



## TECHNICAL NEWSLETTER

### Electrical safety – WorkCover requirements

- ▶ Must **all** plug-in leads be inspected and tagged?
- ▶ What are **hostile** areas?
- ▶ How often must plug-in leads be inspected?

### It's the law

**Testing and tagging of certain plug-in electrical equipment is a legislative requirement in Clause 64 of the OH&S Regulation 2001.**

#### TESTING AND TAGGING OF PLUG-IN TYPE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

NSW WorkCover advises two categories;

1. Construction sites
2. All other workplaces

#### 1. Construction sites

- (a) All electrical plant including portable plug-in electrical equipment and flexible extension cords must be visually inspected regularly for wear and mechanical damage, and tested in accordance with AS/NZS 3760 for earth continuity and insulation resistance or leakage current.
- (b) Inspection and testing of electrical plant, portable plug-in electrical equipment and flexible extension cords must be undertaken by a licensed electrician or a trained competent person (refer to Clause 5.1 of the Code of Practice for Electrical Practices for Construction Work – 2007, WorkCover document No. 301) in accordance with the following testing intervals:
  - (i) prior to its introduction to service on a construction site
  - (ii) at regular three monthly intervals for single unit dwelling house sites
  - (iii) at regular monthly intervals for all construction work, except if an electrical equipment risk assessment report determines that inspection and testing shall be carried out by a licensed electrician at regular three monthly intervals. Refer to Clause 5.3.1 of the Code of Practice for Electrical Practices for Construction Work – 2007.

Tested plant, portable plug-in electrical equipment and flexible extension cords must be tagged and all test results recorded in accordance with the requirements of Clause 5.6 (a) and (b) of the Code of Practice for Electrical Practices for Construction Work – 2007.

#### 2. All other workplaces

Testing and tagging of plug-in type electrical equipment for all other workplaces is not required under a Code of Practice. It may however be a legal requirement under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, and OH&S Regulation 2001 which does require a risk assessment for all hazards in a workplace.

A risk assessment would identify the areas of use of electrical equipment;

- eg. construction / maintenance / manufacturing / warehouse / factory / production / commercial / wholesale / retail / transport / entertainment / hospitality / offices, etc.
- refer AS/NZS 3760 for Australian Standards recommendations
- refer AS/NZS 3533 and AS/NZS 3002 for carnivals, amusement rides and shows.

Testing and tagging may only be required in hostile areas such as factory floors. Offices, etc., may not be risk assessed as hostile, and therefore electrical equipment in those areas may not require testing and tagging.

Refer WorkCover document No. 4862 – “Electrical Equipment Risk Assessment”. (Phone WorkCover on 13 10 50, or download from their website – home page – industry – construction – electrical.)

Electrical equipment located in hostile areas may be tested and tagged following a written risk assessment which determines those areas which are considered hostile, eg.;

- factory floor
- high volume of use areas
- plant rooms
- wet areas
- mobile electrical equipment
- kitchens
- handheld electrical equipment
- etc.

The frequency of testing and tagging would conform with your written risk assessment, ie. monthly, three monthly, six monthly, nine monthly, annually or bi-annually.

All electrical equipment, whether tested and tagged or not, should be visually inspected on a regular basis. This visual inspection may be included in regular workplace safety inspections of all hazards at the workplace.

## **SUMMARY – WHAT NSW EMPLOYERS AND OTHERS RESPONSIBLE MUST DO**

1. For construction sites, apply the WorkCover Code of Practice “Electrical Practices for Construction Work” (No. 301).
2. For all other workplaces;
  - (a) Conduct a risk assessment of your workplace in accordance with WorkCover document No. 4862 – “Electrical Equipment Risk Assessment”. Use the Inspection Record as contained in page 7 of document No. 4862 to record details of your plug-in type electrical equipment.
  - (b) From this risk assessment, identify those items of plug-in type electrical equipment which are located in “hostile” areas (refer page 3 of the WorkCover document No. 4862 for definition of “hostile”).
  - (c) Appoint a licensed electrician to test and tag those items of plug-in type electrical equipment in hostile areas. Testing and tagging to be conducted at intervals determined in your risk assessment – eg. every three months, or annually, etc.
  - (d) Maintain records for 12 months of testing and tagging details (eg. type of cable or lead, location, date of test and date of next test).