Guilds qualification. PAT Testers in the UK do not need to be electricians or have a background in the electrical industry. The only U.K. nationally recognized qualification of competence in PAT is offered by City & Guilds: 'Code of Practice for In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment – Vocational 3 (No. 2377)' although many other non-recognized PAT training courses are available. Cost: Approx 80p - £2 plus per appliance plus repairs required to comply.