Electrical tests and gas safety checks for church buildings

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A Church Growth Trust Briefing Paper

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1.0 Introduction

The guidance in this briefing paper concerns electrical and gas safety in parts of church buildings which are used for worship and those ancillary uses associated with the church property, such as function rooms and youth halls.

Information here, particularly regarding the nature and frequency of inspections, assumes that the church property is a low risk environment, similar to the environment in offices, shops and residential care homes, and does not cover high risk areas, which are usually not present in most church buildings.

Some church premises may include some rented residential accommodation, such as a manse or flat. Rented residential properties are covered under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and are not covered by this paper. The duties of landlords of residential properties will be similar to those outlined here, together with additional duties.

If parts of the church building are fitted with specialist equipment, heavy/industrial equipment, sports equipment or lifts, then additional and more frequent maintenance inspections may apply to those areas or to that equipment.

2.0 Hazards from electricity

There are three major hazards arising from electricity in properties:

- Electric Shock.
- Electrical Fire.
- Electrical Burns.

These hazards may arise from:

- The electrical installations and equipment deteriorating over time.
- Damage to switches, sockets and other equipment.
- Misuse of electrical installation and equipment, including overloading.
- Poor, or lack of, maintenance of the installation and equipment.

3.0 Fixed electrical installation checks and tests

3.1 Legislation and guidance

The following legislation is relevant to electrical installation checks and tests:

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

This Act places a duty of care on an employer and employees to ensure the safety of all persons using the premises, including the self-employed. Some may argue that small churches are not employers but, if the church employs a minister, a cleaner, gardener or other part time workers, they will be considered as an employer.

THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1999

These Regulations state that every employer shall make suitable and sufficient assessment of:

- The risks to health and safety of HIS EMPLOYEES to which they are exposed whilst at work, and
- The risks to ensure the health and safety of persons NOT IN HIS EMPLOYMENT arising out of, or in connection with, the conduct by him or his undertaking.

THE ELECTRICITY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1989

These Regulations are more specifically related to electrical installations and appliances. Regulation 3 defines the persons on whom duties are imposed by the Regulations. These include employers, self-employed persons and employees.

The guidance document to the Electricity at Work Regulations published by the Health and Safety Executive defines an employer as any person or body who employs one or more individuals, including apprentices.

Regulation 4(1) states - "All systems shall at all times be of such construction as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practical, danger".

Regulation 4(2) states - "As may be necessary to prevent danger, all systems shall be maintained so as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practical, such danger.

The term "system" includes all electrical equipment connected to the system and therefore brings in responsibilities relating to portable appliances.

None of the legislation listed above specifically mention that checks or tests have to be carried out. However, if there is a duty to ensure that electrical systems and equipment are safe, it is evident that regular checks, inspections and maintenance need to be undertaken in order to fulfil that duty.

BRITISH STANDARD 7671: REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS - IET WIRING REGULATIONS

BS 7671 is the national standard in the UK for electrical installation and the safety of electrical wiring in domestic, commercial and industrial buildings. Published by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) and the British Standards Institute (BSI). The current version at the time of publication of this briefing guide is BS 7671: 2008 incorporating Amendment 3: 2015. Although the document title includes the words "Wiring Regulations" they are not statutory regulations. They are however referenced in several UK statutory instruments and in most cases, for practical purposes, have legal force as the appropriate method of electric wiring. In addition to regulations regarding installation, BS 7671 also covers inspection, testing and certificates.

Insurers, licensing authorities and other parties which have an interest in the property, such as trusts or mortgage lenders, can often require that electrical work and testing is carried out to the standards contained in BS 7671

3.2 Visual Inspection

Visual Inspections (VI) should be carried out on a more regular basis than the formal testing referred to in the next section. They can be carried out either at no expense or low cost by a person who knows what to look for and having sufficient knowledge to avoid danger to themselves and others.

