

## **Guidance notes on electrical installations requiring Building Regulations approval**

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) have been concerned that risks posed by unsafe electrical installations have been increasing in recent years.

To combat the problem the ODPM have introduced new Building Regulations, Part P 'Electrical Safety', which came into effect on 1 January 2005.

### **The requirements**

**P1 "Reasonable provision shall be made in the design and installation of electrical installations in order to protect persons operating, maintaining or altering the installations from fire or injury".**

Part P applies to the electrical installation, at low (240V) or extra low voltage in:

- Dwellings.
- Common parts of buildings serving dwellings (but excluding power supply to lifts).
- Buildings receiving electricity from dwellings.
- Gardens or land associated with a dwelling where the electricity is from a source within or shared with a dwelling.

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**All electrical work in domestic installations must comply with Part P** (and BS 7671). However, not all work is notifiable to the local authority.

Non-notifiable replacement work includes:

- replacing accessories (sockets outlets, switches, ceiling roses); and
- replacing the cable to a single circuit following damage.

As well as replacements, some new work is not notifiable if it is not in a bathroom, or other 'special location'.

Non-notifiable new work includes:

- Adding lighting points to an existing circuit.
- Adding socket outlets and fused spurs to an existing ring or radial circuit.
- Installing or upgrading equipotential bonding.

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### **Notes**

See IEE Guidance Notes 7 which give more guidance on achieving safe installations where risks to people are greater.

### **Special locations and installations**

Table 2 of the regulations lists these special locations (they are mainly areas where people are more likely to be walking around bare footed and perhaps wet and so will be a good conductor to earth). Electrical installations in these areas and/or these types of installations require approval:

- Locations containing a bathtub or shower basins
- 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 micro CHP units
- Extra-low voltage lighting installations, other than pre-assembled, CE-marked lighting sets

The Government will not allow an electrical contractor to approve his own work unless the electrical contractor is registered with a competent person's self-certification scheme. We will require that you provide certification of satisfactory testing and inspection for all work not carried out under the competent persons scheme. This requirement will unfortunately increase the cost to the applicant and may cause a delay (arranging for another electrician to carry out an inspection and test).

Anyone undertaking an electrical installation, who is not registered with NICEIC or ECA must provide an installation certificate, together with a test certificate prepared by a member of NICEIC or ECA.

### **New electrical installations, rewires and adding new circuits to an existing installation**

If the electrical contractor is a member of NICEIC or ECA, they must complete an **Installation Certificate (Form 1)** BS 7671 (as amended), **(Form 3) Schedule of Inspection** and **(Form 4) Schedule of Test Results**.

If the electrical contractor is not a member of NICEIC or ECA, they must complete the **Design and Construction parts of the Installation Certificate (Form 2)** BS 7671 (as amended) and you are required to arrange for an electrical contractor who is a member of these bodies to inspect and test the installation to enable them to complete the **Inspection and Testing** part of the form, **(Form 3) Schedule of Inspection** and **(Form 4) Schedule of Test Results**

### **Additional Sockets or Lighting points to an existing installation in a special location**

If the electrical contractor is member of NICEIC, ECA or is qualified with City and Guilds Certificate 2391, they must complete the **Minor Works Certificate (Form 5)**.

**Copies of the appropriate forms must be deposited with the authority at completion of the work; failure to do so will prevent the authority from issuing a Completion Certificate and may lead to Enforcement action taken against you**

**and/or your electrical contractor.**

BS 7671 requires that a person installing electrical work or altering an existing installation must test the installation and provide certification to the owner. Local authorities will insist that these certificates are provided. We will not issue completion certificates until satisfactory electrical test certificates have been produced and we will advise homeowners not to pay contractors until we are satisfied that these electrical work certificates have been provided.

**The preferred route to approval is for you to use an electrical contractor who is registered under a Competent Persons Self Certification Scheme. Currently:**

- **Benchmark**
- **British Standards Institute** – (no longer accepts new scheme members but has a small number of existing registered competent persons across England and Wales)
- **ELECSA**
- **NAPIT**
- **NICEIC Certification Services Limited**
- **STROMA**
- **BESCA**
- **OFTEC**

**Certain electrical work in connection with bathrooms and boiler installations may also be carried out by persons authorised under a competent persons self-certification scheme such as those run by Gas Safe and OFTEC in addition to the schemes by ELECSA, NAPIT and NICEIC.**

**If there is any doubt about if the work you are embarking on requires approval, do not hesitate to discuss it with your Local Authority Building Control Office.**