

# HOME ELECTRICAL SAFETY & NEW BUILDING REGULATIONS

INFORMATION SHEET 16

## THE BUILDING REGULATIONS- Domestic Electrical Safety

From the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, all new electrical wiring or electrical components for a house, flat or small commercial premises linked to domestic accommodation, must be designed and installed in accordance with the new Part P of the Building Regulations. This change has become necessary to help reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by faulty electrical wiring in the home, much of it caused by DIY enthusiasts or unqualified people.

This guide has been written to aid householders, designers and builders. It does not explain the new regulations in full, but simply explains what you need to know about your responsibilities under the Building Regulations when new electrical wiring and components are installed.

## WHAT DO THE NEW REGULATIONS SAY?

The Regulations divide new electrical work into two distinct categories;

- **Non-notifiable work** - that is, work which is very minor. There is a full list of non-notifiable work in Schedule 1 at the end of this guide. All you have to with this type of work is to make sure that it is done in accordance with the manufacturers instructions and in such a way that it is safe. If you are in any way unsure about how to install new wiring, electrical sockets etc. then don't! Get a qualified electrician who can do it safely and protect your family.
- **Notifiable work**- all electrical work, except the minor work mentioned in Table 1, is notifiable. That means it has to be checked by one of two processes.

## HOW IS THE WORK CHECKED?

You must show you have complied with the Regulations by either;

- having the work done by a competent person, or
- making an application to your local Council. This will require evidence that the installer is suitably qualified to undertake the work.

The simplest and quickest method is to have the work done by a competent person. They are allowed to certify their own work and all they have to do is issue a certificate to the Local Building Control Authority, saying that the work has been satisfactorily designed, installed and tested in accordance with the relevant standards under the Building Regulations.

Alternatively, you could submit either a Building Notice, or Full Plans application, for the works to your local Building Control Authority. We will require an electrical installation certificate from a suitably qualified electrician on completion of the work. The standard charge for making an application or submitting a notice is £60 including VAT where a certificate is provided. Where no certificate is provided, a further fee of £90 will be made if we are required to arrange for any testing to be carried out.

## WHO ARE THESE COMPETENT PEOPLE?

The Secretary of State has authorised certain recognised bodies to administer self-certification schemes. They are:

- BRE Certification Ltd.
  - email: [enquiries@bre-certification.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bre-certification.co.uk)
  - telephone: 01923 664100
- British Standards Institution.
  - webpage: [www.kitemarktoday.co.uk](http://www.kitemarktoday.co.uk)
  - telephone: 01442 230442
- ELECSA Ltd.
  - webpage: [www.elecsa.org.uk](http://www.elecsa.org.uk)
  - telephone: 0870 7490080
- NICEIC Certification Services Ltd
  - webpage: [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)
  - telephone: (freephone) 0800 0130900
- Zurich Certification Ltd.
  - webpage: [www.zuricheng.co.uk](http://www.zuricheng.co.uk)
  - telephone: 01221 4561311

If a competent person registered with one of the schemes does the work, it is not necessary to notify the Local Authority before work starts. The competent person is responsible for ensuring that the work complies with all the relevant standards.

When the work is complete, you should receive a signed Building Regulations self-certification certificate and the local authority should receive a copy of the relevant details. You should also receive a completed Electrical Installation Certificate, made out and signed by the competent person.

Anyone who is a member of one of the self-certification schemes will be able to produce written proof of membership. If the electrician you intend to use claims membership of one of the schemes but cannot produce written proof, use somebody else.

### WHAT IF THE WORK IS PART OF OTHER BUILDING WORK?

The self-certification processes will still apply if the installer of the electrical work is a member of one of the competent persons schemes. Their certificate will be fed into the Building Regulation Approval process for the whole job and we will accept that as evidence that the work is satisfactory.

If the installer of the electrical work is not a member of a competent persons body we will require a completed copy of the Electrical Installation Certificate but we will also need to check the work.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT HAVE APPROVAL?

There are two problems.

1. We will not issue a **completion certificate** for the works. (including the main works if the electrical installation forms part of a large job such as an extension) This will make any future sale of the property difficult.
2. We can take **enforcement action** for failure to comply with the Building Regulations. That could result in a fine and an order to remove the work if it does not conform to the required standards.

### TELL ME AGAIN – WHAT MUST I DO?

#### **From 1 January 2005, if you intend to install new electrical wiring or fittings**

**As the owner** - you must decide whether the work you are doing is minor or notifiable work. If it is notifiable, you must make sure the persons carrying out the work are either registered with one of the competent persons schemes or that the person carrying out the work will be able to certify their work and make a normal application for Building Regulations approval.

**As the designer** - you must make sure you specify that the electrical work (if part of a general development scheme) will be designed, constructed,

inspected and tested in accordance with the British Standard 7671 (The IEE Wiring Regulations) and will either fall under a competent persons scheme or the Local Building Control Approval route.

**As the builder - you must ensure that you have electrical personnel who can either certify their work under one of the competent person bodies or are qualified and experienced to enable them to sign their work off under the Electrical Installation Certificate form.**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The full text of the new Part P of the Building Regulations can be downloaded or viewed on line at the ODPM web site [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk), in the Building Regulations section, under Approved Documents, Part P.

If you are unsure whether the work you want to do will need to be notified, or you would like clarification of anything mentioned in this guide, please contact us at:

Building Control, Brighton & Hove City Council

Telephone 01273 292485

## SCHEDULE 1 – WORK THAT NEED NOT BE NOTIFIED

### Work consisting of:

- Replacing accessories such as socket-outlets, control switches and ceiling roses
- Replacing the cable for a single circuit only, where damaged, for example, by fire, rodent or impact (*provided that the replacement cable has the same current carrying capacity, follows the same route and does not serve more than one sub-circuit through a distribution board.*)
- Re-fixing or replacing the enclosures of existing installation components (*provided that the circuit's protective measures are unaffected.*)
- Providing mechanical protection to existing fixed installations (*provided that the circuit's protective measures and current-carrying capacity of conductors are unaffected by increased thermal insulation.*)

### Work that is not in a kitchen or special location<sup>(a)</sup> and does not involve a special installation and consists of:-

- Adding lighting points (light fittings and switches) to an existing circuit
- Adding socket-outlets and fused spurs to an existing ring or radial circuit (*Both of the above provided that the existing circuit protective device is suitable and provides protection for the modified circuit, and other relevant safety provisions are satisfactory.*)
- Installing or upgrading main or supplementary equipotential bonding (*provided that the work complies with other applicable legislation, such as the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.*)

**Note: any of the exemptions above only apply if the conditions described in italics are met.**

## **SCHEDULE 2 – MINOR WORK THAT STILL MUST BE NOTIFIED**

The special locations, mentioned at (a) above, where the exemption do not apply and even minor works are still notifiable, are listed here;

- Locations containing a bath tub or shower basin
- Swimming pools or paddling pools
- Hot air saunas
- Electric floor or ceiling heating systems
- Garden lighting or power installations
- Solar photovoltaic (PV) power supply systems
- Small scale generators such as microCHP units
- Extra-low voltage lighting installations, other than pre-assembled, CE-marked lighting sets.

**NOTE** IEE Guidance Note 7 gives guidance on achieving safe installations where risks to people are greater.