



ELECTRICAL SAFETY POLICY

Objective

It is important that potential hazards are identified and action is taken to ensure that no one is at risk while using electrical equipment. To ensure this happens the following issues will be discussed regularly at staff meetings;

- Discuss electrical safety issues*
- Encourage staff to report electrical safety problems*
- Regularly inspect and maintain electrical equipment to identify safety problems*
- Fix identified electrical safety problems*

Who will carry out electrical repairs?

All repairs to electrical equipment will be performed by a qualified, licensed electrician.

Information

*Australia/New Zealand Standard AS/NZ 3760 1996 sets down minimum inspection periods for the inspection and tagging of electrical equipment. WorkCover publication *Electrical Equipment Risk Assessment – 2006* provides for the management of electrical equipment by means of a *Risk Assessment* based on the operating conditions i.e. *hostile and non-hostile environments*.*

What is a hostile operating environment?

A hostile operating environment means an operating environment at a place of work where the electrical equipment or flexible supply cord is, in its normal use, subject to operating conditions that are likely to result in damage to the equipment and for example, includes an operating environment that may cause mechanical damage to the item of equipment or expose the equipment to moisture, heat, vibration, corrosive substances or dust.

Electrical equipment that is being used in a hostile operating environment must be regularly inspected and tested in accordance with the provisions of Australian Standard AS/NZS 3760

What is a non – hostile operating environment?

A non-hostile operating environment refers to a workplace where electrical equipment is used in a working environment that is dry, clean, well organised and free of operating conditions that are likely to result in damage to the item of electrical equipment or flexible supply cord. For example, an office, retail shop, telecentre, classrooms, etc.

Electrical equipment commonly used in these types of low risk operating environments include computers, photocopiers, power boards, stationary or fixed electrical equipment and similar electrical appliances.

Who will carry our risk assessments?

The electrical equipment risk assessment should in most situations be relatively straightforward and can be carried out by a staff member e.g. a workplace that has a limited number of items of electrical equipment.

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

Completing the risk assessment

When completing the risk assessment the following should be identified as factors contributing to the risk;

- *The work premises and 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*

How to manage the safety of electrical equipment

A range of control measures may be implemented to manage the safe operation of electrical equipment used in the workplace, including;

- *Routine visual checks by the equipment user*
- *Formal visual inspections*
- *Maintenance*
- *Repair – by a qualified, licensed electrician*
- *Replacement*
- *Use of fixed or portable residual current devices (RCDs) more commonly known as safety switches*
- *Training and instructing employees in the safe use of the electrical equipment*
- *And, if determined as an outcome of a risk assessment, inspection and testing of identified electrical equipment*

Monitoring and review

When the risk assessment is completed a decision will be made on the need for review. The risk assessment may 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*

Records

Workplaces are required to maintain records of all inspections, tests and maintenance carried out on electrical equipment that operates in or is affected by a hostile operating environment.

In particular the following information must be recorded;

- *The name of the person who carried out the inspection, test or maintenance*
- *The date or dates the inspection, tests or maintenance was carried out*
- *The result or outcome of the inspections, tests or maintenance*
- *The date when the next inspection and test must be carried out*

*WorkCover recommends that for electrical equipment being used in a non-hostile operating environment a documented risk assessment be undertaken. Documented risk assessments should also be undertaken if there is a change in equipment use/location or if an electrical incident occurs at the workplace involving electrical equipment to which the risk assessment relates (see sample *Electrical Equipment Risk Assessment and Inspection Record* attached to this policy).*

Any such record of a risk assessment should be retained for a period of 12 months.