



Safety in Scouting in Berkshire



PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING ('PAT TESTING')

Electricity can kill or severely injure people and cause damage to property through fire etc. Every year many accidents and injuries involving electric shock or burns are reported. Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. For example, shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders. Most of these accidents can be avoided by careful planning and straightforward precautions.

What are the hazards?

The main hazards are:

- contact with live parts causing shock and burns – normal mains voltage, 230 volts AC, can kill;
- faults which could cause fire; and
- fire or explosion where electricity could be the source of ignition in a potentially flammable or explosive atmosphere.

The risk of injury from electricity is strongly linked to where and how it is used. The risks are greatest in harsh conditions, for example:

- ❖ in wet surroundings – unsuitable equipment can easily become live and can make its surroundings live;
- ❖ outdoors – equipment may not only become wet but may be at greater risk of damage
- ❖ Over-use of extension cables which are liable to become over-loaded or damaged.

What the Duty Holder must do

Scout units (Groups, Districts etc.) have both criminal and civil responsibilities when it comes to health and safety, and has a duty of care to those using electrical equipment at the headquarters (including third parties hiring the premises). The Duty Holder is the person responsible for electrical safety in Scout owned premises, and this will be the Building or Maintenance Manager, or ultimately the Chair of the trustees.

The duty holder must:

- ✓ Encourage all users to carry out simple pre-use visual inspections before they use the equipment;
- ✓ Require users who identify damaged or suspect appliances to take the equipment out of service, label it and to report the concern to the duty holder;
- ✓ Implement and maintain a schedule of inspection of portable appliances and where necessary, for testing. The HSE and other responsible bodies issue guidance on the frequency of such measures, and generally the frequency will be determined by the duty holder's risk assessment. Most users of portable electrical appliances determine that such

appliances be inspected and tested on an annual basis, and this is the policy of Berkshire Scouting.

With due acknowledgement to the HSE's online guidance

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