Visual inspections may include checking for:

- Worn/frayed cables or wires.
- Signs of blackness or scorching around sockets, switches and connections, which may indicate overloading.
- Smells of hot plastic or burning.
- Signs of sparks or smoke.
- Broken, damaged or cracked electrical accessories, such as plug sockets and light switches.
- Signs of water damage or potential sources of water damage.

The degree of checking that can be done by a VI of a main installation is limited - as much of the electrical system is concealed. VI of electrical appliances, which are more readily visible, is covered in Section 4.

The recommended frequency of VI is given in the table in Appendix 1.

3.3 Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)

3.3.1 What does an EICR involve?

The purpose of the Electric Installation Condition Report is to establish the overall condition and safety of all the electrics in the building and states whether it is satisfactory for continued use. It also details any work which may need to be done to remedy any defects found. It was formerly known as a Periodic Inspection Report (PIR).

The EICR should be carried out in accordance with BS 7671 and the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Guidance Note 3. It involves testing of the hard wiring in a building and includes such items as main panels, distribution boards, lighting, socket outlets, air conditioning and other fixed plant. It involves performing a series of rigorous visual inspections and electrical tests on all systems in the building.

Where circuit diagrams, charts or tables are not available, a degree of exploratory work may be necessary to identify the various circuits in the building before testing is undertaken. Copies of old test certificates or installation certificates are likely to assist in any identification.

Carrying out the EICR will inevitably cause some disruption, as it will be necessary to disconnect circuits from the electrical supply as part of the testing operations. It is therefore advisable to arrange for the inspection to be undertaken when the building is not in use in order to minimise any inconvenience to those using the building. Even if the building is not in use, it is advisable to check if any of the installations, such as alarm systems, computers, IT systems, internet connections, servers, telephone systems etc would be affected by sudden power loss. It is worth remembering that even if the building is not being used, these systems may sometimes be running. The person undertaking the testing will need to liaise with those responsible for such systems before disconnecting the power supply.

3.3.2 Who should carry out the EICR?

Contractors who are NICEIC Approved Contractors can undertake Electrical Inspection Safety Reports on non-domestic properties or domestic properties. Note that contractors who are NICEIC Domestic Installers are only approved to undertake work on domestic properties, as are ELECSA Registered Contractors.

A list of local NICEIC Approved Contractors can be found on the NICEIC website www.niceic.com.

3.3.3 How often should an EICR be carried out?

The recommended periods between inspections is given in Appendix 1 and is based on information given in British Standard BS 7671 and the IEE Guidance Note 3, together with advice from Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publications. For most church buildings the recommended maximum interval between ECIRs is five years. However some churches may have other specific requirements for the frequency of regular inspections imposed on them by other bodies, such as their insurers, head property office, trustees, diocese or synod.

Those church buildings which hold an entertainment licence for part of the premises will probably find that the licensing/local authority will require more regular tests than would otherwise be required for a place of worship, probably every 12 months. The terms of the licence should be checked.

If the church building is fitted with specialist equipment, heavy/industrial equipment, sports equipment, lifts, lightning protection, fire alarms or escape lighting, then additional and more frequent maintenance inspections may apply to those areas or to that equipment. See Sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 below.

3.3.4 Recording of an EICR and certificates

Following completion of inspection and testing, the client should be provided with a written report detailing the following aspects of the inspection and test:

- Details of the client and installation.
- Extent and limitations of the inspection.
- Supply characteristics and particulars of the installation.
- Schedule of items inspected and tested.
- Schedule of circuit details and test results.
- Summary of the inspection and test.
- Observations and recommendations for actions to be taken.
- Signed declaration by the contractor.

Most contractors will provide this report by producing an official numbered NICEIC certificate or in a similar format produced by their software package. Some insurance companies may insist upon an NICEIC certificate, so this should be clarified with the insurance broker and contractor beforehand.

The certificate or report should be retained for the lifetime of the installation and made available to any contractor who carries out any future tests or installations. It is recommended not to dispose of old certificates or reports when a new one is issued. Retaining historic copies can assist in identifying any trends of deterioration or regular failures of certain circuits.

