

IT Electrical Equipment Home Checks

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Testing Myths

Myth: All office electrical equipment must be tested by a qualified electrician

No. The law requires employers to assess risks and take appropriate action. The advice of the HSE is that for most office equipment visual checks for obvious damage are sufficient.

Checking Electrical Equipment

This guidance is relevant for:

- ▶ Desktop computers that are plugged into the mains
- ▶ Laptop charging systems that are plugged directly into the mains, but they are not applicable to battery powered equipment
- ▶ Any extension cables that you might use to run your computer equipment from.

References

References used when compiling this guidance

Health and Safety Executive. Maintaining portable electric equipment in low-risk environments. INDG236(REV3)
[Download a free copy - INDG236](#)

Unplug Equipment Before Making the Checks

Unplug the equipment before making any checks. A damaged power cable or plug may expose live electrical wires and you don't want to touch these other than when they are dead.

Check the plug for damage

- Check that the plug has a CE or BS mark
- Check that the plug casing has no chips, cracks or other damage
- Check that the plug has no bent or loose pins
- Check that the plug has no burn marks or discoloration
- Check that the correct fuse has been fitted – most IT equipment needs a 5 Amp fuse
- Check that the cable wires are not visible where the cable exits the plug

If a plug fails any of these checks, then it should not be used and a replacement should be sought.

Check the cable for damage.

- Check the cable has no cuts, cracks or signs of wear to the cable covering
- Check the cable has no joints or connectors or coverings that might mask damage (such as insulation tape)
- Check the cable has no signs of discoloration or other signs of burning or heating
- Check the cable has no kinks or bulges, particularly in areas where the cable may be twisted or folded

If the cable fails any of these checks, then it should not be used and a replacement should be sought.

Check the appliance case for damage

- Check the appliance case for chips, cracks or other damage
- Check the appliance case for damage where the power cable enters the appliance

If the appliance fails any of these checks, then it should not be used and a replacement should be sought.

Check your power socket for damage

- Check the power socket has no chips, cracks or other damage
- Check the power socket has no burn marks or discoloration

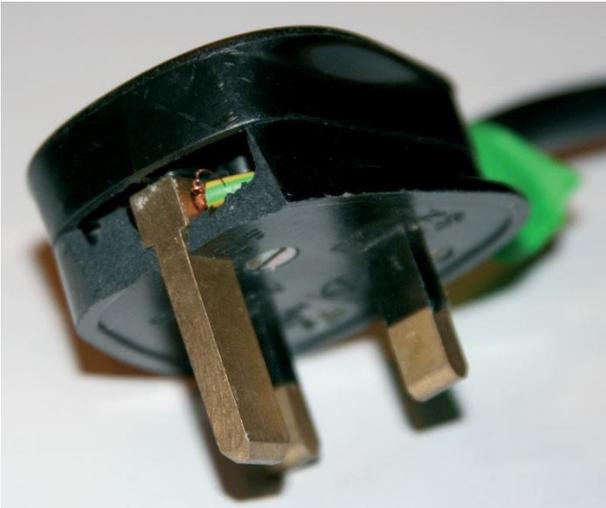
If your socket fails the checks then it shouldn't be used and you will need the services of an electrician. The socket is your responsibility and not the Universities.

- Check the power socket is not overloaded – the total loading shouldn't exceed 13 Amps

As a rule of thumb, it should be possible to run one computer and two monitors from an extension cable plugged into a single socket.

If your equipment passed all the checks then you are ready to go. If not, you need to seek assistance to replace plugs, cable or appliances.

Faulty Plugs Examples



Check that the plug casing has no chips, cracks or other damage



Check that the plug casing has no chips, cracks or other damage
Check that the plug has no burn marks or discoloration



Check that the cable wires are not visible where the cable exits the plug

Faulty Cables Examples



Check the cable has no cuts, cracks or signs of wear to the cable covering



Check the cable has no cuts, cracks or signs of wear to the cable covering

Check the cable has no joints or connectors or covering that might mask damage (such as insulation tape)



Check the cable has no cuts, cracks or signs of wear to the cable covering



Check the cable has no cuts, cracks or signs of wear to the cable covering

Check the cable has no joints or connectors or covering that might mask damage (such as insulation tape)



Check the cable has no joints or connectors or covering that might mask damage (such as insulation tape)



Check the cable has no cuts, cracks or signs of wear to the cable covering

Faulty Appliance Case Examples



Check the appliance case for chips, cracks or other damage

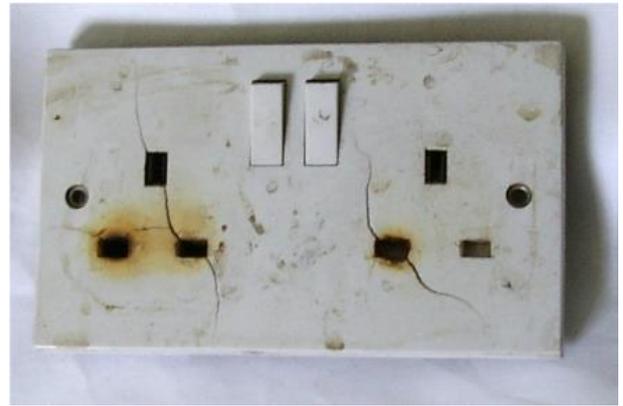


Check the appliance case for chips, cracks or other damage
Check the appliance case for damage where the power cable enters the appliance

Faulty Sockets Examples



Check the power socket has no chips, cracks or other damage
Check the power socket has no burn marks or discoloration



Check the power socket has no chips, cracks or other damage
Check the power socket has no burn marks or discoloration



Check the power socket has no chips, cracks or other damage



Check the power socket has no chips, cracks or other damage

Overloaded Sockets Examples



Check the power socket is not overloaded – the total loading shouldn't exceed 13 Amps