



# switched on

News for the industry from the Electrical Safety Council

issue2 Autumn 2006

## Electrical safety in construction

### Also in this issue:

The Home Information Pack  
- where does it stand?



# WELCOME



## Welcome to the second issue of Switched On.

I recently had the consumer unit in my home replaced, and was very pleased with the experience. The registered installer I selected turned up on time and did exactly what he said he would.

However, when talking to visitors to our stand at a number of consumer shows this summer, I learned that my experience may not be the norm, with many people having stories of unreturned phone calls and empty promises of quotes.

Could it be that homeowners' general dissatisfaction with the trade's service standards is the main reason why 45% of people would rather do electrical work

themselves or ask a friend or neighbour to do it for them, as we discovered in our consumer survey earlier this year?

The obligations imposed by Building Regulations may be clear to some of us in the industry, but bewildered householders may perhaps be more likely to select an installer on the basis of who returns their calls, rather than their credentials.



## How can we help you to help householders?

Have your say... email Emma at: [emma.mccarthy@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](mailto:emma.mccarthy@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION

In conjunction with NICEIC, ECA and SELECT, the Electrical Safety Council has produced a trade leaflet to remind contractors of their legal responsibilities in relation to safe electrical working practice on construction sites.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which was also consulted in the preparation of the leaflet, recommends the adoption of the information it contains.

The leaflet is being distributed in support at the HSE's campaign to focus the attention of contractors on their responsibilities under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989\*, with particular regard to the requirements for safe isolation. The purpose of the regulations is to require precautions to be taken against the risk of death or personal injury from electricity in work activities.

The leaflet, which is aimed at both electrical and building (main) contractors, explains that the relatively common practice of energising circuits before the electrical installation is complete may not be lawful.

It is evident that such unsafe practice is often undertaken to accommodate building designers, clients, main contractors, commissioning engineers and/or finishing trades but, unless live working is truly unavoidable and appropriate safety measures are taken, Duty Holders may be committing a



criminal offence by permitting such work to commence.

Duty Holders include all those who have responsibility for the control of electrical risks on a construction site. This may include managerial and supervisory staff of both the electrical and main contractors.

The leaflet reminds contractors about Regulation 14 of the Electricity at Work Regulations, which states that no person shall be engaged in any work activity **on or so near** a live conductor (other than one suitably enclosed or insulated such as to prevent danger) that danger may arise **unless:**

- It is unreasonable in all the circumstances for it to be dead, **and**
- It is reasonable in all the circumstances for the person to be at work on or near it while it is live, **and**
- Suitable precautions (including where necessary the provision of suitable protective equipment) are taken to prevent injury.

The only defence against criminal prosecution should death or injury occur as a result of working on or near a live conductor would be for the Duty Holder(s) to establish that all reasonable steps were taken, and all due diligence exercised, to avoid committing an offence.

It is unlikely that such a defence by Duty Holders would be effective if they permitted live working to be carried out simply to avoid inconvenience, lost time or cost.

Duty Holders are therefore strongly advised to resist any commercial pressure brought to bear on them to permit live working, especially by anyone having no legal responsibility for electrical safety on the site. It may be helpful to draw to the attention of such persons the legal responsibility, and therefore liability, Duty Holders have for ensuring electrical safety on site.

Copies of the leaflet may be downloaded from the Council's website:

[www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)

*\* Detailed guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 is given in the HSE Memorandum of Guidance on the regulations, HSR25. Copies of this guidance document, which is essential reading for all Duty Holders, are available from HSE Books.*

Over 1.4 million radio listeners tuned in to hear the Council's simple safety message, which was aimed at encouraging Britain's dads to protect themselves

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# Home Information Pack

“ The government is clearly missing another significant opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to improving electrical safety ”

**A**s anticipated, the new **Home Information Pack Regulations (SI 2006/1503)**, formally **introducing the Home Information Pack (HIP)**, were laid before **Parliament on 14 June**. The **associated Procedural Guidance, and Certification Scheme Business and Technical Standards documents, were also published that day**.

The Regulations and Explanatory Memorandum (including the Regulatory Impact Assessment) can be viewed on the Office of Public Sector Information website at [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si200615.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si200615.htm).

Shortly after the regulations were published, however, the Government announced new proposals to phase in the introduction of HIPs. In these new proposals, the government has decided that, when HIPs are first introduced in 2007, only the searches and energy performance information

will be mandatory requirements. In the first instance, the roll out of other aspects of the Home Information Pack which introduce other parts of the Home Condition Report will be on a non-mandatory, market-led basis. This, the government believes, will provide a smooth implementation of the new regulations, with clear benefits for consumers.

In its earlier response to the government's consultation on the draft regulations in December 2005, the Council specifically requested that more emphasis be given in the Pack to electrical safety. In particular, we asked that the importance of inspecting and testing electrical installations, both new and existing, and the issuing of an appropriate safety certificate or report, be properly recognised in the Home Condition Report.

As the consumers' electrical safety champion, the Council is therefore very disappointed that the regulations issued by the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) make absolutely no reference to electrical safety.

Given that the government's own statistics indicate that 17% of all fires in domestic premises in England and Wales are caused by electrical faults, the Council had hoped that the DCLG would support its initiative aimed at reducing the number of deaths and injuries caused by faulty or badly installed electrical installations.

The Council had also hoped, and indeed expected, that the Pack would at least be required to include the Building Regulations Compliance Certificate that members of government-approved Part P schemes are required by law to provide to occupiers, together with evidence of



any insurance-backed warranty still in force. The omission by DCLG to call for such information to be included in the Pack, when the same department has made it mandatory for it to be provided to householders, is incomprehensible.