Ideally the certificates, or a copy of them, should be retained in the building's Health and Safety File prepared under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.

3.4 Fire alarm/detection systems

Although the table in Appendix 1 gives the recommended maximum intervals between inspections and tests for the building as a whole, some installations within the building, such as fire alarm/detection systems will require more regular testing.

Fire alarm and detection systems should be tested weekly by the building users by activating one of the manual call points in rotation. In addition, the system should be tested and serviced by a competent person annually. If the system is connected to a remote call centre, it is usually one of their requirements, or a requirement of the emergency services, that the system is tested and serviced on a regular basis. The agreements should be checked for full details.

3.5 Escape lighting

As for fire alarm/detection systems described above, escape lighting will require more regular testing than the general testing for the building as a whole. Escape lighting should be checked weekly. This is to ensure that the LED lights are indicating that the batteries serving escape lights are charging correctly. Each month they should receive a short test to ensure they illuminate correctly when

power is disconnected. Every six months they should be tested for at least a duration of one hour in order to check the life of the rechargeable batteries. Every 12 months they should be tested for the full designed battery life, usually three hours.

Note that following a full discharge of the batteries, the escape lighting system will not be operative until the batteries have had the opportunity to re-charge, so such tests should be scheduled for when the building is not intended to be used in the period after the test.

3.6 Lightning protection systems

Lightning protection systems installed before August 2008 should have been installed to BS 6651 - Code of Practice for Protection of Structures against Lightning. Since August 2008, the standard has been replaced by BS EN 62305.

The older standard recommended that lightning protection systems should be inspected and tested at fixed intervals, preferably not exceeding 12 months. The new standard recommends inspection and testing intervals of not more than four years. However, with regard to installation in church premises, it may be more prudent to reduce the inspection/testing period to two and a half years, so that these coincide with five-yearly quinquennial inspections.

Insurance companies may have specific requirements regarding the testing intervals and policy documents should be consulted. A test or inspection is also advisable after any lightning strike or suspected strike in order to ensure that no damage to the system has been encountered.

4.0 Electrical Portable Appliance Tests (PAT)

4.1 Legislation and guidance

The following legislation is relevant to electrical portable appliance tests:

THE ELECTRICITY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1989

These Regulations require the equipment to be safe. They do not specify what has to be done to keep the equipment safe, by whom, or how frequently.

4.2 What is a portable appliance?

There is no legal definition of portable equipment, but current guidance documents from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) describes portable electrical appliances as any item which can be moved or disconnected from an electrical supply. If the appliance is fitted with a cable and plug it is generally considered as a portable appliance. This would typically include vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, portable heaters, irons, fans, desk lamps, TVs, radios, small domestic size cookers, data projectors, computers and small kitchen equipment such as toasters, kettles or food mixers.

If it is hard-wired into an electrical system, with no removable plug and, where it is fixed and not intended to be moved (e.g. hot water cylinders or water boilers), it would usually be considered as part of the fixed installation and would require inspection/testing as described under Section 3 of this document.

Other appliances, such as cookers, large photocopiers which are not fixed in position, but could be occasionally moved whilst connected to the power supply, would generally be considered as portable appliances.

Extension leads, multi-way adapters and other similar connection leads are also considered as portable appliances.

4.3 Class I equipment and Class II equipment

CLASS I EQUIPMENT relies upon the metallic parts of the equipment, including the outer casing, being effectively earthed. If the earth connection is lost or becomes disconnected, the appliance is then not earthed and there is the possibility of the appliance becoming live with a potentially fatal result, as anyone touching live metal will be in contact with electricity.

CLASS II EQUIPMENT includes double insulated equipment and is marked with the symbol showing one square inside another like this: ⧈. The equipment is constructed with high integrity insulation and does not have or need an earth connection to maintain safety. If the symbol cannot be seen on the appliance, it should be assumed to be a Class 1 appliance.

Whether an appliance is Class 1 or Class 2 will dictate the recommended inspection intervals or the recommended test intervals, if any (see Section 4.9 for reference).

