

COST CONTROL
S E R V I C E S

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING

**An essential guide for Health and Safety Officers,
Company Directors and Business Owners to understand,
implement and check Portable Appliance Testing.**

Addendum 1

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25/10/2010
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Frequency of testing

The IEE Code does give recommendations but this needs to be carefully assessed in relation to the working environment, type of personnel using equipment, type of equipment on site, fire insurance and QMS requirements.

Equipment used in a fairly static environment e.g. an office, will suffer less damage than equipment in an arduous environment such as a construction site or industrial workshop. If users are encouraged to report damage then hazards will be avoided. If equipment receives unreported abuse then more frequent inspection and testing will be required.

Safety of Class 1 equipment is dependent on connection with earth of the fixed electrical installation and testing is important as any damage either in the cable or equipment may result in a loss of this safety feature.

An appliance that is hand held is more likely to be damaged than a fixed appliance.

In addition, as Class 1 equipment safety is dependent on the continuity of the earth connection from plug to the appliance then there will be an increase risk of danger from hand held Class 1 appliances.

The IEE Code splits environments into 6 categories and the recommended combined inspection and testing period for Class I hand held equipment per category is as follows:

Construction sites	3 months
Industrial including commercial kitchens	6 months
Equipment used by the public	6 months
Schools	12 months
Hotels	12 months
Offices and shops	12 months

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Testing periods for other types of equipment e.g. Stationary, IT, moveable and portable plus Class II equipment can vary within the categories but the Class 1 hand held inspection/testing period always forms the basis of our frequency of testing.

It should also be noted that even if the recommendation states a testing period of 24 months but your fire risk assessment/QMS/fire insurance documentation relates to 12 months then the testing period must be based on whichever is the lower in order to comply with all requirements and worst case scenario.

Time taken to test

In general one tester will be able to carry out between 12 and 15 items per hour in order to carry out a full inspection and test of equipment in accordance with the Code of Practice guidelines.

Having carried out testing over the past 5 years, somewhere between 100 and 120 tests per person, per 8 hour day has been achieved consistently.

This variation is due to many reasons but generally relates to accessibility of equipment, type of equipment and how the equipment is spaced out.

There is always a correlation between price, time and quality.

If a low price to carry out testing is offered then the unit time per item will reduce which will result in a loss of quality.

Equally so, any single tester carrying out more than 15 tests per hour will not, in our experience, be carrying out testing in accordance with the code of practice.

Testing equipment manufacturers know from maintenance/calibration records that some testers have carried out 400 items per day which relates to between 40 and 50 items per hour depending on number of hours worked or to between 72 seconds and 90 SECONDS per item!

This time has to include full inspection, testing and recording results!

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Now look at your own workspace and visualise the following:

1. Close down all IT equipment
2. Find, identify, unravel and disconnect all cabling joining your IT equipment
3. Pull out equipment to expose suitable connection test points
4. Visually inspect every cable and item for damage
5. Check each socket on extension leads with socket tester prior to testing
6. Check internal plug wiring and fuses where possible
7. Test each extension/detachable lead
8. Test each appliance with 2-3 individual tests as required by appliance class and use
9. Allow for repeated tests on certain equipment
10. Log into tester the equipment details
11. Label equipment with pass/fail stickers
12. Replace equipment and connect all cabling back to equipment and sockets
13. Start up all equipment to ensure good connections between equipment

Now, for instance if you have one PC, one monitor, one printer and one extension lead and assuming each IT appliance has a detachable lead you are looking at a total of 7 items.

To carry out the above procedure correctly and in compliance with the code of practice will take you in the region of 20-30 minutes.

In addition to the testing procedure you also have to make a time allowance for moving between workstations, rooms and buildings plus removing/replacing waste bins, coats, shoes and other associated items from under work surfaces.

Ask your tester for a cost and expected number of items per hour and if the answer is less than £1.25 per item and/or 150+ items per day (based on 8 hours and for a single tester) then remember the phrase:

BUYER BEWARE!

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Can we help?

If you are trying to set up a Portable Appliance Testing regime or you are concerned with any aspect from your existing testing service then Cost Control Services can act as a third party consultant to assist you.

Depending on your requirements, we are in a position to:

- Check out your existing system to assess compliance
- Instigate and set up procedures for you including paperwork
- Analyse test results
- Supervise testing
- Train in-house staff

Please contact Nigel Ford direct on 01934 513117/07769 698841 or email your details via info@costcontrolservices.co.uk for a free of charge consultation.

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