The government is clearly missing another significant opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to improving electrical safety by means of Part P, and to encourage a greater proportion of electrical installers to register with Part P schemes.

Following the publication of the regulations, the Council has been renewing its efforts to have electrical safety information included in the Pack. To that end, it has written to MPs and Peers who have shown an interest in the Home Information Pack, as well as to DCLG officials.

Support has also been invited from Electrical Safety Council members, including the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Institution of

Engineering and Technology, and the National House-Building Council.

A press release, highlighting the Council's concerns with the Regulations, has also been issued, which can be viewed on the Council's website: [www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)

The Council has been encouraged by the responses received. In particular, the Peer Baroness Tonge is very supportive of the campaign, and has advised that she intends to take up the matter direct with the DCLG.

It is still hoped that the Council's action will persuade DCLG to reconsider the issue of electrical safety and the inclusion of the Building Regulations Compliance Certificate in the HIP.

The new Regulations will come into force on 1 June 2007, with the exception of Part 7 which came into force on 6 July this year.

Part 7 relates to the introduction of certification schemes that approve Home Inspectors to produce the Home

Condition Reports required by the new regulations. This part of the regulations has been put into effect by the government in advance of the other parts in an effort to ensure that sufficient numbers of Home Inspectors are available when the requirement to produce Home Information Packs comes into force.

This means that HIPs will be introduced in June next year, but with searches and energy performance information being the only mandatory requirements.

For the next step in the introduction of the Home Information Pack, the government is planning to facilitate a 'dry-run' of the scheme in England and Wales, on a voluntary basis, from Autumn this year. The government hopes that this will provide for a smooth and successful implementation of the regulations next year.

For more information about the new regulations and their introduction, visit the government's dedicated website: [www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk](http://www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk)

# TECHNICAL MANUAL

The Council is planning a number of changes to its Technical Manual service.

## CD version

Distribution of updated copies of the CD version, currently four times per year, will be reduced to twice per year with effect from the April 2007 issue. However, the current annual rate of production of new and updated topics will be maintained at no less than 40. The reduction in the frequency of distribution, whilst maintaining the overall level of service to subscribers, will provide significant savings in terms of manufacturing and distribution costs, as well as staff time.

## Paper version

Also with effect from April 2007, support for the original two volume paper version of the Manual, first introduced in April 2002, will be discontinued. This decision has been taken as the cost of fully updating the paper version of the Manual to take account of the 2008 revision of BS 7671, and then continuing to support it by means of paper

supplements, cannot be justified. Since March 2005, only a small proportion of subscribers has been receiving paper supplements in addition to the CD, all others preferring to have the CD only.

## Networkable version

The Council is inviting expressions of interest from organizations that would prefer to have a version of the CD that can be made simultaneously available to up to 10 users on their own network. Such expressions of interest can be lodged by email until mid-December on: [tmnwcd@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](mailto:tmnwcd@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk) Based on 100 organizations wishing to subscribe to a networkable version of the Manual, the cost per network subscription would be about £200.

## Web-based version

Development of a web-based version of the Manual is expected to start within the next few months. Such a version would provide all subscribers with ready access to the Manual via a secure website arrangement, and would in due course entirely replace the CD version.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2005-6

The Electrical Safety Council's Annual Report for the year 2005-6, presented at the Annual General Meeting on 20 September, can be viewed on the Council's website.

Produced in an easy-to-read format, it identifies the members of the Council and

Board, and reviews the activities of the charity and its subsidiary commercial group during the previous financial year under the headings:

- Assuring and certifying
- Training
- Communicating and developing
- Publishing

- Regulating
- Representing
- Managing
- Financing

The report also contains summary financial statements.

## PROTECTING THE NATION'S DADS

The Electrical Safety Council used Fathers' Day to help keep Britain's dads safe.

Over 1.4 million radio listeners tuned in to hear the Council's simple safety message, which was aimed at encouraging Britain's dads to protect themselves with an RCD when using corded power tools, and to seek professional help if the job proved too big for them.

Emma McCarthy, Director of the Electrical Safety Council, warned dangerous DIYers: "Electricity can and does kill. Before picking up a corded power tool or getting stuck in with the electric lawn mower or hedge trimmer, it makes sense for dads to plug them into a portable RCD – a safety device that can and does save lives by instantly switching off the power if someone touches a live wire in a damaged lead."

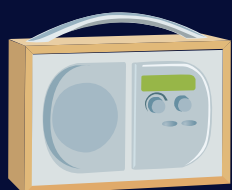
Independent research for the Council found that one in ten men who do DIY admitted to having drilled or nailed through an electric cable. And despite 78% of those surveyed believing that electrical work is the most dangerous type of DIY, half of men who do DIY still dabble with electrics rather than using a registered installer.

The Council also used the campaign to promote awareness of electrical safety in general, the requirements of Part P in England and Wales, and the benefits of using registered installers for electrical work.

The safety campaign was supported by GreenBrook Electrical, who donated a number of portable RCDs for radio stations to give away to their listeners.



“OVER 1.4 MILLION RADIO LISTENERS TUNED IN TO HEAR THE COUNCIL'S SIMPLE SAFETY MESSAGE”



## WEBSITE PROVES TO BE A HIT

The Council's website has had a very promising start, attracting over 50,000 visitors in the first 4 months since its launch in April.

Feedback from users has also been extremely positive. Many like the clean, simple design which makes navigating the site very easy.

Recent additions to the site include a step by step guide for consumers on how to find and employ a competent electrical contractor, and a section giving '10 rogue electrician warning signs'. There is also an 'interactive house' which gives basic electrical safety advice appropriate to each room.

