

Policy	Electrical Safety
Policy Ref:	PHL POL 22
Approved by:	Board
Date Approved	12 th November 2019
Updated	15 th December 2020 (reviewed & re-approved)
Reviewed	04 June 2024
Lead Officer/post	Chief Development Officer

1.0 Policy Statement

This policy applies to all Preferred Homes Limited ('PHL') workplaces, work activities and premises. Electricity is present in all PHL workplaces and is used by employees and service users. This document outlines the PHL policy and the arrangements in place to ensure that electrical systems and equipment are safe. This Policy ensures that the risks associated with electricity are adequately controlled by ensuring that:

- All fixed electrical systems (in buildings owned or occupied by PHL) have a valid Electrical Installation Certificate (EIC) or Condition Report (EICR) that is no older than five (5) years and a copy certificate will be provided to the resident within 28 days
- All communal areas of blocks will have a valid Electrical Installation Certificate (EIC) or Condition Report (EICR) that is no older than five (5) years.
- All void properties have an appropriate EIC or EICR undertaken prior to the property being relet
- Electrical appliances are tested at suitable intervals

2.0 Definitions

- **Fixed electrical systems** – Electrical systems which are normally part of the structure of the building or wired into the building circuit and are not portable, such as emergency lighting systems, fuse boards and fire alarms
- **Electrical appliances (also called Portable Electrical Equipment)** – Electrical equipment which does not form part of the fixed system, and which is an electrical appliance. They may be fitted with a plug but not be very portable e.g. washing machines or may be wired directly into the fixed electrical system via an electrical spur or isolator e.g. air conditioning units, wall heaters, washing machines, projectors and hand driers
- **Competent person** – Any person contracted or employed to carry out electrical work must be a qualified electrician who will undertake the task in a safe manner and leave the equipment or system in a safe condition
- **User checks** – An external visual examination to identify defects in equipment which can be undertaken by the PHL electrical contractor
- **Formal visual inspection** – Detailed formal inspection the results of which are recorded and undertaken by a qualified electrician at specified intervals combining visual inspection and testing
- **Responsible person** – Qualified Electrician

3.0 Arrangements for Applying the Policy

PHL arrangements for applying the electrical safety policy are detailed below.

- 3.1 No works, repairs or modifications to fixed electrical equipment or electrical appliances may be undertaken unless they are undertaken by an authorised person.
- 3.2 Where the normal use of electrical equipment presents a significant risk, a risk assessment must be undertaken. The use of well-maintained electrical equipment for the purpose for which it was intended may not require a risk assessment. Work on fixed electrical systems may have several associated risks with the work and these should be fully considered and controlled prior to the onset of work. A Permit to Work Form should be completed, and risk assessments carried out where necessary. Issues such as the presence of asbestos, proximity of service users and alternative accommodation may need to be considered.
- 3.3 Electrical Equipment should be selected after carefully considering the intended use and the conditions under which it will be used. Equipment should be suitable for the purpose and carry a CE (or equivalent standard) mark.
- 3.4 Where electrical equipment or appliances are to be used outdoors or in hazardous environments a suitable risk assessment shall be completed. All electrical equipment used outdoors is required to have residual current protection (RCD). The RCD used to provide this protection is required to have a residual operating current not exceeding 30mA. The socket outlet used to supply equipment outdoors must have RCD protection. A suitable waterproof externally mounted socket outlet incorporating residual current protection may be used where the rating does not exceed 30mA. If there is any doubt, a plug-in portable RCD device/RCD adaptor should be used.
- 3.5 No repairs or modifications to electrical appliances are to be carried out unless they are undertaken by an authorised person. Where repairs are carried out, the equipment must be subjected to combined inspection and testing with the equipment inventory updated.
- 3.6 Employees wishing to bring their own equipment onto the premises must get approval and authorisation from their line manager. Privately owned electrical appliances should be new and have a CE label. Draft arrangements are to be in place in order to have the equipment added to the equipment inventory and should be subjected to an electrical appliance test on the next session of testing that occurs. If the appliance is not new, then it must be electrically tested before being put into use.
- 3.7 Contractors should not use PHL electrical equipment during their activities. Those arranging for contractors to undertake work should ensure that all electrical contractor's equipment used on PHL property is subject to a programme of inspection and testing.

