



HOUSEKEEPING
EXCAVATION
HEIGHTS
ELECTRICAL
PLANT

Master Builders Safety Glove

ELECTRICAL

TESTING AND TAGGING

Test and Tag is the name given to the process for checking the safety of portable electrical appliances. It involves three stages:

1. visually inspecting the portable electrical appliance for any damage
2. electrically testing it with a Portable Appliance Tester (PAT)
3. once tested (and passed), tagging it to show it has been tested, along with who tested it, the test date and when the next test is due.

Testing and tagging ensures the safety of workers coming into contact with the portable electrical appliance, while also minimising the risk of electrical hazards.

The AS/NZS 3760 is the Australian Standard that provides guidelines and regulations for testing and tagging. The Standard provides recommendations on test and tag intervals, defines who can test and tag and other general guidelines.

The Standard recommends particular test and tag frequencies based on the type of environment the portable electrical appliance resides in. This might differ depending on a workplaces individual risk assessment; however, on construction and demolition sites, PCBU shall have their portable electrical appliances tested and tagged every 3 months. Regulation 163 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (ACT) states PCBU's must comply with the requirements of AS/NZS 3012:2010 (see table below for details).

The test and tag colours will change for different periods throughout the year, which effectively make certain times of the year coincide with a specific test tag colour.

Testing and tagging is not a legislative requirement for other workplaces. However, the employer does have a duty of care to ensure the safety of its employees, meaning that if someone was hurt from a portable electrical appliance that wasn't tested and unsafe, they could be found liable. Because of this, it's the employer's responsibility to have all portable electrical appliances tested.

There is a common misconception that you must be an electrician to test and tag; however, according to AS/NZS 3760:2010, someone who is considered a 'Competent Person' is also able to test and tag in Australia. This is achieved by undertaking a test and tag course, where that person acquires the knowledge and skills in learning to use a PAT tester.

Any device that has a flexible cable, a removable plug and is not low voltage (not exceeding 50V). This includes extension leads, cord sets and portable RCD's. Generally, electrical portable electrical appliances can be classed as either:

Class I – this is an earthed portable electrical appliance i.e. kettles, irons and toasters

Class II – double insulated portable electrical appliances, which are usually identified with a symbol (a square within a square) or with the words 'Double Insulated' i.e. most electric drills and hair dryers

New equipment doesn't need to be tested - just visually inspected and tagged.

Periodic verification intervals

(AS/NZS 3012:2010 Electrical installations - Construction and demolition sites)

Equipment class	Testing Intervals
Construction wiring, including switchboards	Inspected and tested at time of installation, then re-inspected every 6 months
Re-locatable structures, fixed and transportable equipment	6 months
New tasks or a significant change to existing tasks that Portable equipment and flexible electrical cords (extension leads)	3 months
Equipment in amenities and site offices	3 months
Portable RCD—pushbutton test	Before each use of equipment
Portable RCD—operating time	3 months
Fixed RCD—pushbutton test	1 month
Fixed RCD—operating time	12 months
Hire equipment	Upon introduction to service, then in accordance with the testing intervals appropriate to the equipment class.

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