A new industry section of the website went live in July. This includes details about the Council's Technical Manual, and statistical data on the number of deaths and injuries caused by electricity in UK homes, the effects of electric shock and fire being identified separately. In the coming months, this section will be expanded to include more information for the industry.

Feedback on the website is always appreciated, so thanks to all who have already sent in comments. Should you have any ideas on how the site can be further improved, or any other comments, please send them to us using the feedback facility on the website.

“OVER 50,000 VISITORS IN THE FIRST 4 MONTHS SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN APRIL”



## GRANTS FOR ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

To help fulfil its charitable purpose, the Electrical Safety Council is investigating the possibility of awarding improvement grants to a limited number of people who cannot afford to restore the electrical installation in their home to a safe standard. These would be people in need, who would benefit significantly from having a registered electrical contractor undertake investigative and essential remedial work.

Such an initiative would enable the Council to demonstrate its commitment to consumer safety not just through words, but by direct action. It would also raise the Council's profile through opportunities to work in partnership with other bodies that have a consumer safety role.

Research is being carried out to establish an appropriate target group or groups for improvement grants, that is those who are presently at most risk from the dangers of electric shock and fires as a result of defects, damage and/or deterioration in their electrical installations.

The research will also identify how the limited charitable funds available could be used most effectively. It is likely that any improvement work will commence with a formal Periodic Inspection and Report to determine the items, if any, which are in need of urgent attention.

The damage, defects and/or deterioration requiring urgent attention would then be rectified, so far as reasonably practicable, to restore the installation to a condition that is safe for continued use.

Another objective of the grants initiative is to develop sponsorship arrangements with interested electrical contractors and product manufacturers. If this objective can be achieved, it will enable the charity to reach out to a larger number of people in need than would otherwise be possible if the Council had to meet the full costs itself.

If you are interested in being a sponsor for the grants initiative, or you would like further information, please email: [grants@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](mailto:grants@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk) or telephone the Council on 0870 040 0561.

# RESEARCH INTO THE IN-SERVICE RELIABILITY OF RCDs

As announced in the previous issue of Switched On, the Council is researching into the in-service reliability of residual current devices (RCDs) used in homes to provide supplementary protection against electric shock.

The research is being carried out in two phases, the first of which has now been completed. The objectives of the first phase, carried out by ERA Technology Ltd, were to:

- determine, through a study of available literature, the mechanisms by which RCDs fail to operate correctly after prolonged periods of inactivity in domestic environments
- provide an opinion on the relevance of these mechanisms for the RCDs currently on sale in the UK
- provide recommendations for an RCD test programme to be conducted in the second phase of the research.

A report detailing the findings of the first, desk-based, phase of the research can be



viewed on the Council's website at [www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk) In summary, the findings of the research were that:

- Previous research published in Italy indicated that electromechanical RCDs had an average failure rate of 7.1%. However, if the RCDs were operated regularly by means of the integral test button, this figure fell to 2.8%, indicating that RCD reliability improved if they had been operated regularly
- from the available evidence, the primary mode of failure on electromechanical RCDs was ingress of fine particles of dust and moisture causing the moving components to stick or to operate more slowly than intended
- whilst manufacturers of electronic RCDs claimed that their products were more reliable than electromechanical RCDs, little evidence to support this was found. Previous research in the USA suggests that the reliability of electronic RCDs may be similar to that of electromechanical RCDs.

Following the completion of the first phase, work is underway to determine the methodology for the next phase of the research, which will include the in-situ

testing of a range of RCDs installed in domestic premises.

To ensure that the results of the field testing are statistically valid, tests will be conducted on a relatively large number of RCDs in premises where their age and operating history is known and, ideally, where there are significant numbers of devices of the same type and age. It is therefore intended to concentrate the research on particular types of premises such as student halls of residence, housing association properties and local authority housing estates. We are pleased to report that a number of such organisations have already agreed to assist with this important research and allow their premises to be used for this testing. Further details and a full report on progress made with this testing will be published in the next edition of Switched On.

We thank all those who have already provided feedback on their experience of the in-service reliability of RCDs. There is still an opportunity, if you so wish, to share your experience with us. If so please send details to:

[rcds@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](mailto:rcds@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk) or, alternatively, write to:

## RCD Project

Electrical Safety Council,  
18 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6LB

## NATIONAL STANDARD UNDER REVISION

In the UK, the national standard for the safety of electrical installations is BS 7671, *Requirements for Electrical Installations*. It is also known as the 16th Edition of the IEE *Wiring Regulations*, and is published by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (formerly the Institution of Electrical Engineers).

The standard is currently being revised to further harmonize it with the equivalent European Standard\*, which is itself based on the International Standard\*.

The target date for the publication of the revised British Standard, which is likely to be known as BS 7671: 2008 (and as the 17th Edition of the IEE *Wiring Regulations*), is January 2008.

A draft for public comment is likely to be published by BSI in December this year, but those who may be considering commenting are advised that there will be very limited scope for those comments to be taken into account in this revision.

This is because the British Standard now has to reflect the technical intent of the European Standard, and the various parts of that Standard have already been accepted by, or imposed upon, the UK.

\* CENELEC Harmonization Document HD 384: *Electrical installations of buildings*

+ IEC Standard IEC 364: *Low voltage electrical installations*



“A draft for public comment is likely to be published by BSI in December this year”

# RoSPA HOME SAFETY CONGRESS

As part of the Council's drive to raise awareness of electrical safety issues, we are pleased to be sponsoring RoSPA's annual Home Safety Congress this year, which will be held in Harrogate on 6 and 7 November.

The theme will be 'Sharing Success', focusing on home injury prevention delivery from both a national and local perspective. The keynote speaker will be Minister of State for Public Health, Caroline Flint MP. The Electrical Safety Council, the Children's Fire and Burn Trust and the Trading Standards Institute will be among the national organizations giving presentations.

