Electrical Safety Checklist for Australian Workplaces

Updated 29 October 2026 | Australia-wide guidance with NSW construction examples

Site / workplace: _____	**State / territory:** _____
Inspection date: _____	**Inspector:** _____
Work / environment: _____	**Follow-up owner:** _____

Quick answer: Identify your state or territory and work environment first. Use this checklist to check electrical equipment condition, required RCD protection, inspection and testing records, and safe isolation. Set a documented testing schedule for the equipment and work being done; there is no single test-and-tag or RCD testing interval for every Australian workplace.

Updated: 29 October 2026. References include AS/NZS 3760:2022 (including Amendment 1:2022), Safe Work Australia guidance and the NSW and Queensland regulator guidance linked below. Check the legislation and the edition of any standard required in your jurisdiction; a newer published standard does not automatically replace an edition called up by law.

Electricity kills and injures workers every year in Australian workplaces. Unlike many hazards, the danger is often invisible - a damaged lead, an untested RCD, or a wet floor near a power outlet can deliver a fatal shock with no warning. Businesses must manage electrical risks under the WHS or OHS and electrical safety laws applying to their work. Victoria has its own OHS framework; model WHS material is not itself the law in every jurisdiction.

This checklist is structured to work as a practical site walkthrough. Complete it at initial site set-up, after significant changes and at a frequency set by the workplace risk assessment. Record the site, state or territory, work environment, inspection date, inspector and follow-up owner. A walkthrough does not replace scheduled equipment or RCD testing.

Before using the testing sections, record which equipment is covered, the applicable local requirement or standard, the required test type and maximum interval, the competent tester, and the next due date. Construction and demolition work also has requirements under AS/NZS 3012 as applied in the relevant jurisdiction.

For a deeper understanding of electrical hazards and controls, refer to our guide: Electrical Hazards in the Workplace.

1. Residual Current Devices (RCDs)

RCDs (sometimes called safety switches) detect certain electrical faults and disconnect the supply to reduce electric shock risk. They do not protect against every electrical hazard or replace safe isolation. Confirm the required protection for the installation, equipment and work environment with an appropriately licensed electrical worker.

- ☐ Required RCD protection is provided for construction supplies and equipment used in higher-risk environments, including wet or outdoor conditions, in accordance with local requirements.
- ☐ Each RCD is identified as fixed or portable, and its push-button and operating-time/current test schedules are recorded separately.
- ☐ Push-button checks are current under the applicable schedule and manufacturer's instructions; users have been instructed how to perform them safely.
- ☐ Required operating-time/current testing by a competent person using suitable test equipment is current and records are retained.
- ☐ RCD test records are dated, signed by the tester, and stored on site or in the WHS management system.
- ☐ Any RCD that failed a push-button test or trip-time test has been taken out of service and reported for repair by a licensed electrician.

NSW construction and demolition example

The following maximum intervals come from SafeWork NSW's construction and demolition guidance. They apply to that context, not to all workplaces nationally.

Equipment or test	Maximum interval
Portable tools and extension leads: inspection and testing	3 months
Portable RCD: push-button check	Before each use
Portable RCD: operating-time test	3 months
Fixed RCD: push-button check	1 month
Fixed RCD: operating-time test	12 months

Other equipment classes, hire equipment and work environments have different requirements. For example, Queensland publishes separate equipment and RCD schedules by type of work. Check that schedule for Queensland work rather than applying the NSW example.

2. Test and Tag - Portable Appliances and Leads

AS/NZS 3760:2022 covers in-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment and RCDs. Identify the equipment subject to testing and tagging under local requirements before checking its status. Under the model WHS approach, routine testing is not a blanket requirement for every appliance in a dry, clean, low-risk office; equipment must still be safe. Local electrical safety rules, work conditions and manufacturer instructions may require additional controls.