4.4 Making an inventory

It is not a legal requirement to do so, but churches may find it useful to make an inventory of all the portable appliances for which they are responsible, including details of:

- Description of each appliance, make model etc.
- Serial or reference number (e.g. the church could possess several vacuum cleaners or portable amplifiers all of the same make/model).
- Whether the appliance is stored on-site or off-site.
- Whether the appliance is Class I or Class II.
- Scheduled frequency for testing.

Such an inventory would assist the person undertaking the Portable Appliance Tests and would serve as a check list to ensure all appropriate appliances have been tested (e.g. that all appliances have been located and some are not hidden away in a cupboard or temporarily taken off-site and thus miss the tests.

4.5 User checks and Visual Inspections

User checks should be carried out by the user before most electrical equipment is used. The user should consider or look for:

- Whether the equipment been used or stored in an unsuitable condition, such as wet or dusty environments.
- Signs of overheating, such as burn marks or staining on the plug or appliance.
- Damage to the lead, including fraying, cuts or scuffs or adhesive tape used to cover damage or joints.
- Damage to the plug, such as bent pins or broken cover.
- Cable not being gripped where it joins the plug, resulting in coloured wires being visible at the junction of the cable and plug.
- Damage to the appliance, such as damaged casing, loose parts or loose screws.

Regular Visual Inspections (VI) can be carried out by a person who knows what to look for and having sufficient knowledge to avoid danger to themselves and others. Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive confirms that VIs do not have to be undertaken by a qualified electrician, but the person may require some simple training to equip him/her with some basic electrical knowledge to ensure he/she can carry out the inspection competently. The VI will usually include those user checks listed above, plus removal of the plug cover to check that:

- There are no signs of internal damage, overheating or water damage to the plug.
- The correct fuse is fitted.
- The wires are connected to the correct pins.
- Terminal pins are tight.
- The cable grip is holding the outer part/sheathing of the cable securely.
- No bare wires are visible, other than at the terminals.

The person carrying out the VI should also consider whether:

- The appliance is suitable for the job.
- The appliance is being used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- There has been any change in circumstances since the last inspection or whether the user(s) have reported any issues.

4.6 Portable Appliance Test (PAT)

A Portable Appliance Test (PAT) is more technical and detailed than a routine visual inspection. It requires greater knowledge and experience than that required for a visual inspection and requires the use of specialist equipment.

4.7 Who should carry out a PAT?

Information in current Health and Safety Executive guidance confirms that the person carrying out the PAT is not required to be a qualified electrician, although many companies who approach clients to offer their testing services can tend to imply that special or electrical qualifications are required by law, which is not the case. However, they should have the right equipment for the task and they should know how to use the test equipment and how to interpret the results.

There are many companies who offer PAT services with software to generate certificates. Many local electricians will also offer this service, often at a reduced rate for charities or churches. Alternatively, if the church has a considerable amount of equipment which needs to be tested annually, they may wish to consider purchasing PAT equipment and having a designated person undertake the training. For example, some schools find it economic to purchase the equipment and train the caretaker in its use. A group of churches in an area may consider purchasing the equipment jointly with one person trained to use it and undertake tests for all the churches.

Some suppliers of PAT equipment offer training seminars or include a training DVD within the package for less than £300. However it is worth taking into consideration that the costs do not stop at the initial purchase, as equipment will usually have to be returned to the manufacturers around every 12 months for checking or re-calibration.

If you choose to employ an external company to check your portable appliances, it is worth undertaking some research on costs. Some commercial companies, used to dealing with offices etc, can charge up to £10 per appliance, whereas some local companies or local electricians will charge as little as £1 to £2 per appliance.

4.8 What is included in a PAT?

Typically a PAT will include:

- Earth continuity test – checking that the appliance is connected to an earthing system.
- Earth resistance test – determines the resistance provided by earthing rods.
- Insulation resistance test – ensures the insulation of the appliance prevents leakage of electrical current.
- Polarity check – ensures appliance plugs and extensions are correctly wired.
- Safety switch test – ensures that the tripping mechanism for an appliance works as it should.

