



ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT INSPECTION **CHECKLIST**



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What is this checklist about?

Electricity has great potential to seriously injure and kill. As an employer or self employed person you are responsible for ensuring the electrical equipment in your workplace is safe and regularly inspected and maintained.

This electrical equipment inspection checklist will help you comply with the legislative requirements in clause 64 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001* by taking you through the steps of an alternative risk assessment approach for the inspection, and testing of **plug-in type electrical equipment** used in the workplace.

Who should be involved in completing the checklist?

When using this checklist it is important to involve your employees. Employees who work directly with electrical equipment can help you identify and develop the best safety solutions. By involving your staff you will be meeting your obligation to consult your employees on workplace electrical safety issues under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*.

What this checklist does not include:

- Electrical equipment that is used in construction work. This equipment must be regularly inspected and tested in accordance with the requirements of the *WorkCover Code of Practice – Electrical practices for construction work*.
- Hired electrical equipment. As this equipment is used in a diverse range of working environments outside the control of the equipment owner a risk assessment cannot be carried out. This equipment must be regularly inspected and tested in accordance with the requirements of Australian Standard AS/NZS 3760:2001 *In-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment*.
- Workplace electrical equipment that has been serviced or repaired which could affect the electrical safety of the equipment. This equipment must be inspected and tested in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Standard AS/NZS 3760:2001 prior to the equipment being placed back into service.

Checking out your workplace

An important part of your business is to ensure the health and safety of your employees and other people who visit your workplace. You need to be aware of potential hazards and take action to ensure no one is at risk while using electrical equipment. To ensure you fulfil these obligations for a safe workplace, the following questions will help you evaluate how well you are currently managing electrical safety in your workplace.

Do you talk to your employees about electrical safety issues?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you encourage your employees to report electrical safety problems?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you regularly inspect your electrical equipment to identify safety problems?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you fix identified electrical safety problems?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Who can carry out the risk assessment?

A 'competent person' as defined in the OHS Regulation 2001 must do the risk assessment of your plug-in electrical equipment. This is a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience, or a combination of them, the knowledge and skills enabling that person to safely carry out a risk assessment of electrical equipment. The person carrying out the risk assessment must know what to look at, what to look for and what to do.

Workplace risk assessments on some plug-in electrical equipment may be relatively straightforward and can be carried out by you or a trained member of staff. For example, a workplace that has a limited number of items of electrical equipment that is used in a low risk working environment, e.g. an office.

However, other workplace assessments may require a higher level of technical expertise and interpretation of results and, therefore, can only be carried out by appropriately qualified or experienced personnel who are able to recognise electrical hazards or potentially unsafe conditions. For example, an electrician, electrical contractor or specialist testing provider.

Completing the checklist

When completing the checklist, you should also identify any specific workplace factors that may contribute to the risk, including:

- the work premises and the working environment, including their layout and condition,
- the capability, skill, experience and age of people undertaking the work,
- the systems of work being used,
- the range of reasonably foreseeable conditions.

Note: If multiple items of electrical equipment of the same design are installed and used under the same working conditions that are the same for all practical purposes it is only necessary to complete your risk assessment on a representative sample of those items. For example, office computers would fall into this category. **Although the risk assessment can be limited to a representative sample, you must still ensure an inspection of all electrical equipment is carried out and the results recorded.**

What is high risk electrical equipment?

Plug-in electrical equipment that is high risk includes:

- **Handheld equipment:** This is equipment that is handheld by the operator. For example hand held power tools, hairdryers, commercial kitchen appliances, etc.
- **Portable equipment:** This is equipment that due to its size or mass can be easily moved from place to place. For example, floor polisher, vacuum cleaner, fans, heaters, etc.

- **Moved equipment:** This is equipment that is normally moved between operations where it or the flexible supply lead could be damaged. For example certain office equipment, food preparation equipment, extension leads and power boards that are used in hostile working environments (see *below*), certain factory equipment, welding machines, etc.
- **Equipment used in a hostile working environment:** This is a working environment where the electrical equipment is normally subjected to events or operating conditions likely to damage the equipment or reduce its expected life span. This includes, but is not limited to physical/mechanical damage, exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, corrosive chemicals, dusts and fumes.

