

PAT Tester

Introduction

As a Portable Appliance Tester (PAT), you will be checking electrical appliances to make sure that they are safe to use.

Also known as

- Portable Appliance Electrician
- Portable Appliance Testing Engineer

Work Activities

As a PAT Tester, you will inspect all electrical appliances to make sure that they are safe to use.

You will carry out two checks which are given below:

Formal Visual Inspection

This is where you will check for any signs of damage to the plug or lead. You could be asking questions such as:

- are there any exposed wires?
- has the mains lead been cut?
- are there any signs of overheating?
- are there any signs of damage to the casing of the plug?

Electrical Testing

You will carry out two electrical checks.

The first check is an Earth Continuity Test. The purpose of this is to check that there is a good connection between the Earth pin and the external case of the plug.

You will then carry out relevant insulation tests. This is where you will check that there is enough insulation around the cable. This could be the rubber tube or the plastic casing around the appliance and wires. You will do this to make sure the user cannot touch the metal parts of appliance which could give them an electric shock.

If you find any faults, the user must stop using the appliance immediately. You will then need to make the repairs needed such as a new case of the plug or a new wire to make it safe.

You could be checking appliances such as:

- computer monitors
- kettles
- electric drills
- printers and photocopiers
- dishwashers
- vending machines
- fridges and freezers
- telephones
- vacuum cleaners

Some appliances are checked weekly, but most are checked every year.



Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

To become a PAT Tester, you need:

- good practical skills, to use a variety of tools and equipment
- to follow safety procedures very carefully
- strong problem-solving skills
- to pay close attention to detail
- to be well organised, thorough and methodical
- to enjoy seeing a job through from start to finish
- good communication and interpersonal skills
- to work well on your own and with others
- a calm, professional manner

You'll be required to pass a colour vision test. You may be required to have a current driving licence.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £19,000 - £20,500
- With experience: £22,500 - £27,000
- Senior PAT Testers earn £30,000 - £33,000

Hours of work

PAT Testers usually work 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday.

Where could I work?

Employers range from small, family electrical businesses to large national electrical contracting firms.

Opportunities for PAT Testers occur with employers in towns and cities throughout the UK.

Self-employment

Opportunities occur for qualified and experienced PAT Testers to become self-employed.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, on recruitment and employers' websites, and on Find a Job (www.gov.uk/jobsearch).

Social media websites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, are a great way to network, find vacancies and get in contact with possible employers. Make sure that your profile presents you in a professional manner that will appeal to potential employers.

Take a look at our General Information Article 'Finding Work Online'.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

An Intermediate or Advanced Level Apprenticeship is a great place to start. Take a look at our information article 'Apprenticeships – How do I apply', for more details about applying for apprenticeship positions.

Various vocational BTEC and City & Guilds qualifications are available and could help you to get into this career - see below for more details.

You could take a course in PAT Testing. It will show you other ways of providing a service to your customers. By the end of the course, you will have learnt:

- electrical safety
- insulation and earthing
- how to use a Portable Appliance Tester
- types, use and testing of electrical equipment
- how to use other test instruments for PAT testing

Work Experience

Previous experience working as an Electrician would be really useful for this career.

Progression

PAT Testers can progress to specialist posts or to Team Leader positions after further training and experience. Some qualified and experienced PAT Testers become self-employed.

If you wanted to move into higher-level jobs, a HNC, HND, foundation degree or degree in electrical and electronic engineering or building services engineering might help.

Qualifications

To get onto an Intermediate or Advanced Level Apprenticeship, you will usually need five GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, possibly including English and maths.

Further Information

Contacts

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
Tel: 0800 015 0400
Email: nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
Website: www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- **City & Guilds**
Address: 1 Giltspur Street, London EC1A 9DD
Tel: 020 7294 2468
Email: learnersupport@cityandguilds.com
Website: www.cityandguilds.com
- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 028 4844
Website: ams.careerswales.com/

Related Careers

- Domestic Appliance Service Engineer
- Maintenance Engineer
- Machine Operator
- Engineering Craft Machinist
- Office Machine Service Engineer
- Vehicle Body Refinisher

- Vehicle Body Repairer
- Welder
- Locksmith
- Toolmaker
- Watch and Clock Repairer
- Mechanic
- Lift Engineer
- Escalator Engineer