4.9 How often should Visual Inspections and Portable Appliance Tests be carried out?

The frequency of inspections and tests is not determined by law and so determining the frequency, is a matter of judgement by the duty holder. A table indicating the recommended frequency of user checks, visual inspections and tests is included in Appendix 2. This information is taken from Health and Safety Executive guidance.

Note that not every appliance needs a PAT. This will largely depend upon whether the appliance is Class I or Class II rated. Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive confirms this, stating that in some cases a simple user check and visual inspection (e.g. checking for loose cables, signs of fire damage, internal plug damage, bare wires and correct fuse is used) is enough.

Over time examination of past checks and tests will indicate any trends in condition or performance. If the condition of appliances deteriorates rapidly or they regularly fail checks or tests, this would indicate that it would be prudent to check or test those particular appliances on a more regular basis than the table recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Many companies undertaking testing will advise that all appliances need to be tested every 12 months and attach stickers/labels to equipment or issue certificates to advise this. However in practice the 12 month period is not always applicable. Note that the intervals recommended by HSE can be up to five years for some types of appliances, such as large photocopiers rarely moved, rather than 12 months. For more information please refer to the table in Appendix 2.

4.10 Recording PAT tests and taking action

There is no legal requirement to record PAT tests, but it is highly advisable to do so, as in the case of an incident this would probably be the only way of proving that the church had fulfilled their responsibilities for ensuring they were maintaining the equipment in a safe operating condition. All reputable companies will usually place a sticker on the equipment recording the date of the test, the date for the next test and a serial number, accompanied by an individual certificate for each appliance. It is therefore advisable to verify that those undertaking the testing (whether an outside company or in-house staff) will provide labels and certificates, before commissioning the tests. An attached sticker and an accompanying certificate are usually essential if the equipment is to be used in another location as identified in section 4.12 below.

4.11 Portable appliances brought into the building

In addition to having tests undertaken on their own appliances regularly used in the building, some churches may consider it appropriate, in some circumstances, to require evidence that any portable equipment brought into the building has been tested. How rigidly this is enforced is a matter for careful consideration, but it may be particularly appropriate if the church buildings are let out to other organisations who may wish to bring in equipment for their activities (e.g. members of a sewing club may wish to bring their own sewing machines or hiring out for concerts with sound systems which may involve the use of a considerable amount of electrical equipment). Church leaders/trustees may wish to incorporate a clause in any hire or letting agreement, giving the church the right to prohibit the use of appliances which do not hold a current PAT certificate.

4.12 Portable appliances taken out of the building

Likewise churches should consider any portable equipment they may take to other venues (e.g. outreach events). Larger venues, such as town halls, can sometimes ask to see PAT certificates for say portable public address (PA) systems or electric instruments, before permitting setting up.

Some electricians at exhibition events, such as Christian Resources Exhibitions, can refuse to connect power to the display or exhibition stand if current PAT certificates cannot be produced on the day. It is therefore advisable to carry a spare copy of the relevant PAT certificate with any electrical equipment, which may be taken out of the building for use at other venues, such as keyboards and other instruments, sound systems, lighting etc.

5.0 Hazards from gas

If gas appliances, such as boilers, cookers or heaters, are not properly installed and maintained, they present a risk of danger from gas leaks, explosion and fire.

Combustion appliances not correctly installed or maintained can present an accumulation of carbon monoxide. This is particularly dangerous as it cannot be readily detected by occupants of the building as it cannot be heard, smelt or tasted and inhalation can lead to lethal carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

These comments do not apply only to installations operating on mains gas, but also those operating on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), which can include such appliances as portable gas heaters.

6.0 Gas safety checks

6.1 Legislation and guidance

The following legislation is relevant to gas safety checks:

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

This Act places a duty of care on an employer and employees to ensure the safety of all persons using the premises, including the self-employed. Some may argue that small churches are not employers but, if the church employs a minister, a cleaner, gardener or other part time workers, they will be considered as an employer.

THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1999

These Regulations state that every employer shall make suitable and sufficient assessment of:

- The risks to health and safety of HIS EMPLOYEES to which they are exposed whilst at work , and
- The risks to ensure the health and safety of persons NOT IN HIS EMPLOYMENT arising out of, or in connection with, the conduct by him or his undertaking.

THE GAS SAFETY (INSTALLATION AND USE) REGULATIONS 1998

These Regulations are more specifically related to gas installations and appliances. The Regulations cover most installations in the UK, with the exception of a few specific categories, such as vehicles, boats, agricultural land, factories or mines, none of which will be relevant to normal church operations. They include installations in any tents, marquees or other movable structures.

6.2 Maintenance and testing

Regulation 35 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations states "It shall be the duty of every employer or self-employed person to ensure that any gas appliance, installation pipework or flue installed at any place of work under his control is maintained in a safe condition so as to prevent risk of injury to any person". Duties under Regulation 35 also extend to portable appliances, such as mobile LPG space heaters.

The guidance in the Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice for the Regulations confirms that effective maintenance of appliances usually involves an on-going programme of regular/periodic inspections, together with any necessary remedial work.

In the absence of any specific manufacturer's instructions, effective maintenance should include the following, as a minimum:

- Examination of the physical condition and safe functioning of appliances, installation pipework, ventilation and any flue for deterioration.
- Carrying out performance tests.
- Taking remedial action as necessary.

6.3 Who should carry out testing or maintenance?

All checks and work on gas appliances must be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered engineer. The Gas Safe Register is a list of people who are qualified to work safely and legally on gas appliances. It is not acceptable to have a gas appliance fitted by a non-registered person and then checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer. If this occurs both the registered person and non-registered person could face prosecution.

A list of Gas Safe registered engineers can be found at www.gassafe.co.uk.

Many people do not appreciate that a Gas Safe registered engineer is registered for only certain types of activities. Some engineers who are registered to carry out safety checks may not be registered for servicing. Some engineers are registered for domestic work, but not non–domestic work such as church buildings. Some engineers are registered for Natural Gas installations, but not LPG installations. Some engineers may be registered to work on boilers, but not on warm air systems. Details of systems or work categories for which a Gas Safe engineer is registered can

be found on the Gas Safe website and should be printed on the reverse of their identity card.

6.4 Frequency of testing

Regulation 35 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations regarding duties of employers to maintain gas installations does not include any reference to the required frequency of testing.

Regulation 36 of the Regulations does place additional responsibilities and obligations upon landlords and does state mandatory interval for testing. These duties include:

- Ensuring that any relevant gas fitting and any flue serving a relevant gas fitting is maintained in a safe condition.
- Ensuring that each appliance and flue is checked for safety at least every 12 months.
- When a new lease commences, ensuring that each appliance and flue has been checked for safety (in practice this usually means carrying out a safety check each time a new lease is granted).
- Ensuring that a record of tests is made and is then kept for at least two years after the test.

The responsibilities relating specifically to landlords and requiring tests at specific intervals will not usually be relevant to church situations. The definition of "landlord" is given in Regulation 36 (1). However Church Growth Trust would always recommend that safety checks are carried out on gas appliances, their flues and supply pipework every 12 months, as would be the legal requirement for residential properties under lease or rental.

7.0 Additional Information

ELECTRICITY

"Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 SI 1989 No 635"
Available as free download as a pdf file for printing from www.legislation.gov.uk.

"Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 Guidance"
Series Code HSR25 (Third Edition) ISBN 978-0-7176-6636-2
Published by the Health and Safety Executive. This document includes the full text of the Regulations accompanied by detailed guidance and explanatory notes.
Available from HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books either as a free download or for purchase at a cost of £15.00.

"BS 7671 2008: Amendment 3 2015"
ISBN 978-1-84919-769-4. Published by Institute of Engineering and Technology.
Available from www.neceicdirect.com and other book suppliers.
Typical purchase cost is £69.00.

