

ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS IN DWELLINGS

From 1 January 2005 new government legislation will change the way in which electrical installation work in dwellings across England and Wales is controlled. It will be a legal requirement for electricians involved in alterations and additions to existing installations, as well as new construction, to comply with Part P and other relevant parts of the Building Regulations.

The requirements of Part P relate to fixed electrical installation work in other areas, whether carried out professionally or DIY. In following the principles of BS 7671: 2001, electrical installations will need to be suitably designed, installed, inspected and tested in order to protect persons from fire and injury.

Part P applies to electrical installations in:

- Dwellings
- Combined dwellings and business premises having a common supply (e.g. shops).
- Common access areas and shared facilities in blocks of flats (e.g. Laundry rooms, but not lifts).
- Outbuildings such as sheds, detached garages and greenhouses.
- External situations associated with buildings (e.g. fixed lighting and pond pumps).

- 1. Be given by a person who is registered with a government approved, competent persons scheme.** *See Note 1. This option is preferred by government and is likely to be the simplest and most economical.*
- 2. Submitting full details of the electrical installation as part of a Building Regulation application and upon completion arranging for a registered competent person to test the installation.** *See Notes 1 & 2. This option applies where a person not registered with a government authorised competent persons scheme carries out the electrical installation. Note: Currently it may be difficult to get a registered competent person to carry out a check of such installations.*
- 3. Submitting a Building Regulation application to the Council for the fixed electrical work only.** *See Note 2. This application will be in addition to that submitted for other work controlled by the Building Regulations and an additional fee will be payable. Note: Where this option is chosen the Council will arrange for a registered and competent person (acting as our agent) to carry out an inspection of the installation before covering up; and for an inspection and test of the completed installation.*

People who are not registered with a government approved scheme and therefore unable to self certify their own work will need to apply for Building Regulation consent in every case not covered by the exceptions.

Note 1.

Government approved competent persons self-certification schemes for electrical safety in dwellings: BRE Certification Ltd www.partp.co.uk, British Standards Institution www.kitemarktoday.com, ELECSA Ltd www.elecsa.org.uk, NAPIT Certification Ltd www.napit.org.uk, NICEIC Certification Services Ltd www.niceic.org.uk. Defined competence schemes (for persons who do electrical work as an addition to their main activity e.g. gas installers, kitchen & bathroom fitters): ELECSA, NAPIT, NICEIC as above, CORGI Services Ltd, www.corgi-gas-safety.com, Oil Firing Technical Association www.oftec.org.uk.

For the latest information on approved competent persons self-certification schemes see "Building Regulations" at www.odpm.gov.uk

Note 2

Applications must include full details of the proposed work including an "electrical installation diagram and specification" showing compliance with BS 7671 (the IEE Wiring Regulations) e.g. cable types, circuits, fuses/circuit breakers, earthing and bonding conductors; and fixed electrical appliances.

Non notifiable work – If the work is very minor (Table 1) in nature all you have to do is ensure that any electrical work is installed in accordance with manufacturers instructions, and is done 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 get a qualified electrician.

Notifiable work – Where the work does not fall within Table 1, one of the options listed overleaf must be used.

Table 1

Work that need not be notified to Building Control Bodies

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.
- Re-fix or replacing the enclosures of existing installation components.
- Providing mechanical protection to existing fixed installations.

Work that is not in a kitchen or special location and does not involve 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.
- Installing or upgrading main or supplementary equipotential bonding.

Notes

1. On condition 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.
2. If the circuit's protective measures are unaffected.
3. If the circuit's protective measures and current-carrying capacity of conductors are unaffected by increased thermal insulation.
4. Special locations and installations include bath/shower rooms, garden lighting or power etc. For a complete listing, see table 2 of Approved Document P.
5. Only the existing circuit protective device is suitable and provides protection for the modified circuit, and other relevant safety provisions are satisfactory.
6. Such work shall comply with other applicable legislation, such as the Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations.

F.A.Q's

What if the electrical work forms part of other building works or development?

The same process would apply if the installer of the electrical work is a member of one of the competent person's schemes. Their certificate would be fed into the Building Regulation Approval process. If the installer of the electrical work is not a member of a competent person's body then we will require a separate application and fee for the work.

What are the consequences of not obtaining approval?

1. A Completion Certificate for the works (including the main development works if the electrical installation forms part of it, i.e. an extension) will not be issued. This may result in any future sale of the property being compromised.
2. Possible enforcement Action by ourselves for failure to comply with the Building Regulations.

As the owner you need to determine whether the work you are carrying out is minor or notifiable work – if it is notifiable, make sure the person carrying out the work is either registered under one of the schemes or that person carrying out the work will be able to certify their work under the Local Authority Building Control route.

As the designer you need to 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 Authority Building Control Approval route.

As the Builder/developer you need to ensure that you have either electrical personnel who can either certify their work under one of the **competent persons schemes** or are **qualified/experience** to enable them to sign off under the Electrical Installation Certification form.