

# **Restarter Volunteer Handbook**

Welcome to the Restart Project, you are joining a volunteer-driven project changing the world, one community event at a time.

## **What is the Restart Project?**

The Restart Project is a people-powered platform for change, helping demand emerge for more sustainable, better electronics. We're based in London but our reach is global.

By working with communities, schools, and companies to value and use electronics longer – and documenting the barriers to doing so – we're driving a global movement to move beyond the throwaway economy.

We take local action to prevent electronic waste through hands-on, learning events where we help people fix their own electronics – and help others to do the same globally.

We also look at the big picture, generating valuable insights into how to improve electronics for people, from design and manufacture, through use and end of life.

When we act together, people everywhere have the skills and vision to guarantee that technology serves people and planet. Our insights and actions will enable designers, companies and policymakers to fix what we simply cannot on our own.

## **What are Restart Parties and how do they work?**

A Restart Party is a free community event where volunteers help people fix their own broken electricals and electronics, to save them from waste and change our relationship with electronics.

We call them parties because they have a fun, spontaneous spirit, where participants bring food and music, and people often meet and mingle. Parties can occur in different types of venues: pubs, churches, community centres, art galleries and typically last three hours.

The focus of the events is on skillsharing. Participants with broken electronic equipment take an active part in the repair.

Please note that under-age participation is allowed at our events but only in the presence of guardians.

## Who are Restarters and what do they do?

A Restarter is a person who likes helping people learn how to fix broken electronics or electricals - anything with a battery or that plugs in - with a few exceptions, like microwaves. Restarters come in all shapes and sizes and they have diverse skills. Some help with basic electrical fixing involving changing fuses and plugs. Others deal with software issues on laptops and mobiles. Yet others take on intricate electronics repairs involving soldering.

Anyone who volunteers to organise or help with repair at Restart Party is a Restarter - there is no special initiation process. What unites Restarters is the love of a repair challenge and their collaborative approach, they love to share skills.

## Why become a Restarter?

- Sharing your experience and knowledge with others feels great!
- It's completely flexible - volunteer as much as you want, whenever you want
- Learning is both-ways, you learn by narrating and communicating repair
- You get to have a go at repairing a wide variety of devices and faults
- You are helping reduce e-waste and spreading the skills/ motivation to repair
- Restarters also contribute to our [radio show](#), [Wiki](#) to inspire and enable others to repair
- We hold events like Fixfest to bring the repair community together

## Safety and liability

We have yet to experience a serious safety incident at one of our Restart Parties but our work requires *constant vigilance*.

As explained in our Safety Guidelines, there is always an experienced Restarter serving as a safety focal point at events. Restart Party hosts also serve as de-facto safety focal points.

**Your role as a Restarter is to take safety seriously, helping others and participants to do the same.** Mains devices should be treated with the respect they deserve, and tested on arrival and departure. Restarters play a role in this, reminding device owners to get devices tested before they leave.

Should anything occur: a number of Restarters are first aiders. **If you sign up to our Safety Guidelines, and adhere to them, you will be covered under our Employers Insurance.**

We have disclaimers on all tables at our events which address liability, please encourage participants to read them and understand them. All of our events are covered by public liability insurance, however this cannot extend beyond the event itself.

## Community values

**Restart Parties are learning spaces, the process of learning is valued even more highly than the outcome of the repair.** Restarters share their skills with participants and with each other. It's really important that the owner fully understands what work is being done on their device and is invited to participate and ask questions as much as possible.

**An excellent Restarter is somebody who actively makes others feel welcome,** participating in a community spirit. A Restart Party is a party, so sometimes this comes down to simple, small gestures, like finding a chair, making space, offering food or drink, and sharing tools.

**Our community is radically open** to all people of all appearances, genders, sexualities, nationalities, abilities, backgrounds, political leanings. It is an *actively* open community, meaning we need to go the extra mile to help traditionally excluded people feel welcome - this is why we have skillshares for women and non-binary people.

Please consider how others may think and feel, and how comments or actions may be perceived in a diverse community. We all make mistakes or assumptions about others, no matter how open we think we are. When people express discomfort or raise an issue, please listen carefully first before reacting.

## Let's get fixing!

Join our global online community at [talk.restarters.net](https://talk.restarters.net)

Get help and support to organise community repair event and connect with electronics repairers around the world!

Twitter: @RestartProject

Facebook: /RestartProject

Instagram: @restartproject

Radio show: <https://therestartproject.org/podcast/>

# Restarter Safety Guidelines

It's really important that we consider safety when helping people repair their broken electronic items. There should always be a designated safety volunteer at every event, make sure you find out who they are before you begin repairing. This copy of the guidelines is for your reference you should also have a signed and returned a copy to the Restarter hosting your party.

## Set-up

- **Extension leads** must be taped to the floor where possible and kept out of the flow of foot traffic.
- Check with the hosts of a Restart Party before **soldering**. Ventilation is an issue in some venues.
- Hosts or the designated safety volunteer will locate and draw your attention to fire **extinguishers and fire exits**. If you miss this announcement, please inform yourself.
- A **first aider** will be identified as such when present.

## Basics

- **Children must be accompanied** at all times by their guardians and kept an appropriate distance from chemicals, soldering and dangerous tools.
- When using **blades or sharp instruments**, always cut away from your body, and we recommend you use gloves.
- Be mindful when opening a device or using any force as bits may go flying (into someone's eye). If this is a risk, ask for **eye protection** and/or move away from others.
- **Careful with drinks!** Do not not consume spillable drinks at repair tables.

## Electricity

**\*\*if you have any doubts or questions, find the host who will call over a designated safety volunteer\*\***

- All mains-operated devices must be PAT tested before you start a repair and on completion.
- We do not repair a component of a device unless we are able to safety test the full device on the spot

- Only repair mains equipment if you are competent to do so. To plug in a mains appliance, use an RCD or a dedicated mains isolating transformer. Use insulated tools.
- Beware of stored high voltage in capacitors, even a very long time after a device has been disconnected from the mains. Always test if they are charged with a voltmeter. If they are charged and you are not experienced in discharging them do not progress with the repair.
- Put the device back together before testing it under mains power. If you have to test device while it is both plugged in to the power network and dismantled, only do so with a second Restarter present.
- If you smell burning immediately unplug at the power plug and then assess the problem with our designated safety volunteer.
- Beware of rechargeable batteries. If shorted or abused, they can be toxic and a fire risk.
- We usually do not repair power tools or high-wattage electricals. We can make exceptions, but they will be assigned by hosts to experienced volunteers. If in doubt, ask a host.
- For any old electrical device, always check that the wiring in the mains plug is to good standards.
- If a device has been shorting out electrical circuits, connect the device only after being certain you have found and corrected the problem.

## **Using cans and chemicals**

- Keep them away from any flame or direct sunlight.
- Do not spray flammable or volatile liquid on a live circuit or close to a soldering iron.
- Keep chemicals such as solvents far away from other people, especially children.