"IET Guidance Note 3: Inspection and testing"

Published by the Institution of Engineering and Technology
Available from www.neceicdirect.com and other book suppliers.
Typical purchase cost is £30.00.

"Architect's Pack. A short guide on Electrical Safety and Energy Saving Options within domestic and commercial buildings"
Jointly published by NICEIC and Elecsa. Available for free download from NICEIC website www.niceic.com/specifiers.

"Maintaining portable electric equipment in low-risk environments"
ISBN 978-0-7176-7201-6. HSE reference HSG107 (Third Edition)
Published by the Health and Safety Executive.
Available from HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/pubns either as a free download or for purchase at a cost of £5.00.

GAS

"Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998"
Available as free download as a pdf file for printing from www.legislation.gov.uk.

"Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances: Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Approved Code of Practice and guidance"
ISBN 978-0-7176-6617-1. HSE reference L56 (Fourth Edition)
Published by the Health and Safety Executive. This document includes the full text of the Regulations accompanied by detailed guidance and explanatory notes.
Available from HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/pubns either as a free download or for purchase at a cost of £15.00.

A list of Gas Safe registered engineers can be found at www.gassafe.co.uk.

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APPENDIX 1

TABLE 1: Recommended Initial Frequencies of Inspection of Electrical Installations

Type of Installation	Routine check	Max period between inspections and testing as necessary	Reference (see notes below)
GENERAL INSTALLATION			
Domestic accommodation – General		Change of occupancy or 5 years	
Domestic accommodation – Rented houses and flats	1 year	Change of occupancy or 5 years	1, 2, 10
Domestic accommodation – (Houses of Multiple Occupation),- halls of residence, nurses accommodation, etc	1 year	Change of occupancy or 5 years	1, 2, 10, 11
Commercial	1 year	Change of occupancy or 5 years	1,2, 3, 4
Domestic accommodation – General	N/A	Change of occupancy or 10 years	N/A
Educational establishments	6 months	5 years	1,2, 6
Industrial	1 year	3 years	1,2
Offices	1 year	5 years	1,2
Shops	1 year	5 years	1,2
Laboratories	1 year	5 years	1,2
HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CLINICS			
Hospitals and medical clinics – General areas	1 year	5 years	1, 2
Hospitals and medical clinics – Medical locations	6 months	1 year	9
BUILDINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC			
Cinemas	1 year	1 to 3 years	2,6
Church installations	1 year	5 years (quinquennially)	2

Type of Installation	Routine check	Max period between inspections and testing as necessary	Reference (see notes below)
Leisure complexes (excluding swimming pools)	1 year	3 years	1,2,6
Places of public entertainment	1 year	3 years	1,2,6
Restaurants and hotels	1 year	5 years	1,2,6
Theatres	1 year	3 years	2,6,7
Public Houses	1 year	5 years	1,2,6
Village halls/ Community centres	1 year	5 years	1,2
SPECIAL AND SPECIFIC INSTALLATIONS (For medical locations see above)			
Agricultural and horticultural	1 year	3 years	1,2
Caravans	1 year	3 years	7
Caravan Parks	6 months	1 year	1,2,6
Highway power supplies	As convenient	6 – 8 years	
Marinas	4 months	1 year	1,2
Fish Farms	4 months	1 year	1,2
Swimming Pools	4 months	1 year	1, 2, 6
Emergency lighting	Daily/monthly	3 years	2,3,4
Fire Alarms	Daily/weekly	1 year	2,4,5
Laundrettes	1 month	1 year	1,2,6
Petrol filling stations	1 year	1 year	1,2,6
Construction site installations	3 months	3 months	1,2

REFERENCES FOR TABLE 1:

1. Particular attention must be taken to comply with SI 2002 No. 2665 Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002 (as amended)
2. Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, Regulation 4 and memorandum of guidance (HSR 25) published by the HSE.
3. See BS5266 Part 1: 2005 Code of practice for the emergency lighting of premises.
4. Other intervals are recommended for testing operation of batteries and generators.
5. See BS5839-Part1:2002 + Amendment 2:2008 Fire detection and alarm systems for buildings. Code of practice for system design, installation, commissioning and maintenance.
6. Local Authority Conditions of Licence.
7. It is recommended that a caravan is inspected and tested every three years, reduced to every year if it is used frequently, (See Regulation 721.514.1 and figure 271 – Instructions for electrical supply)
8. The person carrying out some of the inspections may recommend that the interval between future inspections be increased or decreased as a result of the findings of their inspection.

