

Electricity and Electrical Equipment Policy

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Key messages

The main objective of this policy and procedure is to:

- Inform ICO staff and users of ICO premises of the arrangements for the placement and management of electrical systems and equipment in the office.
- Establish systems to ensure that electrical systems are safe and adequately maintained.
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to electrical equipment.

Does this policy relate to me?

The policy relates to all staff and users of ICO premises.

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1. Introduction and policy position

- 1.1. The Information Commissioner's Office will provide safe working environments for staff. This includes the provision of electrical systems in our offices which are well maintained, and electrical equipment which is safe and suitable for the tasks being done both in the office or at home.
- 1.2. This document describes our approach to ensuring we are able to do this effectively and the part that you, as an ICO staff member or user of our premises, need to play to help us to do this.
- 1.3. This document also describes what the ICO will do in order to maintain safe systems of work with respect to Electricity.
- 1.4 This policy and procedure applies to all ICO sites, though specific arrangements may vary depending on whether the ICO has responsibility of the electrical systems or if that rests with the landlord or major tenant.

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2. Authorised equipment

- 2.1 Only electrical equipment which has been purchased by the ICO, or has been authorised for use by the Facilities Manager or Health and Safety Manager, can be used in the ICO's offices.

This means that you cannot bring in your own equipment from home for use in the office without authorisation. Authorisation to use equipment will only be given if the item is new or if it passes electrical testing.

Equipment such as portable heaters, toasters or other cooking devices will never be authorised given the increased risk of fire or causing injury.

- 2.2 Items of electrical equipment will be labelled and identified by serial/code number, and details of this equipment will be recorded on an inventory which will be retained by the Facilities Team.
- 2.3 Equipment that has not been authorised will be removed from use.

3. Inspection of equipment

- 3.1. There is no legislative requirement for Portable Appliance Testing (commonly referred to as PAT testing). Instead, the law simply requires employers to ensure that their electrical equipment is maintained to prevent danger – it doesn't say how this should be done or how often. Employers should take a risk management based approach, considering the type of equipment and what it is being used for.
- 3.2 At the ICO we will ensure that electrical equipment based in our offices is PAT tested at least every two years, taking on board the advice of the test contractor or product manufacturer and conducting more frequent checks where appropriate.

This approach surpasses the requirements of the law, but will enable us to minimise risk as office based equipment typically has different users each day and people may be less familiar with the operation of devices.

Records of tests will be kept by the Facilities Team.

- 3.3 There is not a two yearly PAT testing regime for equipment used for home working.

As described in our [Working Safely at Home policy](#) laptops and monitors are the most frequently provided items of electrical equipment for home working, and the Health and Safety Executive suggest test frequencies of up to four years for these devices. Laptops and chargers are replaced every three years, which is within the suggested period for testing.

You should check your monitor at home regularly. The Working Safely at Home policy informs you how to conduct a visual inspection.

We will invite staff to bring in monitors for formal testing by the Facilities Team periodically.

If you have any concerns about equipment you are using at home, you must stop using it and return it to the office for inspection or replacement.

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4. Faults and defects

- 4.1 If you notice any faults or defects with equipment, you are responsible for bringing them to the attention of the relevant team. Faults with IT equipment must be reported using the [IT Self-Service Portal](#). Issues with other equipment must be reported to facilities@ico.org.uk.
- 4.2 Typical faults include 'on/off' switches that do not appear to work, plugs or motors on fans that seem to get too hot, and power cables that have been damaged or frayed.
- 4.3 Any equipment which is thought to be faulty will be removed from use by the Facilities team.
- 4.4 If repairs, rather than replacement, of faulty electrical equipment is appropriate, this must be done by a competent person. Unless you have been authorised to do so, you should not attempt to repair or use equipment that is suspected to be faulty.

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5. Electrical systems

- 5.1 The Facilities and Estates team will liaise with landlords to ensure that the electrical systems in each building meet the requirements of the ICO.

- 5.2 Electrical installations should be tested often enough that there is little chance of deterioration leading to danger. At the ICO offices a Electrical Installation Condition Report (sometimes referred to Fixed Wire Testing) will be conducted at least every five years.
- 5.3 Electrical systems checks or maintenance will only be conducted by a competent contractor who has received a Permit to Work to access the systems being testing (see the Permit to Work/Permit to Access procedure). This will include the production of Risk Assessments and Method Statements, with arrangements made with the Facilities team for electrical systems to be switched off unless there is a specific requirement for live working, and appropriate safety arrangements are in place.
- 5.4 Staff are not permitted to access electrical cupboards, as this poses a risk of electric shock or electrocution.
- 5.5 Staff must ensure that they do not overload the electrical system, for example by plugging in too many items into an extension lead. The Working Safely at Home policy advises how to ensure such extension leads are not overloaded when homeworking.

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Feedback on this document

If you have any feedback on this document, please [click this link](#) to provide it.

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Version history

Version	Changes made	Date	Made by
5.0	Review of existing policy and content placed in new policy template	September 2023	Mike Collins
6.0	Review of existing policy and revision of governance formatting	September 2025	Mike Collins

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