

25. Electricity					
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Policy

The Board of Directors and the Chief Executive of the Society recognise the dangers that can arise from the use of electricity. In order to meet their responsibilities and to achieve and maintain a lower-risk working environment, they have adopted the following procedures.

General Requirements & Definitions

The Electricity at Work Regulations impose a duty on all employers to ensure that electrical systems within the workplace are maintained so as to give rise to no danger. This applies equally to fixed installations (the main wiring of a premise) and to portable appliances (anything connected to the mains supply via a plug and lead). This requires all such systems to be the subject of regular inspection and preventative maintenance. Records of such must be maintained.

Access to electrical installations, fuse boxes etc. is required at all times. Under no circumstances must items such as stock block access to them.

Fixed Installations – Inspection & Maintenance

For fixed electrical installations the frequency of testing will not exceed five years. The method of testing will comply with that specified by the Institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations for Electrical Installation (IEE wiring regulations). This testing will be performed by a competent electrical contractor who is a member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Contractors (NICEIC), and they will issue an inspection report and certificate for the premises.

The inspection standard includes electrical mains, switchgear, fuse ways and other control apparatus and all fixed wiring (power and lighting) and fixed electrical equipment.

Portable Appliances – Inspection (Visual Test)

As part of the user's responsibility for ensuring the upkeep of a safe place of work, it is important to carry out visual inspections of both portable appliances and leads before each use. Remember, this is a visual inspection only.

Portable Appliances – Inspection & Maintenance (Full Test)

Portable appliance testing will apply to any mobile or portable appliance used on electricity supplies. Mobile or portable can be taken to include any appliance that has a plug and lead rather than permanent connection to the electricity supply.

As a minimum standard, every portable appliance, where applicable, must be tested, both visually and electrically in line with the Society's testing regime routines, or in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines. An approved contractor or a suitably trained colleague may only carry out the inspection (arrangements are in place via the Health & Safety Team for full testing).

The findings of the inspection will be recorded and the appliance will be clearly labelled once having received full inspection.

Standards for Ensuring the Safe Use of Electricity

Any electrical defect or unsatisfactory matter should be reported to the site manager or their deputy immediately. The manager will then make arrangements to remove the equipment from service, until work can be carried out to rectify the defects. Examples of this include:

- Worn or damaged wiring and cables.
- Loose and improperly made connections.
- Badly positioned, exposed and trailing wiring and cables.
- Broken plugs, sockets, switches etc.
- Overloading or over heating of any socket, plug or appliance.

No unauthorised person should attempt to tamper with, touch or repair an apparently faulty item. It is essential that all such items are reported immediately to the manager (this includes blown fuses).

Extension leads must only be used with site manager's approval and must never be plugged into other extension leads to acquire the length required. Lighting sockets must not be left empty – a bulb or fluorescent tube must always be in place.

Wiring which serves displays or other electrical appliances should not be permanently routed across walkways. Where temporary routing across walkways is unavoidable the cable or wire must be adequately protected using the correct cable protection equipment to prevent impact damage or persons tripping.

Electrical Plant Rooms

Electrical plant rooms must be clearly marked with a 'No Admittance' sign and 'Electrical Hazard' sign. The room must be kept locked with the key under management control. Authorised personnel should be limited to management requiring access to monitor plant or to authorised contractors carrying out maintenance or repair.

Where the electrical plant room is not located in a lockable room (for example refrigeration plant on cold store roofs, external plant, heating and ventilation) access should be restricted by a physical barrier if at all practicable and be clearly marked.

No portable electrical equipment (other than that owned, leased or used by the business or its nominated contractors) may be used on the premises unless it has been electrically tested and marked by a Society approved contractor or nominated colleague. This will include but not be restricted to items such as radios, phone chargers and desk fans.

All waste electrical equipment such as VDU's, refrigeration units etc. must be disposed of in accordance with the Waste Electrical Equipment / Hazardous Waste regulations and in accordance with the Society's environmental commitment to wherever possible purchase equipment that can be recycled in a safe manner.