

Formal visual inspections

An important part of a maintenance regime is the formal visual inspection. Such inspections are necessary because they can reveal most potentially dangerous faults. They can normally be carried out by a member of staff who has sufficient information and knowledge of what to look for, what is acceptable, and who has been given the task of carrying out the inspection (that is, they are competent to do the task). To avoid danger, trained people should know when the limit of their knowledge and experience has been reached. Simple, written guidance relating to the formal visual inspection can be produced that summarises what to look for and which procedures to follow when faults are found or when unauthorised equipment is found in use. This guidance can also help equipment users.

These inspections can help to control the risks and to monitor the user checks. A competent person should carry out regular inspections that include checks similar to those in paragraphs 38–39 but undertaken in a more formal and systematic manner.

As part of the visual inspection, you should also consider whether:

- the electrical equipment is being used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- equipment is suitable for the job
- there has been any change of circumstances
- the user has reported any issues

Additional checks could include removing the plug cover to ensure:

- there are no signs of internal damage, overheating or water damage to the plug the correct fuse is in use and it is a proper fuse, not a piece of wire, nail etc
- the wires including the earth, where fitted, are attached to the correct terminals
- the terminal screws are tight
- the cord grip is holding the outer part (sheath) of the cable tightly; and
- no bare wire is visible other than at the terminals.