- ☐ Equipment requiring periodic inspection, testing or tagging has been identified from the jurisdiction, equipment type and actual operating conditions.
- ☐ Required inspections and tests are current; tags are attached where required, including applicable construction-site requirements.
- ☐ Equipment in low-risk areas has been assessed for safe use and maintenance without assuming every kettle, fridge, charger or monitor needs the same testing schedule.
- ☐ The testing schedule records the applicable requirement, test type, maximum interval and next due date; it is reviewed when equipment or use conditions change.
- ☐ Records identify the equipment, tester, test date, result and next test due date, and are kept for the period required locally.
- ☐ Unsafe or failed equipment is disconnected or isolated, labelled "DO NOT USE," and removed from use until repaired and verified safe or disposed of; equipment overdue for a required test is not used until that requirement is met.

3. Visual Condition of Leads, Plugs, and Equipment

Check leads, plugs and equipment for visible damage before use, following the workplace procedure and manufacturer's instructions. This does not replace any required periodic inspection or electrical testing.

- ☐ No leads have visible cuts, abrasions, kinks, or exposed copper conductors.
- ☐ No plugs or sockets have cracked casings, bent pins, or scorch marks.
- ☐ No equipment has damaged housing, missing guards, or signs of burning or overheating.
- ☐ Leads are not run under doors, across walkways, or in any position where they can be damaged by foot traffic or vehicle movement.
- ☐ Extension leads are not daisy-chained (one extension lead plugged into another).
- ☐ Workers are instructed to report any damaged electrical equipment immediately and not to use it until inspected by a competent person.

4. Switchboards and Distribution Boards

Switchboards must be kept secure and free from combustible materials to prevent fire and to limit access to live parts.

- ☐ Switchboard enclosures are closed and latched (not propped open).
- ☐ Switchboard access is restricted to authorised persons - locked where accessible to the public or unauthorised workers.
- ☐ All circuit breakers and switches are labelled clearly and legibly.
- ☐ No combustible materials (cardboard, rags, timber) are stored in front of or adjacent to the switchboard.
- ☐ Required access and working clearances around the switchboard are maintained, as confirmed for the installation by an appropriately licensed electrical worker.
- ☐ The switchboard has no signs of burning, discolouration, or pest activity (insects, vermin).
- ☐ The switchboard diagram (as-built drawing) is current and accessible.

5. Overloaded Outlets and Circuits

Overloaded circuits are a leading cause of electrical fires. Double adaptors and piggyback plugs concentrate load on a single outlet not designed for it.

- ☐ No double adaptors or piggyback plugs are in use.
- ☐ Outlet assemblies are suitable for the work and load; domestic power boards are not used on NSW construction or demolition sites, where compliant construction outlet assemblies are required.
- ☐ No circuit breakers have been found tripped repeatedly without a diagnosed cause - repeated tripping indicates overloading or a fault that must be investigated by a licensed electrician.
- ☐ High-load equipment (welders, compressors, large air conditioners) is connected to dedicated circuits of the appropriate rating.

6. Wet Areas and Water Exclusion

Water dramatically reduces the resistance of the human body, making otherwise survivable shock voltages fatal.

- ☐ No extension leads or electrical equipment are resting on wet ground, wet concrete, or in areas subject to flooding or ponding.
- ☐ Leads are kept clear of puddles, trenches with water, and areas subject to rain ingress.
- ☐ Outdoor outlets and equipment have protection suitable for the actual water, dust and mechanical exposure, confirmed against local requirements and manufacturer instructions; a generic IP rating is not treated as suitable for every wet environment.
- ☐ Leads crossing wet areas are elevated or protected so they cannot contact standing water.

7. Isolation and Lockout/Tagout (LOTO)

Before any maintenance, adjustment, cleaning, or repair work on electrical equipment or plant, the energy source must be isolated and controlled.

- ☐ An isolation procedure (lockout/tagout) is documented and available to all relevant workers.
- ☐ Personal safety locks and danger tags are available at the worksite.
- ☐ Workers required to isolate equipment have been trained in the isolation procedure.
- ☐ Isolation points are clearly identified and labelled on plant and equipment.

- ☐ For electrical work, an appropriately licensed or authorised competent person has verified the relevant parts are de-energised using suitable test equipment, with the tester checked before and after testing. A try-start check does not prove electrical conductors are dead.
- ☐ No worker removes another worker's personal safety lock - each worker applies their own lock and removes it only when their own work is complete.

