PERSONAL ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES POLICY

Version control

Date	Action	Next review
	New policy	
	Policy reviewed and approved by Board	

1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure establishes Cresconova Labs' approach to managing fire risks associated with personal electrical equipment brought onto the premises by staff, visitors or contractors.

Faulty or inappropriate electrical appliances may increase the risk of ignition and injury within the workplace. In particular, lithium-ion battery devices and charging equipment have been identified as potential sources of fire where equipment is damaged, incompatible chargers are used, or devices are charged improperly.

This procedure forms part of Cresconova's duty to reduce fire risks under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and supports the wider fire safety management arrangements in place at the premises.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all persons using the premises, including staff, volunteers, interns, contractors and visitors.

It governs the use and charging of personal electrical equipment within the building, including mobile phones, laptops, personal chargers, vaping devices and other battery-powered equipment.

3. General Principles

Electrical equipment used within the premises must be safe, in good condition and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Where Cresconova provides equipment for work purposes, staff should use that equipment rather than bringing additional personal appliances into the workplace.

Any electrical item that appears damaged, defective or overheated must not be used. If concerns arise regarding the condition or safety of an electrical item, the equipment should be removed from use immediately and the matter reported to the Responsible Person or delegated site lead.

All personal equipment must undergo a formal visual inspection by the user before each use.

4. Personal Electrical Items

Staff may bring limited personal electrical items onto the premises where reasonably required, such as mobile phones, laptops or similar small electronic devices.

Such items must be in good working condition and used only with appropriate chargers supplied or recommended by the device manufacturer. Equipment that shows signs of damage, overheating, exposed wiring or other faults must not be used within the premises.

Personal electrical items that involve significant electrical load, such as portable heaters, cooking appliances or similar equipment, must not be brought onto the premises without prior approval from the Responsible Person and may require inspection or testing before use.

The Responsible Person may require the removal of any personal electrical item where its condition or use presents a potential fire or safety risk.

5. Inspection, Maintenance and Testing

All personal electrical equipment brought onto the premises must be maintained in a safe condition to prevent the risk of fire or electric shock. While the primary responsibility for the initial safety of a device rests with the owner, Cresconova Labs requires that any equipment intended for frequent or long-term use undergo a formal regime of inspection and testing.

Before connecting any personal device to the building’s electrical supply, the user must perform a visual "user check" to ensure there are no signs of frayed cabling, cracked casings, expanded batteries or discolored plug pins. Furthermore, any high-draw equipment or chargers that remain on-site for extended periods may be subject to formal Portable Appliance Testing (PAT).

The Responsible Person reserves the right to include personal laptops, monitors, or specialised charging units in the organization's annual electrical safety inspection schedule. Any device that fails to meet these safety standards, or that lacks a valid inspection record where one is required, must be removed from the premises immediately.

6. Charging of Personal Devices

Charging of personal electrical devices should be undertaken in a safe and responsible manner.

Devices should be charged using suitable chargers and placed on stable surfaces that are unlikely to overheat or ignite. Charging should not take place on soft furnishings or other

combustible materials. Charging cables must be arranged so that they do not create trip hazards or obstruct circulation routes.

Where reasonably practicable, devices should not be left charging unattended for prolonged periods. Charging is strictly prohibited when the premises are unoccupied.

7. Prohibited Devices

Certain devices containing larger lithium-ion battery packs present an increased risk of fire and are therefore not permitted within the premises.

Electric scooters, electric bicycles, hoverboards and similar micromobility devices must not be stored, charged or brought into the building under any circumstances.

The charging of removable lithium-ion battery packs associated with such devices is also prohibited within the premises under any circumstances. This prohibition extends to damaged or recalled laptops and devices, as well as the charging of removable lithium-ion battery packs associated with any micromobility equipment.

8. Cigarettes, E-Cigarettes and Vaping Devices

The use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes or vaping devices is not permitted anywhere within the premises or within its immediate vicinity.

Vaping devices must not be used, stored or charged within the building.

This restriction is intended to reduce fire risks associated with lithium-ion batteries and charging equipment, and to maintain a safe and appropriate environment within an educational setting.

Any person wishing to use such devices must do so off the premises and away from the building entrance and vicinity.

9. Emergency Response and Thermal Runway

In the event that a personal electronic device enters a state of thermal runaway (a rapid, self-heating chemical reaction) staff must prioritize immediate evacuation over equipment preservation. Early indicators of battery failure typically include the physical bulging or "pillowing" of the device casing, audible hissing or cracking sounds, and the emission of a distinct, sweet-smelling chemical vapor.

If a device begins to smoke, emit sparks, or exhibit extreme localized heat, no attempt should be made to move or handle the item. While the power supply may be disconnected at the wall socket if it is safe to do so, the charging cable must not be pulled directly from the failing device.

Because lithium-ion fires are self-sustaining and produce their own oxygen, standard firefighting equipment such as water, foam, or traditional fire blankets may be ineffective or lead to violent secondary reactions. Consequently, any suspected battery fire must be treated

as a major incident; the nearest fire alarm call point should be activated immediately, and all persons must evacuate to the designated assembly point. Following any such event, the affected device must be treated as hazardous waste and stored in a non-combustible container outside the premises until it can be professionally decommissioned.

10. Monitoring and Compliance

The Responsible Person, or a delegated member of staff, may inspect electrical equipment where concerns arise regarding its safety.

The Responsible Person, or a delegated member of staff, may inspect electrical equipment where concerns arise regarding its safety. To ensure the effectiveness of this policy, all staff shall be briefed on these requirements during their initial fire safety induction. Where equipment is considered unsafe or inappropriate for use within the premises, staff may be instructed to remove the item from the building or cease using it immediately.

11. Review

This procedure shall be reviewed periodically as part of Cresconova's fire safety management arrangements and updated where necessary to reflect changes in risk, guidance or operational practice.