The Council's presentation will highlight the electrical safety issues facing consumers today, and will focus on particular groups that are at most risk from the hazards of electricity, such as the elderly, and those in need of practical guidance, such as householders carrying out electrical DIY jobs.

**For full details about the RoSPA Home Safety Congress, including a delegate pack and booking form, visit [www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com) or telephone RoSPA on 0870 777 2120.**



## ELECTRICAL ACCIDENT STATISTICS

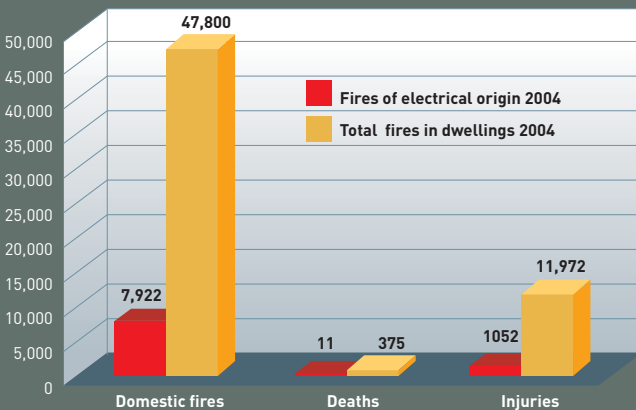
As part of its background research into electrical safety issues, the Council has compiled some statistical information on electrically-related accidents in the UK that have been published separately by a number of authoritative sources. The statistics, which are the latest available, are given below.

The Council has launched a number of consumer campaigns to address the main areas of concern, including:

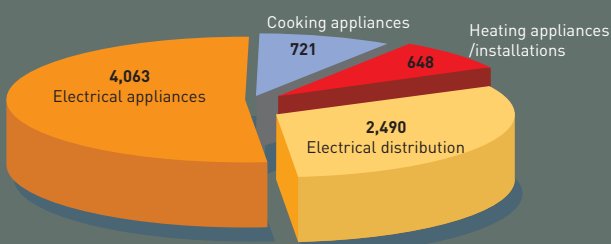
- Researching into the in-service reliability of RCDs used for supplementary protection against electric shock, and making appropriate recommendations
- Reducing the number of fires in domestic premises having an electrical origin
- Raising consumer awareness of the legal requirements relating to electrical safety

### Causes of accidental primary fires in dwellings of electrical origin within UK in 2004

Number of fires and casualties in accidental primary fires in dwellings



### Cause of fires of electrical origin in 2004



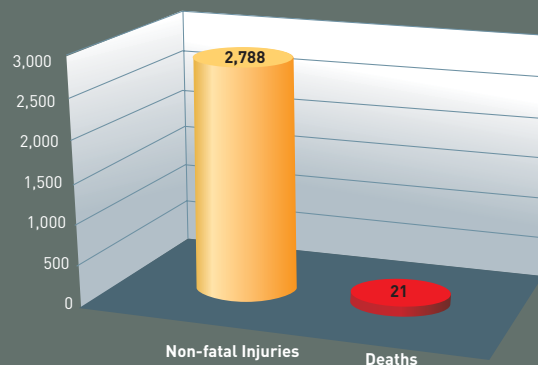
Source of statistics relating to accidental primary fires in domestic dwellings: Fire Statistics, United Kingdom, 2004, published by ODPM, UK Statistics Office, ODPM, UK

### Physical injuries caused by exposure to electrical current in the home during 2002

Causes of non-fatal accidents in the home caused by exposure to electric current



### Accidents in the home caused by exposure to electric current



Sources of statistics relating to exposure to electric current: Office for National Statistics (England & Wales); General Register Office for Scotland; and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), UK

# QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY CONSUMERS ABOUT PART P

**Q) What is 'Part P'?**

**A)** This refers to Part P of the Building Regulations 2000. These are statutory requirements that apply to building work in England and Wales. Part P gives legally enforceable rules relating to electrical safety in houses and flats (referred to in the regulations as 'dwellings'). The various other Parts of the Building Regulations give legal requirements relating to structure, fire safety etc.

**Q) What work has to comply with Part P?**

**A)** Since 1 January 2005, all electrical installation work carried in houses and flats in England and Wales must comply with the Building Regulations.

**Q) Why have the new rules been introduced?**

**A)** To help reduce the number of deaths, injuries and fires caused by faulty electrical installations and to make it harder for 'cowboy builders' to leave electrical installations in an unsafe condition.

**Q) If I want some electrical work carried out, do I have to tell my local authority's Building Control Department before the work starts?**

**A)** The diagram below sets out the options for consumers.

**Q) What will happen if electrical work does not comply with the Building Regulations?**

- A)** The electrical installation might not be safe. Also:
- the local authority may insist that you have faulty work put right
  - without the relevant electrical safety and compliance certificates, you may have difficulty in selling your home.

**Q) How can I find a registered installer to carry out my electrical installation work?**

**A)** Visit the websites of the approved scheme



**A** You do not need to tell your local authority's Building Control Department about:

- repairs, replacements and maintenance work; or
- extra power points or lighting points or other alterations to existing circuits (except in a kitchen or bathroom, or outdoors).

You need to tell them about most other work. If you are not sure about this, or you have any questions, ask your local authority's Building Control Department.

**B** Why should I use an installer who is registered with a competent person scheme?

- Members of schemes can deal with all the new rules for you.
- Members are qualified to carry out electrical work.
- Members will give you a certificate to confirm their work follows the new rules.
- You will not have to pay Building Control charges.
- You will have the option of taking out an insurance - backed guarantee for the work.
- You will have access to a formal complaints procedure if you are not happy with the technical standard of the work.

