



Maintaining portable electrical equipment

The H&S Regulations require that electrical systems and equipment must be maintained, so far as reasonably practicable, to prevent danger. This requirement covers all items of electrical equipment including fixed or portable equipment. Control of risks arising from the use of portable electrical equipment is based on a risk assessment.

Hazards identified

Portable equipment and the electrical connections are likely to be subjected to, and more vulnerable to, physical damage and wear or harsh treatment, especially:

- Repeated or excessive flexing of the cable will eventually cause the conductor to fracture and the sheath to crack. Damage usually occurs first at the cord grip or gland where the cable enters the equipment or its plug
- Some portable equipment (such as soldering irons) are capable of causing damage to the sheath, or even to the insulation of its own flexible cable.
- Portable grinders working in wet reservoirs.

Managing the risk

Effective maintenance of portable electric equipment can be achieved by a combination of: checks by

- the user
- ongoing and effective maintenance by the competent person - the H&S Officer or his delegate
- where necessary a combined inspection and test, by the electrically competent H&S Officer
- The aim of these checks is to determine whether the equipment is fully serviceable or whether remedial action is necessary to make sure it is safe to use
- The H&S Officer should follow up these procedures by monitoring the effectiveness of the system and taking action where faults are found, particularly when faults happen again.

Testing is carried out annually in line with the site policy.

See maintenance plan for portable electrical equipment.