



Building Control

Technical Guidance Leaflet No. 11

Part P – Electrical Safety

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the Hertfordshire Building Control Technical Forum

Background

Statistics compiled by the government indicate that defective fixed electrical installations in UK households cause around 30 deaths and over 1,250 serious injuries every year. To address this issue the government introduced Part P of the Building Regulations in January 2005 bringing about statutory controls on electrical installation work in dwellings. This was later revised in April 2006.

These requirements apply not only to new construction but also to any alterations and additions to existing installations. The normal way to comply is to accord with the detailed technical rules given in British Standard 7671 – Requirements for Electrical Installations.

Scope of the requirements

As well as applying to houses and flats, Part P also covers work to the common parts of blocks of flats (corridors and stairways) and to shared amenities such as laundries. Combined dwelling and commercial premises having a common supply are also controlled such as shops and public houses with flats over. It also applies to outdoor installations such as outside sockets, supplies to outbuildings, outside lighting and pond pumps.

Non-notifiable work

Part P covers all works on fixed wiring systems but certain work classed as 'non-notifiable' does not necessitate notification to Building Control. This is work not involving the addition of a new circuit and not in a 'special location or installation' (see below). This could be the addition of socket outlets or lighting points to existing circuits. The replacement of accessories such as socket outlets, switches and ceiling roses in any location is also classed as non-notifiable work. You can find a full description in Appendix A.

In order to comply with Part P, the electrician carrying out the work, who need not necessarily be registered with a self-certification scheme, must provide the householder with a Minor Works Certificate. He must however be competent in inspection and testing in accordance with BS7671 (i.e. possess an appropriate City and Guilds qualification). DIY minor works must be checked by a competent electrician who can issue a minor works certificate.

Work that must be notified to Building Control

All proposed electrical work in dwellings would need to be notified to Building Control in advance of the work starting except when

- The work can be classed as non-notifiable works and is not in a special location or a special installation (see Appendix B) or;
- The work is undertaken by a firm or individual who is a 'competent person' registered with an electrical self-certification scheme authorized by the Secretary of State (see Appendix C for currently accredited bodies)

Method of notification

If the 'notifiable' works are to be carried out in conjunction with other work controlled by Building Regulations then the main application will cover the electrical work.

If such works are to be carried out on their own then the applicant should complete a special Building Notice form for electrical works on dwellings.

With both types of application it is essential that the Council be provided with relevant contact numbers for the electrician, builder or applicant so that an electrical engineer acting as our agent can telephone them to discuss the proposals. He will also make arrangements to inspect and test the electrical works. We will be unable to issue final certification until he has notified us that relevant work is satisfactorily complete.

Upgrading the existing system

For notifiable alterations and additions to existing installations, it is a Part P requirement to ensure that the parts of the existing installation upon which the new work will depend for safety will comply with the current standards. For this reason it will be normal procedure to isolate the new work from the existing system i.e. connect on a new circuit to the consumer unit. If this is not the case then our inspector will need to extend the scope of his assessment and test. This will incur additional costs to the Council that we may pass on to the applicant.

Fees

A fee is payable to the Council for applications for electrical installation work. The charge represents our reasonable costs incurred in checking and testing the work and the associated administration and is shown in our current schedule of fees.

In dealing with electrical contractors, we would strongly advise householders to request proof of their qualifications and accreditation to check or self-certify work.

APPENDIX A - Work that need not be notified to Building Control

Work consisting of:

Replacing any fixed electrical equipment (e.g. socket outlets, control switches and ceiling roses) that does not include the provision of new cabling.

Replacing the cable for a single circuit only where damaged. (a)

Re-fixing or replacing the enclosures of existing installation components (b)

Providing mechanical protection to existing fixed installations (c)

Installing or upgrading main or supplementary equipotential bonding (d)

Work that is not in a kitchen or special location and does not involve a special installation (e) and consists of:

Adding lighting points (light fittings and switches) to an existing circuit (f)

Adding socket outlets and fused spurs to an existing ring or radial circuit (f)

Work not in a special location on:

Telephone or extra-low voltage wiring and equipment for the purposes of communications, information technology, signalling control and similar purposes

Prefabricated equipment sets and associated flexible leads with integral plug and socket connections.

Notes

- (a) 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.
- (b) If the circuit's protective measures are unaffected.
- (c) If the circuit's protective measures and current carrying capacity of conductors are unaffected by increased thermal insulation.
- (d) Such work needs to comply with other applicable legislation such as the Gas Safety (installation and use) regulations.
- (e) Special locations and installations are listed in Appendix B below.
- (f) Only if the existing circuit protective device is suitable and provides protection for the modified circuit, and other relevant safety provisions are satisfactory.

APPENDIX B – Special Locations and Installations (a)

Special Locations

- Locations containing a bath or shower
- Swimming pools or paddling pools
- Hot air saunas

Special Installations

- Electric floor or ceiling heating systems
- Garden lighting or power installations
- Solar photovoltaic power supply systems
- Small scale generators such as micro CHP units (b)
- Extra-low voltage lighting installations, other than pre-assembled, CE marked lighting sets

Notes

- (a) IEE Guidance Note 7 gives more guidance on achieving safe installations where risks to people are greater.
 - (b) Combined heating and power units (boilers producing heat and electrical power).
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APPENDIX C – Electrical Self-Certification Schemes

ELECSA Limited [0845 634 9043]

www.elecsa.co.uk

National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers Registration Limited (NAPIT) [0845 543 0330]

www.napit.org.uk

NICEIC Group Limited [0870 013 0382]

www.niceic.com

British Standards Institute (BSI) [0208 996 9001]

www.bsigroup.com

Building Engineering Services Competence Accreditation (BESCA) [0800 652 5533]

www.besca.org.uk

CORGI Services Limited [0800 915 0480]

www.trustcorgi.com

The above list of Competent Persons Schemes may not be exhaustive and other individuals and corporations may have obtained registration under the Competent Person Scheme.