Electrical equipment that is assessed as high risk should be regularly inspected and tested in accordance with the recommendations of Australian Standard AS/NZS 3760:2001.

Note: The testing timeframes recommended in AS/NZS 3760:2001 can be varied by you subject to a risk assessment being carried out in accordance with the risk management provisions of the OHS Regulation 2001.

Any variation of the testing timeframes that are recommended in AS/NZS 3760:2001 must be supported by documentation that is retained by the employer in accordance with the record keeping provisions of clause 65 of the OHS Regulation 2001.

What is low risk electrical equipment?

Plug-in electrical equipment that is low risk includes:

- **Equipment that is used in a non-hostile working environment:** This refers to electrical equipment that is used in a working environment that is clean, well organised and free of environmental factors that could affect the equipment or flexible supply lead. For example, office, telecentre, computer classroom, etc.
- **Equipment that is fixed or stationary when in use:** This refers to electrical equipment that is connected by a flexible supply lead that is not flexed in normal use or exposed to damage and includes the following:
 - **Fixed equipment** is equipment that is fastened to a support, secured in position or otherwise due to its size and mass located in a specific location.
 - **Stationary equipment** is equipment having a mass exceeding 18 kg and not provided with carrying handle(s).
- **Equipment that is not liable to suffer damage or be moved when in use:** This refers to electrical equipment and flexible supply leads that are used in a non-hostile working environment and which are not liable to suffer damage or be moved about when in normal use.

Electrical equipment that is assessed as low risk is not normally considered sufficient a hazard to warrant the regular in-service electrical testing as recommended in the Australian Standard AS/NZS 3760:2001. For low risk equipment, routine visual checks of the equipment, fittings and the flexible supply lead by the operator should be sufficient. In addition to the routine checks other control measures could be used including, maintenance, repair, replacement, use of residual current devices (RCD's) and, when warranted, testing of identified equipment.

Monitoring and Review

When you complete the checklist, you must also decide how often it needs reviewing. Regular reviews are recommended in line with the timeframes that are specified in the Australian Standard AS/NZS 3760:2001.

The effectiveness of the decisions, made as a result of the risk assessment also need to be re-evaluated if:

- there is evidence the risk assessment is no longer valid,
- or an injury results from exposure to an electrical hazard to which the risk assessment relates
- or a significant change occurs in the working environment, location or use of the electrical equipment, to which the risk assessment relates.

What records do I have to keep?

You are required to keep records of all inspections carried out on your electrical equipment. Where any risk assessment has been carried out, all inspection documentation (including this checklist) must be retained in accordance with the record keeping provisions of clause 65 of the OHS Regulation 2001.

In particular , the following information must be recorded:

- the name of the person who carried out the risk assessment,
- the date on which the risk assessment was carried out,
- the result or outcome of the risk assessment,
- the date when the next risk assessment must be carried out

To get you started, the Electrical Equipment Inspection Checklist provides a format for recording the outcome of your risk assessments and the results of any testing carried out on the equipment. Your records should be located conveniently so that managers, employees and employee representatives can access the information. WorkCover inspectors and authorised employee representatives have the right to examine the records of employers, which are required to be kept by the Regulation.

What guidance is available to help me?

WorkCover has produced the *Code of Practice: Technical Guidance*. The Code adopts without alteration the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 3760:2001), *In-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment*. This Standard provides employers with practical guidance on the inspection, testing and record keeping of electrical equipment they use at their workplace.

Electrical practices on construction sites, which include inspection and testing of electrical equipment, are covered separately by the requirements of *WorkCover's Code of Practice – Electrical practices for construction work*.

In addition to the electrical equipment inspection checklist and codes of practice, WorkCover has also produced a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs), on the subject of electrical inspection, testing and tagging. To view this guidance material and the FAQs, visit WorkCover's website at

www.workcover.nsw.gov.au.

