

PART P – ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Each year on average 10 people die and about 750 are seriously injured in accidents involving unsafe electrical installations in the home. Some of these casualties are due to electrocution and others from fires in the home resulting from unsafe installations. As from the 1st January 2005, new Building Regulations (Part P) came into force with the aim of reducing this risk.

Many DIY enthusiasts and unqualified electricians carried out electrical installations, with little or no way of knowing whether their installation was safe until a fault develops – and then it may be too late. It is important to recognise that a little knowledge is often sufficient to make electrical equipment function, but a much higher level of knowledge and experience is needed to ensure safety.

These regulations were therefore introduced to ensure that reasonable provision is made in the design, installation, inspection and testing of electrical installations in order to protect people from fire or injury.

How do the controls work?

There are of course many competent and qualified electricians, and Part P recognises that no further check is required on their work.

Therefore, competent electricians who have been registered on a government approved Part P competent person scheme run by bodies such as NICEIC, EC Certification Ltd, ELECSA, BSI, NAPIT or other authorised scheme providers, need only submit details of each job to their assessment body.

The 'Competent Person' is able to self-certify that both electrical and other work associated with the installation is in accordance with Building Regulations and to issue a 'certificate of compliance' without involving Building Control. A copy of the certificate will be forwarded to Building Control for record purposes. We will be advised of all electricians who can self-certify their works.

If you use an electrician who is not registered on a Part P competent person scheme, you will need to submit an application under the Building Regulations in exactly the same way as if you were carrying out other building works. If it forms part of other work, such as a domestic extension or alteration, the electrical installation will be considered as part of the Building Regulation application for that work, otherwise it will need to be the subject of its own application.

What type of electrical work is controlled?

Part P applies to all fixed electrical installations associated with domestic property including garages, sheds, conservatories etc. that may otherwise be exempt from the Building Regulations. However, the requirement to submit a Building Regulation application will not apply to replacement socket outlets or ceiling roses or to the replacing of a single circuit cable where damaged e.g. by fire or rodent.

In addition, and with some proviso's, the provision of a lighting point to an existing circuit or adding a socket outlet to an existing ring or radial circuit will not be controlled, unless such work is in a kitchen, bath or shower room, garden lighting or power, or other special location or installation, in which case Part P will apply and will need to be controlled. For full details of special locations and installations, please contact a Building Control Surveyor or visit our website.

What do I have to do?

If you intend to have electrical works carried out (other than those minor works described previously) there are essentially three options available;

- 1) Use an electrician who is registered with a government approved *competent persons scheme* and is therefore able to self-certify. You will not need to submit an application or pay any fee to Building Control if you elect to use this option. You should, however, ask to see evidence that the electrician is a member of such a scheme, and if you are in any doubt, contact Building Control.
- 2) Submit an application under the Building Regulations for the works, (whether they be solely electrical works or part of other building works) and confirm that you will appoint a suitably qualified electrical contractor to carry out the works who will be able to certify compliance with BS 7671 (IEE wiring regulations), verifying design, installation, commissioning and testing on completion of the works. You must then submit this certificate to Building Control who will vet the certificate to ensure it has been completed correctly and that the certifying electrician is suitably qualified.
- 3) Submit an application under the Building Regulations for the works, (whether they be solely electrical works or part of other building works) and confirm that you wish building control to ensure that you meet the requirements of Part P. As Building Control Surveyors are not sufficiently experienced and qualified to be able to inspect and test electrical installations, we will engage a suitably qualified electrical contractor who will be able to confirm to us whether or not Part P has been satisfied.

The Building Regulation application required in respect of both 2) and 3) above must consist of the application form and the appropriate fee. Schematic wiring diagrams may also be required. The current fees are included in our current charges leaflet which is published on our website and is available on request. Please note, however, that for obvious reasons, the charges in respect of 3) above will be substantially more than those for 2).

Important Information

If you wish the Isle of Wight Council to make arrangements to inspect and test the electrical works i.e. 3) above, in order to ensure that the requirements of the Building Regulations will be satisfied, our contractor will carry out 2 inspections;

- 1) **First-fix stage** - to ensure the design and installation is suitable. It is important that electrical works are not concealed when this inspection is carried out;
- 2) **Electrical works completed** - to carry out the necessary testing.

Once you have filled in the necessary form and paid the appropriate fee, you should advise us that you will require an inspection at least one week in advance. We will then make arrangements for our authorised contractor to make contact with you to arrange a suitable time for an inspection. The person who has carried out the installation should be present at both inspections. Our contractor may require to see details of the design e.g. schematic wiring diagrams.

Our contractor will advise at the time of the inspections whether the installation is satisfactory. **Please note that if it is not, you will be charged for a further re-inspection.**

On satisfactory completion of the works, the Council will issue a completion certificate confirming compliance with the Building Regulations.

Enforcement powers are available to Building Control if the requirements of the Building Regulations are not followed, and your insurance is also likely to be invalidated. In addition, you may encounter problems when you come to sell your property in the future. However, failure to comply with this legislation may have far more serious consequences; ultimately you may put at risk the lives of yourself, your family, visitors to your property and future occupants.

Note:

Persons proposing to carry out building work are reminded that Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent may also be required, and you are advised to contact Development Control for guidance (01983 823552).

Further advice can be obtained from:

Planning Services
Building Control Section
Seaclose Offices
Fairlee Road
NEWPORT
Isle of Wight
PO30 2QS

☎: 01983 823580

E-mail: building.control@iow.gov.uk

Website: www.iwight.com/buildingcontrol

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ELECTRICAL SAFETY (DWELLINGS)



PLANNING SERVICES