4.0 Servicing of electrical appliances

Servicing and testing of electrical appliances will be undertaken in accordance with any instructions from the manufacturer. All electrical appliances will be routinely examined to ensure that they are safe. There are three levels of examination which should be undertaken these are, user checks, formal visual inspection and detailed inspection and testing. The frequency of inspection and testing will be based upon an assessment which considers the following:

- The environment in which the equipment is used
- Frequency and type of use to which the equipment is subjected
- The age and condition of the equipment
- The level of portability of the equipment

4.1 User checks

Approximately 95% of faults and damage to electrical appliances can be identified by a visual inspection. A brief visual inspection should be carried out on frequently used or movable equipment each time it is used.

4.2 Formal visual inspection

In addition to user checks, equipment which is frequently used, or which is used in harsh conditions should receive a visual inspection which is formally recorded. Examples of equipment that might require formal visual inspection include handheld equipment and moveable equipment which is frequently used outside. The necessity and frequency of formal visual inspections should be based upon a risk assessment but must not exceed six months. A formal visual inspection should be undertaken routinely by an authorised person. The formal visual inspection should not include taking the equipment apart and should be confined, where necessary, to the combined inspection and testing.

4.3 Combined visual inspection and testing

PHL will ensure that an inventory of all electrical appliances is prepared and maintained with the individual identification number for all equipment recorded. Electrical appliances must be inspected and tested on a regular basis and a suitable label affixed, indicating the date of test, the date due for re-test and the item identification used within the equipment inventory. The maximum intervals for testing are:

- Period Portable Appliance: An appliance of less than 18kg in mass that is intended to be moved whilst in operation or an appliance which can easily be moved from one place to another e.g. vacuum cleaner, every 2 years
- Movable Equipment: This equipment is either 18 kg or less in mass and not fixed, e.g. electric fire or equipment with wheels, castors or other means to facilitate movement by the operator as required to perform its intended use, every 2 years
- Handheld Equipment or Appliances: This is portable equipment intended for use to be held in the hand during normal use, e.g. drill, annual
- Stationary Equipment or Appliances: This equipment has a mass exceeding 18kg and is not provided with a carrying handle, e.g. refrigerator, every 4 Years
- Fixed Equipment / Appliances: This is equipment or an appliance which is fastened to a support or otherwise secured in a specific location, e.g. room heater, every 4 Years
- Information Technology Equipment: This includes electrical business equipment such as computers, laptops and mains powered telecommunications equipment, and other equipment for general business use, every 4 Years

If as a result of inspection and testing the equipment is found to be defective it must be removed from use and repaired, retested or discarded.

5.0 Fixed Electrical Systems

Fixed electrical systems at premises must be inspected and tested in accordance with the 18th edition of the IEE Wiring Regulations BS7671:2008. Properties will be inspected in line with property type and at a change of tenancy. The authorised person undertaking the testing must provide a certificate and this must be kept along with records of maintenance undertaken.

5.1 Repair and Alteration of Fixed Electrical Systems

No repair or modification to fixed electrical installation may be undertaken unless by an authorised person who is accredited with NICEIC, ECA or an equivalent organisation. Any alterations must comply with the requirements of the 18th Edition of the IEE Wiring Regulations. On completion of the work a certificate must be issued which will be retained by the premise manager.

