

Helping To Shine Light On PAT



Portable Appliance Testing – often referred to as PAT is a means of checking the safety and integrity of electrical appliances. Different ranges of tests are performed on different ranges of equipment. Outlined below are the general tests and the reasons for doing so. While it is not a legal requirement you may be asked for it at some venues of entertainment. Fail to prepare, prepare to fail.

Visual inspection - This is the most important of all the tests. 95% of all failures will be through a visual inspection. It is a simple precaution that can be undertaken by almost anyone, things to check are:

Damage e.g. cuts, abrasions to the cable covering.

Damage to the plug e.g. the casing is cracked or the pins are bent.

Non standard connections e.g. taped joints in the cable.

Outer covering sheath of the cable not gripped where it enters the plug or the equipment.

Look to see if the coloured insulation of the internal wire is showing.

Sign of damage to outer cover of equipment. Hole big enough for a pencil to reach electrical parts. Insecure fastenings e.g. loose screws.

Overheating, burn marks or stains on the plug top or socket.

Open plug top to check that correct fuse is being used, terminal screws are tight and plug is terminated correctly, also that the cable grip is secure and firmly holding the lead.

Cord test - This tests the integrity of the mains cord. The cord test checks the polarity of the mains conductors, the phase, neutral and earth insulation and the safety earth continuity where an earth conductor is used. This test ensures that the mains cable is safe to use.

Exemptions - Sensitive equipment such as IT, digital effects/amplifiers are generally exempt from high voltage insulation tests which may cause damage to the equipment.

Labelling - On successful completion a green PASS label is applied to the equipment.

Frequency of checks - Usually conducted every 12 months. This will vary according to usage of equipment and the environment it is exposed to.

More information - This guide is merely a general overview for the benefit of musicians. For an authoritative statement contact The Musicians' Union - www.musiciansunion.org.uk In terms of PAT testing I would recommend you visit www.niceic.org.uk It has the list of requirements and a list of contractors in your area. There is a HSE booklet entitled "Electrical Safety For Entertainers" Ref INDG247 freely available from www.hse.gov.uk

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