9. Medical locations shall have their isolating transformer equipment inspected and tested for functionality as well as alarms etc; every third year the output leakage current of the IT isolating equipment shall be measured.
10. The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 requires that properties under the Act have their services maintained. Periodic inspection and testing is the IET recognised method of demonstrating this.
11. The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulation (England and Wales)

NOTES TO TABLE 1:

- The information in the above table and references are taken from the recommendations in the IET Guidance Note 3, 2015 amendment. The testing intervals are recommended and not dictated by law.
- Specific intervals between inspections/testing may be imposed on the church by other interested parties, such as insurers, trustees, head property office or diocese which may differ to the above recommended intervals.
- Church properties which also hold a public entertainment licence may be obliged to conduct inspections/tests at intervals applicable to places of public entertainment for those sections of the building to which the licence applies. Check with licensing authority.
- Apart from the intervals for inspections in relation to the general installation in a church building, certain installations, such as fire alarm systems or escape lighting may be subject to more frequent inspections.

APPENDIX 2

TABLE 2: Recommended Initial Intervals for Checking Portable Electrical Equipment

Equipment/Environment	User checks	Formal visual inspection	Combined inspection and testing
Battery operated (Less than 40 volts)	No	No	No
Extra low voltage (less than 50 volts AC) Telephone equipment, low voltage desk lights	No	No	No
Desktop computers, VDU screens	No	Yes 2 to 4 years	No if double insulated, Otherwise up to 5 years
Photocopiers, fax machines: Not hand held. Rarely moved	No	Yes 2 to 4 years	No if double insulated, Otherwise up to 5 years
Double insulated ▣ (Class II) equipment: Not hand held. Moved occasionally, e.g. fans, table lamps	No	Yes 2 to 4 years	No
Double insulated ▣ (Class II) equipment: Hand held. e.g. some cleaners, some kitchen and irons	Yes	Yes 6 months to 1 year	No
Earthed equipment (Class I): Electric kettles, some floor cleaners, some kitchen equipment and irons	Yes	Yes 6 months to 1 year	Yes 1 to 2 years
Cables (leads and plugs connected to the above) and mains voltage extension leads and battery-charging equipment	Yes	Yes 6 months to 4 years depending upon the type of equipment it is connected to.	Yes 1 to 5 years depending upon the type of equipment it is connected to.

NOTES TO TABLE 2:

- The information in this table is taken from the recommendations made by the Health and Safety Executive in their guidance document HSG107 (Third Edition). The testing intervals are recommended and not dictated by law.
- The contents of the table are not specifically written for church premises; although they are in respect of portable electrical equipment held in a low-risk environment, such as an office,

shop or residential care home. Therefore some of the categories of equipment may not be applicable to some church situations.

- Different recommended test intervals apply to other circumstances which are not considered low risk, such as equipment hire, construction equipment, industrial equipment, laundries or sports facilities. These recommendations are not included here as they will not be relevant to most church premises, but details of recommended testing for appliances in such circumstances are published by HSE.
- Note that double insulated Class II appliances are not recommended for testing by a portable appliance test, but are recommended to have regular visual/user checks.
- Note that the recommendations do not necessarily imply that tests should be undertaken every year.
- After the first few visual inspections and the first few formal tests, the information can be revised to adjust the intervals between future inspections. A low failure rate would indicate that the inspection/test intervals could possibly be increased, but a high failure rate would suggest that inspection/test intervals should be shortened.

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