



RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDE

RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDE – ELECTRICITY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1989

These Regulations affect every employer (including the self-employed) and apply to all electrical systems and equipment including portable equipment. You must comply with the Regulations "as far as reasonably practicable" and maintain records to show that the electrical equipment and systems are being maintained in a safe state.

What are the main hazards faced?

- Contact with live parts causing shock and burns
- Faults that can cause injury or fires
- Fire or explosion where electricity is the source of ignition.

You should carry out an assessment of all electrical equipment and the system to identify areas where the above hazards could cause injury or damage and put measures in place to reduce or eliminate the risks posed.

How can you reduce the risks involved?

- Do not carry out "do-it-yourself" repairs – use a qualified electrician and ensure their work complies with the industry standard – the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Wiring Regulations. Doing this ensures you are complying with the Electricity at Work Regulations to the standard required
- Do not use equipment for purposes for which it was not designed
- Have the wiring system and all equipment regularly inspected and tested
- Ensure any safety advice or warnings from equipment manufacturers are acted upon promptly
- Ensure your system can be safely and quickly isolated – mark isolation switches prominently and clearly
- Post warning notices adjacent to live equipment and when repair or maintenance is being carried out, ensure the area around it is roped or fenced off
- Ensure you have a procedure for prompt reporting and repairing of faults
- Inspect and test all electrical equipment brought onto your premises by your staff e.g. kettles, toasters, fairy-lights, to ensure they are safe to use
- Draw up a list of all electrical equipment on your premises and agree an inspection and maintenance interval for each one – and stick to it! Record the action taken.

How often should items be inspected and tested?

See the table of guidelines at the end of this document.

Do different rules apply to office machines?

Yes, the rules are not as onerous – see separate guidelines for details.

Where can I get more information?

Visit the Health and Safety Executive web-site at www.hse.gov.uk for more information.

HSE BOOKS have a useful book that will assist you – "HSG85 Electricity at work – safe working practices" ISBN 0717621642. Use this number to order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 6FS or telephone 01787 881165 or on www.hsebooks.co.uk

SUGGESTED INITIAL INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE INTERVALS

Equipment/Environment	User Checks	Formal Visual Inspection	Combined Inspection & Testing
Battery operated (less than 20 volts)	Not required	Not required	Not required
Extra low voltage (less than 50 volts a.c.) e.g. telephone equipment and low voltage desk lights.	Not required	Not required	Not required
Computers, VDUs, photocopiers and fax machines – NOT hand held and rarely moved.	Not required	Every 2 to 4 years	Not required if double insulated.* Otherwise up to 5 years.
Double insulated * equipment NOT hand held and moved occasionally e.g. fans, table lamps or slide projectors.	Not required	Every 2 to 4 years	Not required
Double insulated * hand held items e.g. some floor cleaners.	Yes	Every 6 to 12 months	Not required
Earthed equipment (Class II) e.g. kettles, some floor cleaners, kitchen equipment and irons.	Yes	Every 6 to 12 months	Every 1 to 2 years
Cables and leads attached to any of the above.			
Extension leads operating at normal mains power.	Yes	Between 6 months and 4 years depending on type and level of use of equipment to which it is attached.	Between 1 and 5 years depending on type and level of use of equipment to which it is attached.

* Double insulated and Class 1 equipment is not earthed and has no earth wire (green and yellow striped) in the flexible cable.

Class II equipment has a special marking on the rating plate attached to the equipment in the form of two squares inside each other.

IMPORTANT

The information set out in this document constitutes a set of general guidelines and should not be construed or relied upon as specialist advice. Therefore **MORE THAN BUSINESS** accepts no responsibility towards any person relying upon these Risk Management Guidelines nor accepts any liability whatsoever for the accuracy of data supplied by another party or the consequences of reliance upon it.