

Portable Electrical Equipment

There have been a number of electrical incidents reported across the department. Of these, several have involved a person suffering an electric shock whilst using a range of portable electrical items including: computer equipment, cleaning equipment, cooling equipment and other assorted devices. These incidents have resulted in situations where the user was injured as a result of the electric shock.

Hazards/Risks

Portable electrical items pose a specific risk to users. This is accentuated when the equipment is damaged and specifically when live wiring or components are exposed and contactable by the user. In these instances, there is a high likelihood of an electric shock occurring when contact is made with live wire/components.

Action required by Schools/Workplaces

Schools/workplaces are required to immediately review their portable electrical equipment and undertake the following specific actions:

- Operators of portable electrical equipment are to conduct a visual inspection of the equipment **prior to each use**, to identify:
 - any damage, exposed wires, cuts, nicks, abrasions to the electrical cord attached to the item (Figure 1)
 - any damage or exposed internal components, any damage to the outer casing or the handle of the item.
- All electrical items are to be managed according to the [Guide to Managing Electrical Equipment in departmental schools and workplaces](#).



Figure 1

Actions to take if damage is identified

Where damage exceeds cosmetic/superficial damage and/or where the damage may affect the safe handling or operation of the equipment:

- **do not use the item** - turn off the power, unplug it and remove the item to ensure it cannot be used inadvertently
- items removed from service should be segregated from serviceable items to avoid inadvertent use **and** also be tagged with appropriate signage to indicate that it is 'Out of order' or 'Do not operate' (Figure 2)
- if the item is repairable, arrange for the item to be repaired by a qualified person
- if the item is not repairable, arrange for the item to be disposed of immediately
- where the item cannot be effectively segregated from serviceable items, apply additional precautions to prevent inadvertent use e.g. lock out mechanisms (where fitted), removal of parts (e.g. drill bits, blades from workshop tools) etc.



Figure 2

For clarification or support please contact your [Regional Health and Safety Consultant](#).