To contact one of the competent person schemes operators, phone one of the numbers on the following page. Registered installers are in the process of becoming members of the new TrustMark Scheme which was launched in Jan 2006. TrustMark members will offer consumers more protection than the minimum protection registered installers must offer.

Copies of this information can be downloaded from the Council's website: [www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)

operators shown here, or, more conveniently, visit the Local Authority Building Control website: [www.competentperson.co.uk](http://www.competentperson.co.uk). This has a searchable database of all Competent Persons registered with approved scheme operators.

**Q) Where can I find out more about Part P?**

**A)** Amongst other places, further details including leaflets can be found on the government website [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk), and on the Electrical Safety Council's website [www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)



**Authorised competent person self-certification schemes for installers who can do all electrical installation work**

BRE Certification Ltd  
Phone: 0870 609 6093  
[www.partp.co.uk](http://www.partp.co.uk)



British Standards Institution  
Phone: 01442 230442  
[www.bsi-global.com/kitemark](http://www.bsi-global.com/kitemark)



ELECSA Limited  
Phone: 0870 749 0080  
Website: [www.elecsa.org.uk](http://www.elecsa.org.uk)



NAPIT Registration Limited  
Phone: 0870 444 1392  
Website: [www.napit.org.uk](http://www.napit.org.uk)



NICEIC Group Ltd  
Phone: 0870 013 0382  
Website: [www.niceic.com](http://www.niceic.com)



**Authorised competent person self-certification schemes for installers who can do electrical work only if it is necessary when they are carrying out other work**

CORGI Services Limited  
Phone: 01256 372200  
[www.corgi-gas-safety.com](http://www.corgi-gas-safety.com)



ELECSA Limited  
Phone: 0870 749 0080  
[www.elecsa.org.uk](http://www.elecsa.org.uk)



NAPIT Registration Limited  
Phone: 0870 444 1392  
[www.napit.org.uk](http://www.napit.org.uk)



NICEIC Group Ltd  
Phone: 0870 013 0382  
[www.niceic.com](http://www.niceic.com)



OFTEC (Oil Firing Technical Association)  
Phone: 0845 658 5080  
[www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)



## COMPETENT PERSONS REGISTER

For the purposes of the Building Regulations for England and Wales, a Competent Person is a firm that has been adjudged sufficiently competent to self-certify that its work complies with the regulations.

A Competent Person must be registered with a scheme that has been approved by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Schemes authorised by the DCLG are listed on its website at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

A new website, set up under the auspices of Local Authority Building Control (LABC), has been developed by a collaboration of approved scheme operators to provide consumers with the ability to search for a Competent Person registered with one of their approved schemes.

The LABC website, [www.competentperson.co.uk](http://www.competentperson.co.uk), is currently dedicated to Part P of the Building

Regulations, which concerns electrical safety in the home. However, the register may be expanded in future to encompass other self-certification schemes.

The website enables users to search for firms registered with either 'full scope' or 'defined competence'. The scope defines the areas in which a Competent Person is approved to work as follows:

- 'Full scope' covers the full range of domestic electrical installation work. This is for those firms that carry out electrical installation work as the main part of their businesses
- 'Defined competence' is limited to defined electrical installation work in connection with, or ancillary to, some other non-electrical work, for example kitchen and bathroom fitting.

The website relies on the scheme providers to keep the registration information up to date,



so users are advised to check with the particular scheme operator before entering into any legal agreement with a firm. Links to each of the scheme operators' websites are given to assist with this process.

As well as hosting the Competent Persons Register, the website gives access to the DCLG consumer leaflet 'New rules for electrical safety in the home', and gives information on jobs that must be notified to Building Control (either via a Competent Person on completion of work, or directly prior to work commencing).



# Major fire safety reform in

**A**s part of the government's commitment to reduce death, injury and damage caused by fire, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has reviewed current fire safety law in England and Wales, and is making a number of changes through the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The new fire safety rules, which came into force on 1 October, apply to all non-domestic premises (including the common parts of apartment buildings).

The Fire Safety Order is the biggest overhaul of fire safety legislation in England and Wales in decades. Northern Ireland and Scotland will have their own laws.

The main effect of the changes will be a move towards greater emphasis on

fire prevention in all non-domestic premises, including the voluntary sector and self-employed

people with premises separate from their homes.

Fire certificates have been abolished and no longer have legal status.

If you are:

- responsible for business premises
- an employer
- self-employed with business premises
- a charity or voluntary organisation
- a contractor with a degree of control over any premises

... then you need to act now!

## Responsible person

Responsibility for complying with the Fire Safety Order rests with the 'responsible person'. In a workplace, this is the employer and any other person who may have control of any part of the premises, for example, the occupier or owner.

In all other premises the person or people in control of the premises is responsible. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises, all must take all reasonable steps to work with each other.

The responsible person(s) has to carry out a fire risk assessment which must focus on the safety in case of fire of all 'relevant persons'.

The assessment should pay particular attention to those at special risk, such as the disabled and those with special needs, and must include consideration of any dangerous substance likely to be on the premises. If five or more people are employed, the significant findings of the assessment must be recorded.

## Enforcement

Responsibility for enforcement of the new rules lies with the local fire and rescue service authority which will carry out regular inspections to check compliance, with top priority going to those premises presenting most risk to the community.

## Guidance

The DCLG has been working with a range of partners from industry and the fire and rescue service on a publicity strategy to raise awareness of the new laws amongst those affected.