5.2 Live Working

Working on or near equipment that is at a voltage as a result of being connected to a source of electricity. The live parts are accessible so that they can be touched either directly or indirectly by means of some conducting object. Live working must not be undertaken unless there is no other method of undertaking the work. If live working is to be undertaken, a safe system of work must be produced, and this will comply with the requirements of HSG 85 Electricity at Work – Safe Working Practices. This type of work must not be undertaken without prior discussion with PHL.

5.3 Earthing / Bonding

The use of competent contractors will normally ensure that earthing is reinstated or installed where necessary. Adequate earthing of equipment and fittings is required and should be maintained during refurbishment works particularly in kitchens and toilets during refits.

5.4 Electrical Distribution Boards/Cupboards/Substations and Plant Rooms

Materials must not be stored on or in distribution boards, cupboards and substations as they may present a fire hazard and restrict access for isolation. Access to these facilities must be restricted to authorised personnel only. Electrical distribution boards/cupboards/substations must display signage to warn of the danger of unauthorised access.

5.5 Lightning Protection Systems

Where lightning protection systems have been installed in a premise they must be adequately maintained. The main equipotential bonding conductors for the system should be tested every 5 years as part of the fixed electrical system test.

6.0 Key Accountabilities

Staff with responsibility for arranging works to premises must ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- Work may only commence when measures to deal with any identified hazards have been agreed
- Where work to the fixed electrical system is undertaken, that it complies with the 18th Edition of the IEE regulations and is undertaken by qualified persons and a suitable certificate is provided on completion.

6.1 **Premise Managers/Responsible Person**

All Managers across PHL to whom Responsible Person responsibilities have been delegated will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that the following requirements are met at the premises under their control:

- Adequate funds are made available to meet the costs of the required testing and inspection arrangements
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that adequate safety precautions exist to ensure that employees and other persons are not exposed to electrical hazards
- A Contractors Permit to Work is completed prior to the start of any work
- A programme of inspection and testing for electrical appliances is in place which considers the frequency of use, environment of use and nature of the equipment
- Where the testing of a fixed electrical system or electrical appliance identifies that remedial works are required the remedial work is undertaken in an identified timescale or is taken out of use
- Where work has been undertaken on the fixed electrical system the appropriate certificate is obtained from the contractor on completion and is retained
- Each item of electrical appliance is identified and labelled with a reference number, the date of inspection, and the date on which it is next to be inspected
- An inventory of electrical appliances is created and maintained
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that damaged or defective equipment is taken out of use immediately and use is prevented until suitable disposal or repair is arranged
- No live work is undertaken unless essential, and that detailed arrangements for the work are agreed in advance with PHL

6.3 **Managers**

Managers with line management responsibility for employees and equipment must ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Only equipment which is authorised is in use
- The relevant premise manager is notified of any additions, deletions or transfers of electrical equipment
- Electrical appliances are made available for inspection and testing in accordance with the devised programme
- Electrical equipment which has not been inspected or tested as required by the programme is taken out of use until it has been inspected and tested

- Adequate information, instruction and training is provided to employees about the safe use of electrical equipment. Reference should be made to the manufacturer's restrictions and instructions for use
- Repairs or modifications to electrical equipment and systems are undertaken only by competent and authorised persons

6.4 Employees

Every employee of PHL will:

- Take reasonable care for the health safety and welfare of themselves and that of others who may be affected by their activities in relation to any contact or involvement with electrical equipment or systems
- Co-operate in the implementation of the Electrical Safety Policy, and any organisational arrangements and procedures
- Only use electrical equipment which is authorised for use at work
- Report damaged or defective electrical equipment and systems to their manager

7.0 Legislative Framework

The following pieces of legislation have shaped this document:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- IEE Wiring Regulations – 18th Edition BS7671:2008
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (section 11)

8.0 Equality

This policy has been Equality Impact Assessed. The policy aims to meet the diverse needs of the workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. The Equality Impact Assessment confirms that this policy meets the standards.

9.0 Further Advice and Information

This policy document is for general guidance only. If any further advice on how to apply this policy please is required this should be directed to PHL Head Office.