8. Licensed Electrical Work

Electrical installation, alteration and repair work must be carried out by a person appropriately licensed or authorised for that work under local legislation. Test-and-tag competence does not authorise electrical repairs.

- ☐ Electrical work has been assigned to a person appropriately licensed or authorised for its scope in the relevant state or territory.
- ☐ Copies of electrical contractor licences are held on file (or accessible in the WHS management system).
- ☐ A Certificate of Compliance (or equivalent) has been issued for any new electrical installation work.
- ☐ A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) is in place where required for high-risk construction work or under applicable electrical safety rules; it does not itself authorise energised work. Refer to our Electrician SWMS Guide.
- ☐ No workers have been permitted to attempt DIY electrical repairs, including replacing elements, rewiring plugs, or bypassing safety devices.

9. Overhead and Underground Electrical Services

Contact with overhead power lines and underground cables is responsible for a significant proportion of fatal electrical incidents in Australian workplaces, particularly in construction, excavation, and landscaping.

- ☐ Overhead power lines in or adjacent to the work area have been identified and marked on the site plan.
- ☐ Safe approach distances and any exclusion zones have been confirmed for the jurisdiction, line voltage, work and worker authorisation with the relevant network operator or regulator, then communicated to workers and plant operators.
- ☐ Physical barriers or spotter arrangements are in place where plant or vehicles operate near overhead lines.
- ☐ A Dial Before You Dig (1100 or online at www.1100.com.au) enquiry has been lodged before any excavation work, and service location plans are on site.
- ☐ Underground services have been located using a combination of plans, cable-locating equipment, and careful hand exposure where necessary.
- ☐ Workers know to call 000 and the relevant network operator immediately if contact with a power line or underground cable occurs.

10. Emergency Procedures

Workers must know what to do if someone receives an electric shock or if an electrical fire occurs.

- ☐ Emergency procedures for electrical incidents (shock, electrocution, electrical fire) are documented and displayed on site.
- ☐ Workers know not to touch a person who is still in contact with a live source - the power must be isolated first.
- ☐ First aid arrangements, trained first aiders and CPR capability are provided according to the workplace first aid assessment and local requirements.
- ☐ Emergency services contact numbers (000) and the network operator's fault line are posted at or near the main switchboard.
- ☐ Fire extinguishers appropriate for electrical fires (CO2 or dry powder - never water) are accessible and serviced.
- ☐ An electrical incident has not occurred without a formal investigation and corrective actions being completed and recorded.

Using This Checklist

Complete each section with a tick, a cross, or N/A. For any cross (non-conformance), record:

1. **What** the issue is.
2. **Who** is responsible for correcting it.
3. **By when** it must be fixed.

Review outstanding items at each site meeting and close them out promptly. Retain completed checklists as WHS records - they demonstrate your due diligence if a regulator or insurer asks for evidence of ongoing electrical safety management.

If you identify issues that require licensed electrical work, stop using the affected equipment or circuit immediately and arrange repairs before it is returned to service.

Official sources and scope

- Standards Australia: AS/NZS 3760:2022 and Amendment 1:2022 - current publication details for in-service inspection and testing. Check which edition local law requires.
- Safe Work Australia: Electrical safety overview - higher- and lower-risk workplaces; model guidance rather than a single national testing schedule.
- SafeWork NSW: Electrical practices on construction and demolition sites - the NSW construction examples above, including AS/NZS 3012:2019, RCD testing and equipment records.
- WorkSafe Queensland: Testing and tagging electrical equipment - Queensland equipment and safety-switch schedules and competence requirements.
- Queensland: Managing electrical risks in the workplace Code of Practice 2021 - verification of de-energisation and secure isolation, sections 4 and 5.

For work elsewhere, confirm the applicable requirements with your state or territory regulator. The NSW examples do not establish the rules for Victoria or other jurisdictions.

Corrective actions

For each issue, record the action, responsible person, due date and verification of completion. Do not use unsafe equipment while awaiting action.

Issue / action	Owner / due date	Closed / verified

General guidance only. Confirm local WHS/OHS and electrical safety requirements, applicable standards and site-specific controls before use. This checklist does not replace required testing or authorise electrical work.