A series of guides has published to assist those preparing fire risk assessments. These guides, which can be downloaded free of charge via the link given below, include:

- **Guide 1** Offices and shops
- **Guide 2** Factories and warehouses

Department for  
**Communities and  
Local Government**



# England and Wales

- **Guide 3** Sleeping accommodation
- **Guide 4** Residential care premises
- **Guide 5** Educational premises
- **Guide 6** Small and medium places of assembly
- **Guide 7** Large places of assembly
- **Guide 8** Theatres and cinemas
- **Guide 9** Outdoor events
- **Guide 10** Healthcare premises
- **Guide 11** Transport premises and facilities

The documents, together with more information and the answers to some frequently asked questions, are available at [www.firesafetylaw.communities.gov.uk](http://www.firesafetylaw.communities.gov.uk)

## **Fire alarm and emergency lighting systems**

The Fire Safety Order requires an appropriate fire detection and alarm system to be provided in premises, the type and extent of the system being determined by a risk assessment. Escape routes and exits requiring illumination must be provided with emergency lighting.

Where necessary in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons, the

responsible person must ensure that fire alarm and emergency lighting systems are subject to a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

## **Certification**

In view of the increased legal liabilities on all concerned, electrical contractors now need to be doubly sure that fire alarm and emergency lighting systems they install and/or maintain fully comply with the relevant requirements before issuing the necessary completion certificates and reports.

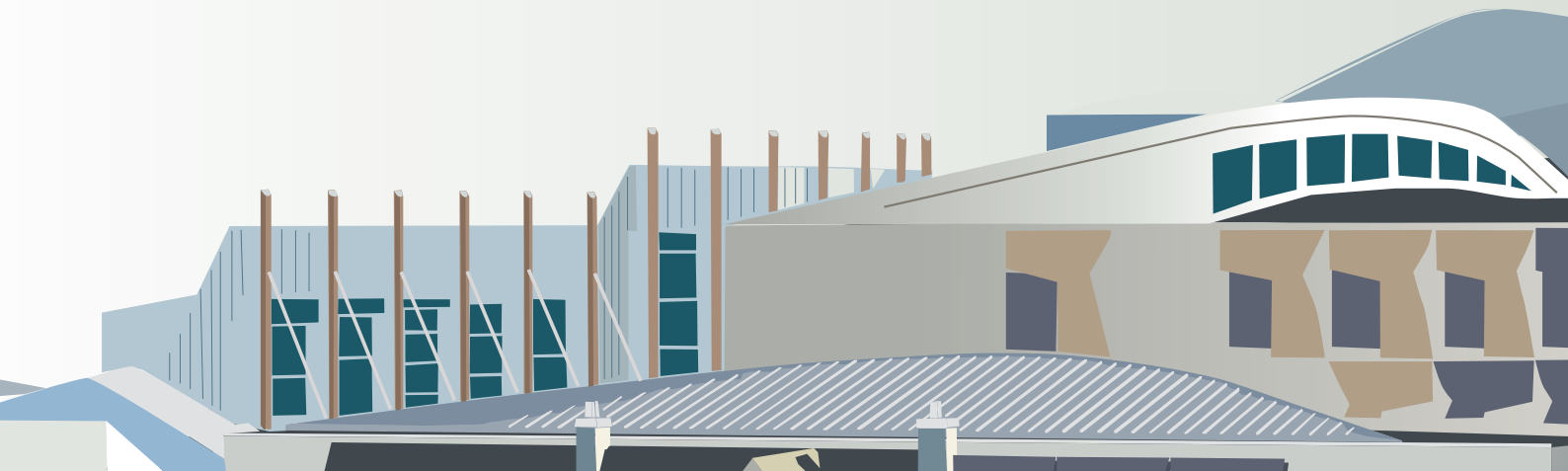
## **Records**

Responsible persons should ensure that appropriate records are made and kept in case it should become necessary for them to prove that they have acted responsibly. A simple log book may suffice, supplemented by copies of the installation and maintenance certificates called for in BS 5839 (fire alarm systems) and BS 5266 (emergency lighting systems), reviews of the fire risk assessment, the current fire safety policy, and training records. A visiting inspector (usually a Fire Officer from the local Fire and Rescue Service) can require to examine the records.

**'THE ACTIONS TO PREVENT DOMESTIC FIRES ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD. STEPS TO BE TAKEN CAN BE SIMPLE'**



One of the 11 guides



# FREQUENTLY ASKED CONSUMER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BUILDING (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2004

**Q** When did the new legal requirements start?

**A** In December 2004, Scottish Ministers approved a registration scheme for Certification of Construction (Electrical

Installations to BS 7671). It allows Approved Certifiers of Construction to certify the compliance of all aspects of electrical installation construction and commissioning work with the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

**Q** Where can I find out more information about the new legal requirements?

**A** More information can be obtained from the Scottish Building Standards Agency (SBSA) at [www.sbsa.gov.uk](http://www.sbsa.gov.uk) The SBSA was set up in June 2004 as an executive agency of the Scottish Executive to undertake the national functions related to the new building standards system on behalf of Scottish Ministers as set out in the Building (Scotland) Act 2003.



## Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 Regulation 5, Schedule 3



### Guidance on electrical work not requiring a warrant

Domestic Buildings	Work to Existing Buildings			
	type [1]	flat	house (up to 2 storeys)	house (3 storeys & above)
<b>Repairs and replacement</b>				
Re-wiring [2]	24	required	not required	required
Electrical fixtures, eg luminaries	24	not required	not required	not required
<b>New work</b>				
Electrical work affected by demolition or alteration of the roof, external walls or elements of structure	1	required	required	required
Electrical work adversely affecting a separating wall, eg recessed sockets	1	required	required	required
New power socket-outlets	1	required	not required	required
Mains operated fire alarm system	1	required	not required	required
Electrical work to automatic opening ventilators (including auto-detection)	1	required	not required	required
Electrically operated locks	1	required	not required	required
Wiring to artificial lighting	1	required	not required	required
Wiring to emergency lighting	1	required	not required	required
Electrical work associated with sprinkler system	1	required	not required	required
Electrical work associated with new boiler (large)	1	required	not required	required
Electrical work associated with new boiler (small)	6	not required	not required	not required
Electrical work associated with new shower	11, 12	not required	not required	not required
Electrical work associated with new extract fan	13	not required	not required	not required
Extra-low voltage installations	22	not required	not required	not required
<b>Note 1</b>	Building work type as referenced in schedule 3.			
<b>Note 2</b>	A building warrant is not required for rewiring where it is a repair or replacement works to a level equal to the installation (or part thereof) being repaired or replaced.			

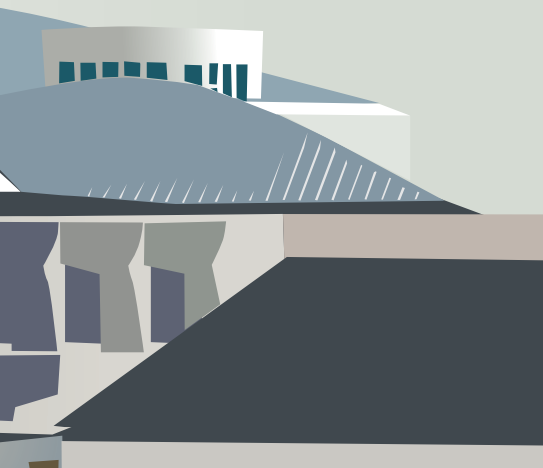
**Q** Why have the rules been introduced?

**A** The purpose of the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004, as defined by the Building (Scotland) Act 2003, is to secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of people, to further the conservation of fuel and power, and to further the achievement of sustainable development, with respect to the design, construction, demolition and conversion of buildings and the provision of services, fittings and equipment in or in connection with buildings.

**Q** If I want some electrical work carried out, do I need to apply for a warrant (get legal permission) from a Verifier of my local authority (usually undertaken by the Building Standards Department) before the work starts?

**A** It depends on the nature of the work. The table [left] gives guidance on electrical work for domestic buildings; there is a similar table available from the SBSA for non-domestic buildings.

**Q** What is the process for applying for a warrant?



**A** The process is shown in the diagram below, which is based on that in the SBSA Procedural Handbook, available on the SBSA website [www.sbsa.gov.uk](http://www.sbsa.gov.uk).

**Q** Why should I use an installer who is registered with a registration scheme for Certification of Construction (Electrical Installations to BS 7671)?

**A** The advantages include:

- the installer can deal with all the new requirements
- the installer will provide the householder with an authenticated certificate to confirm that the work carried out complies with the building regulations, and was undertaken by a competent installer
- there will be a refund on the building warrant fee
- there will be access to a formal complaints procedure if there is reason to believe that the work does not comply with the building regulations.

**Q** What will happen if I do not follow the Building Regulations?

**A** The electrical installation might not be safe. Also:

- there will be no record of the work done
- there may be a difficulty selling your home if you do not have the right electrical safety certificates
- an offence may currently result in a fine up to a maximum figure of £5000, with an additional charge of £50 per day if the offence continues
- in certain circumstances the local authority may carry out required remedial works in order to achieve compliance and may recover from the owner of the property any expenses reasonably incurred by it in doing so.

**Q** Where can I find out more information about electrical safety?

**A** Information about electrical safety is available at:  
[www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)

**Q** How can I find a registered installer to carry out my electrical installation work in Scotland?

**A** The only definitive list of registered installers is held by the SBSA on their website [www.sbsa.gov.uk](http://www.sbsa.gov.uk), under the approved providers of the Certifiers of Construction (Electrical Installations to BS 7671) scheme. If an installer's name does not appear on the list, they are not approved to certify work in compliance with the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

The following organizations are approved by the SBSA for the registration of installers to carry out electrical installation work in compliance with the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

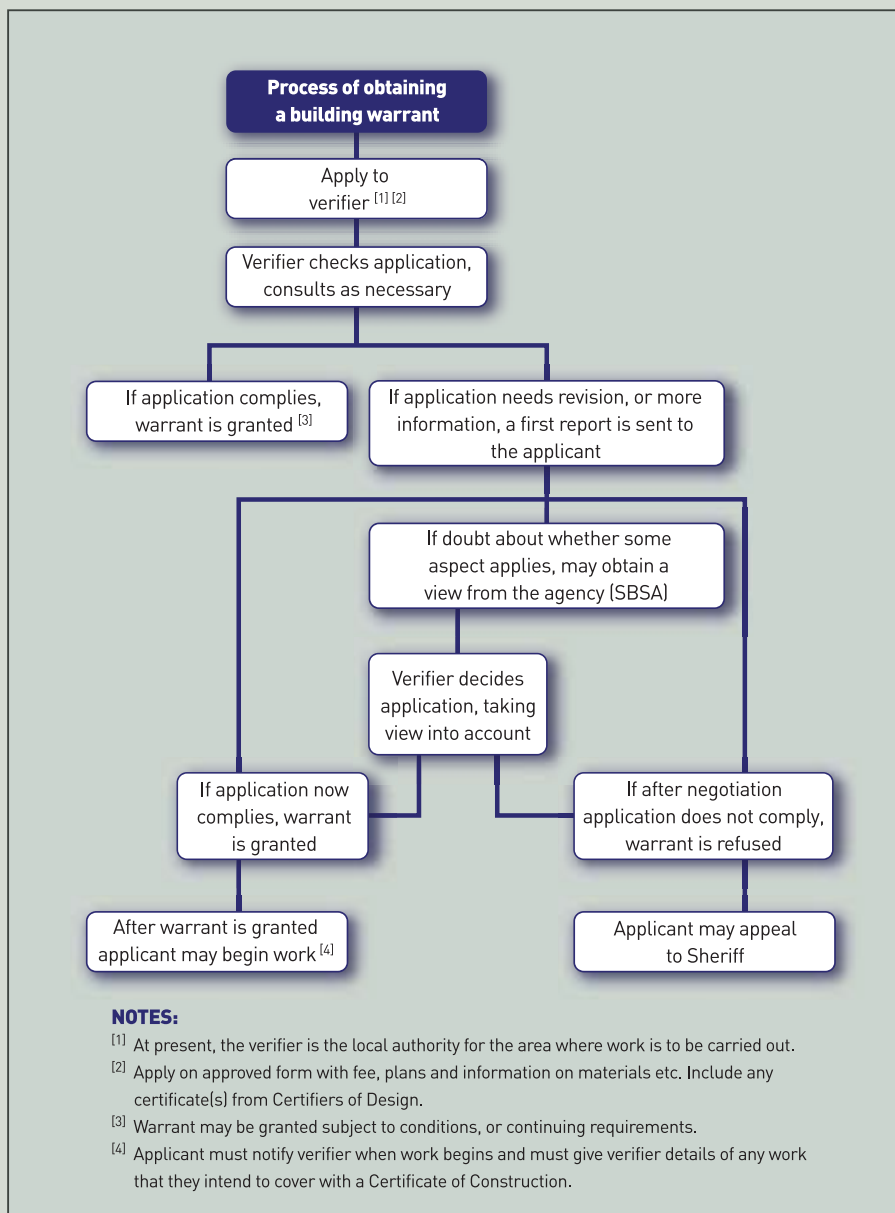


**NICEIC Group Ltd**  
Phone: 0131 317 8444  
Website: [www.niceic.com](http://www.niceic.com)



**SELECT**  
Phone: 0131 445 5577  
Website: [www.select.org.uk](http://www.select.org.uk)

**Copies of this information can be downloaded from the Council's website: [www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)**



# ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION WORK IN SCOTLAND

A new Building Standards system came into force in Scotland in May of last year. Under the new system, any electrical work carried out under a building warrant has either to be certified by a registered installer (known as an Approved Certifier of Construction), or be verified by the local authority.

The requirements apply to both domestic and non-domestic premises. It is the responsibility of the person ordering the work, normally the building owner, to establish whether a building warrant is required.

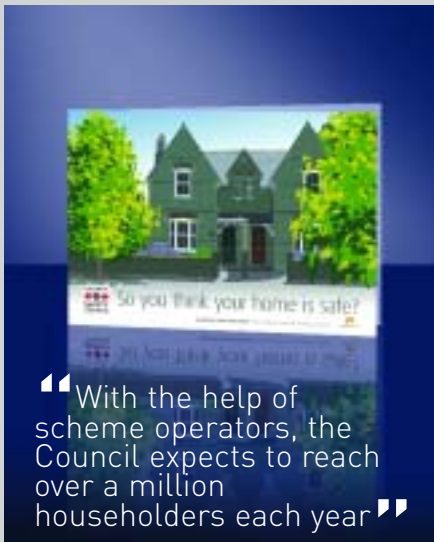
The Council has published a new leaflet to inform persons having electrical installation work carried out domestic premises in Scotland

about the new requirements, and to advise them how to find a registered installer.

Further information about the new Building Standards system in Scotland can be found in this issue of Switched On, and on the website of the Scottish Building Standards Agency: [www.sbsa.gov.uk](http://www.sbsa.gov.uk)



# SO YOU THINK YOUR HOME IS SAFE?



As mentioned in the previous issue of Switched On, to help improve public awareness of common electrical hazards in the home, the Council has produced a safety leaflet called 'So you think your home is safe?'

The leaflet is now available and is being distributed to householders in England and Wales by at least one of the Part P scheme operators as an insert with Building Regulations Compliance Certificates

With the help of other Part P scheme operators, the Council expects to reach over a million householders each year by this method. This is part of a much wider public awareness campaign being carried out by the Council.

The leaflet covers such topics as:

- getting to know your home electrics, such as the consumer unit, RCDs etc
- how old is your wiring – does it need replacing?
- visible electrical hazards around the home (condition of plugs, sockets, flexes, adaptors etc)
- particular electrical hazards in the kitchen, bathroom and garden
- how to find a competent electrical installer to undertake further electrical work.

See below for details how to obtain this and other safety leaflets from the Council.

# SAFETY AND INFORMATION LEAFLETS

The new leaflets announced on this page, are two of a number of safety and information leaflets the Council is producing to fulfil its consumer safety role and to raise awareness of electrical safety issues that affect householders and contractors.

The range of leaflets now includes:

- Home safe home?
- Using electrical equipment outdoors
- Part P and how it affects you
- The Home Information Pack
- So you think your home is safe?
- Electrical safety in construction

The leaflets are intended to raise the profile of the Electrical Safety Council amongst householders and others, and to explain the benefits of using installers registered with government-approved schemes.



Copies of these and other safety leaflets can be downloaded from the Council's website [www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk).

Alternatively, single printed copies are available on request by emailing [leaflets@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](mailto:leaflets@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)

**Have you got a shocking or funny electrical tale? If so, send it to us at [switchedon@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk](mailto:switchedon@electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk)**  
The pick of the bunch will appear in the next issue.