



## Electrical inspections - a requirement or a con?

We often get clients asking for advice when it comes to electrical testing.

From PAT (portable appliance tests) through to building supply inspections it seems that the waters are rather murky and many business people are frustrated by a lack of clear guidance on what they must do rather than what they could do.

This is complicated by a range of suppliers who all provide information in a way which makes you suspect that their intentions are more commercial than educational...

So what are the facts in a nutshell?

### **Portable appliances**

You should have a scheme of inspection (could be visual) by a person competent to spot the risk issues (not necessarily an electrical engineer). However, you'll find that pretty much everyone interprets this as having a company carry out portable appliance tests once a year for portable equipment (less often for fixed equipment like photocopiers and more often for equipment in tough environments like workshops or construction).

It is your choice to do otherwise but we'd recommend the above.

### **Electrical installations**

Typically your insurer will ask to see evidence of inspection and test on a five yearly basis. If you have recently moved into your offices you should be in receipt of a handover certificate which states that the installation was carried out in line with the requirements of the current IEE Regulations (17th Edition) and all is well. Once you get five years beyond this it's time to review and you'll need to get hold of a competent contractor to do this for you (NICEIC for example).

Remember, there can be a lot of power moving through the system hidden behind walls and in risers cupboards, poor connections can be overheating or perhaps sparking leading to fire and major problems. Perhaps have a shop around, a larger contractor with heat sensing camera equipment might actually work out to be better value than having to shut down sections whilst the survey is completed.

In summary, none of this is law but it is alluded to in the regulations as being reasonable. The fact that just about everyone else is doing it makes complying your best option in this case.

If you have questions then please contact one of our health & safety consultants by calling us on 01458 253682.