

**NASUWT
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The Teachers' Union



Undeb yr Athrawon

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Electrical Safety

NASUWT Wales

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The largest teachers' union in Wales

16/07025 Wales

health&safety
at work

The largest teachers' union in Wales

This leaflet provides essential information and advice on electrical safety regulations and procedures in schools and colleges.

Health and safety standards

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 established the relevant standards that apply to schools.

In addition, there are various relevant British Standards and some codes of practice that apply.

Responsibility for safety

Responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of workers falls upon the employer under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

However, all employees are obliged to care for the safety of themselves and others.

NASUWT members are advised not to maintain or seek to repair electrical equipment.

The danger areas

Any area in which electrical apparatus is used is potentially dangerous, especially if water is also present.

A normal mains voltage of 230 volts AC can kill if contact is made with live parts. Faults with electrical equipment can also cause fire even where there is no risk of shock.

There are potential risks associated with the use of portable electrical devices, including audiovisual and computer equipment.

Where there is a greater risk of injury, such as where electrical installations are in close proximity to water outlets, a high standard of electrical protection is important.

General safety rules

Electrical equipment and installations (e.g. stage lights) should be maintained and repaired only by a competent person who has the technical knowledge, experience and skills necessary to do so.

There should be no expectation or requirement placed on a teacher to maintain the safety of electrical equipment.

The employer's guidelines for the use of electrical equipment by children must be complied with.

It is important that all staff are made aware of how to administer first aid to the victim of an electrical shock without endangering themselves.

All electrical equipment, fittings and installations should be inspected by a qualified person on a regular basis but teachers should conduct a visual check for any obvious faults, e.g. bare wires, frayed cables, signs of overheating or burning before use.

Inspection and risk assessment

It is the employer's responsibility to inspect on a regular basis all electrical equipment, fittings and installations.

This inspection should always be carried out by a person possessing sufficient technical knowledge, experience and skills.

A risk assessment should be undertaken by the employer where there is the potential for harm to be caused and measures to control risks should be implemented.

An inventory of all electrical equipment, fittings and installations on the site should be drawn up. This should record the serial number or another form of identification.

An inspection should take place at least at the following intervals (and more frequently in areas of high usage or subject to abuse):

- **FIXED INSTALLATIONS:** every five years at least;
- **TEMPORARY INSTALLATIONS:** every three months;
- **PORTABLE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:** visually each term with a thorough inspection and test each year.

Any concerns should be raised with the headteacher. Members should also notify the NASUWT.

Advice and support

Where an NASUWT member suffers any injury, they should telephone the NASUWT free Legal Advice Line 0808 100 2221.

For additional advice and support, contact your NASUWT Local Association or Wales Centre.

Contact details can be found:

- on the NASUWT website at www.nasuwt.org.uk;
- in the NASUWT diary; or
- by phoning 029 2054 6080.

Further information

Advice on the application of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 is available from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Area Offices.

The HSE guidance *Electricity at Work: Safe working practices, Maintaining portable electrical equipment in low-risk environments* and a *Memorandum of Guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations* can be found on the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk.