

## Building Control Guidance Note

### HOME ELECTRICAL SAFETY & NEW BUILDING REGULATIONS – ‘PART P’

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 all new electrical wiring or electrical components in connection with dwellings must be designed, installed and tested in accordance with the new Part P of the Building Regulations. Approved Document P gives guidance on ways of meeting the principles contained in British Standard 7671:2001 and can be downloaded or viewed on-line from the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

According to Government statistics, each year on average 10 people die and about 750 are seriously injured in accidents involving unsafe electrical installations in the home. Part P is intended to increase the safety of households by improving the installation, inspection and testing of electrical installations in dwellings.

#### WHAT DO THE REGULATIONS SAY?

**The Requirements** (these apply in relation to a dwelling or in a building or garden where electricity is from a source within a dwelling):

- “**P1** Reasonable provision shall be made in the design, installation, inspection and testing of electrical installations in order to protect persons from fire or injury”.
- “**P2** Sufficient information shall be provided so that persons wishing to operate, maintain or alter an electrical installation can do so with reasonable safety”.

The Regulations divide new electrical work into two distinct categories:

**Non-notifiable work:** - work that is minor as listed in Annex 1. With this type of work please ensure that it is carried out in accordance with manufacturers instructions and in such a way that it is safe. If in any doubt you are advised to seek the assistance of a competent electrician.

**Notifiable work:** - All other electrical work will need to be checked and approved by either:

- having the work done by a person (or firm) who is registered as a member of a recognised **Competent Persons Self-Certification Scheme** (details of which are given in Annex 2). This is the simplest and quickest method that allows a competent contractor to design, install, test, self-certify their work and issue an ‘Electrical Installation Certificate’ to the owner. Following completion of the work the registered contractor also provides a Building Regulations Compliance Certificate to the owner and arranges for that information to be copied to the Local Authority, **or**
- submitting an application (usually a Building Notice) together with an appropriate fee, and having the work checked and certified by a **Building Control** body. Please note that with this option, as part of the checking process, the Local Authority will still require an ‘Electrical Installation Certificate’ signed by a competent electrician confirming the adequacy of the electrical installation. In addition to the electrical work,

the Building Control body will check that other relevant aspects of the Building Regulations are complied with.

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

The self-certification processes will still apply if the electrician is a member of one of the recognised Competent Persons Schemes. Their certification will be fed into the usual Building Regulation checking and approval process for the whole job e.g. an extension, and we will accept that as evidence that the electrical installation work is satisfactory.

If the electrical work is being undertaken by an electrician who is not a member of a Competent Persons Scheme, as part of our checking procedures we will require a signed Electrical Installation Certificate at the completion of the electrical work.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF ELECTRICAL WORK IS NOT CERTIFIED?

There are likely to be two potential problems:

1. We will not issue a Completion Certificate for the work. (This will include the main project e.g. an extension, if the electrical work forms part of that work). This will be apparent on any land search enquiries and will make any future sale of the property very difficult.
2. We may take enforcement action for failure to comply with Building Regulations. Failure to comply with Building Regulations is a criminal offence, which can result in a fine (including the potential for on-going daily financial penalties) and/or the service of a notice requiring the removal of any contravening work.

### CAN YOU SUMMARISE WHAT I HAVE TO DO?

From 1<sup>st</sup> 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 an application for Building Regulation approval.

**As the designer** – you must make sure you specify that the electrical work will be designed, constructed, inspected and tested in accordance with British Standard 7671 (The IEE Wiring Regulations) and will either fall under a competent persons scheme or the Local Authority Building Control 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 as part of the Local Authority Building Control approval route.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are unsure whether the work you want to do will need to be notified, or you would like clarification about anything mentioned in these notes, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address shown at the head of the front page.

## ANNEX 1 – MINOR WORK THAT NEED NOT BE NOTIFIED

- 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 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'\* and does not involve a 'special installation'\* (see below) 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 gas 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*)

### **\*Special Locations and Installations – Minor Work That Must Still Be Notified**

The Special Locations and Installations mentioned above (\*), where the exemptions do not apply and even minor works are 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: Electrical installation work such as adding new light fittings, switches, sockets, and fused spurs to an existing circuit in a kitchen is notifiable

(See IEE Guidance Note 7 on achieving safe installations where risks to people are greater)

## ANNEX 2 – COMPETENT PERSONS SELF-CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

The Secretary of State has authorised a number of recognised bodies to administer self-certification schemes for electrical installation work. The rationale behind the schemes is to provide, on the basis of risk to health and safety, schemes whose members are adjudged sufficiently competent in their work to self-certify that their work has been carried out in compliance with all applicable requirements of the Building Regulations.

The schemes are intended to offer benefits to both consumers and industry. Consumers should benefit from lower prices as building control fees are not payable. They should also benefit from reduced delays and from the ability to identify competent firms. Firms who join these schemes will avoid the time and expense of submitting building notices. The schemes are also intended to reduce the burden on Local Authority Building Control.

Initially the following organisations have been authorised to operate such Part P schemes but others will follow in due course:

BRE Certification Limited	Tel: E-mail: Web:	01923 664100 <a href="mailto:enquiries@bre-certification.co.uk">enquiries@bre-certification.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.bre-certification.co.uk">www.bre-certification.co.uk</a>
British Standards Institution	Tel: E-mail: Web:	01442 278607 <a href="mailto:product.services@bsi-global.com">product.services@bsi-global</a> <a href="http://www.bsi-global.com">www.bsi-global.com</a>
ELECSA Limited	Tel: E-mail: Web:	0870 7490080 <a href="mailto:enquiries@elecsa.org.uk">enquiries@elecsa.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.elecsa.org.uk">www.elecsa.org.uk</a>
NICEIC Certification Services Limited	Tel: E-mail: Web:	0800 013 0900 <a href="mailto:enquiries@dis.niceic.org.uk">enquiries@dis.niceic.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.niceic.org.uk">www.niceic.org.uk</a>
Zurich Certification Limited	Tel: E-mail: Web:	01221 456 1311 <a href="mailto:certification@uk.zurich.com">certification@uk.zurich.com</a> <a href="http://www.zuricheng.co.uk">www.zuricheng.co.uk</a>

If the work is carried out by a competent person registered with one of the schemes, it is not necessary to notify the Local Authority before the work starts. The competent person should ensure that the work complies with relevant requirements and when complete, will issue to the owner a signed Electrical Installation Certificate together with a Building Regulations Compliance Certificate. The competent person is also required to notify the Local Authority with details of the Building Regulations Compliance Certificate soon after the work is complete.

Anyone who is a member of one of the self-certification schemes will be able to produce written confirmation of membership. If an electrician you are considering using cannot produce written proof of membership then you are advised to use somebody else.