



Electrical Safety in **communal areas** of **residential properties**

England and Wales

ELECTRICAL

SAFETY
COUNCIL

Building on the success of our *Landlords Guide to Electrical Safety*, this Guide is intended to address electrical safety in communal areas (areas accessible by staff, residents, and others visiting the property). It is primarily for all types of residential landlords, including local authorities, housing associations, freeholder companies, resident management companies and right to manage companies. Electrical contractors, installers and residents may also find the information useful.

The aim of this Guide is to provide those having the responsibility of looking after communal areas with the right information so that they can meet their legal obligations. As this is a Guide, though, it has not been possible to cover every aspect of electrical safety. So, to assist readers, references to other publications and/or website addresses have been provided. It is not our intention, however, for you to purchase any such publications.

The Electrical Safety Council* is indebted to the following organisations for their contribution and/or support to the development of this Guide:



The Association of Residential Managing Agents (ARMA)
www.arma.org.uk



Guinness South
www.guinnesspartnership.com



Radian
www.radian.co.uk



RLHA Group
www.rlha.org.uk



Springboard Housing Association
www.ghg.org.uk



Laceys Solicitors
www.laceysolicitors.co.uk

In electronic format, this Guide is intended to be made available free of charge to all interested parties. Further copies may be downloaded from the websites of some of the contributing organisations.

The version of this Guide on the Electrical Safety Council website (www.esc.org.uk) will always be the latest. Feedback on any of our Guides is always welcome.

*The Electrical Safety Council is an independent charity committed to reducing deaths and injuries caused by electrical accidents at home and at work. We are supported by all sectors of the electrical industry as well as local and central government and work to promote safety and good practice.



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Electrical Safety in Communal Areas

England & Wales version

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1. Introduction

With so much legislation in place these days, and conflicting guidance that is all too easily available in the public domain, it can sometimes be difficult for you to know what to do when it comes to managing electrical safety within communal areas in building(s) that you own or manage.

The aim of this Guide is therefore to provide you with the right information or, where appropriate, tell you where to find it, so that you can meet your legal obligations where you have the responsibility of looking after communal areas.

Communal areas are those areas of a house or a block of flats or an estate that residents have a right to use in common with other tenants and for which a landlord is responsible. Typical examples of communal areas include shared:

- ▶ entrance halls and foyers
- ▶ stairwells
- ▶ corridors
- ▶ landings
- ▶ kitchens and bathrooms
- ▶ laundry and boiler rooms
- ▶ gymnasium or swimming pool
- ▶ parking and refuse areas
- ▶ pathways
- ▶ gardens.

Despite the UK's relatively good track record for electrical and fire safety, recorded figures for 2007 show that 19¹ people died from electrocution and/or fatal electric burns as a result of an accident in the home, and there were 21,424² accidental domestic fires of an electrical origin, which resulted in 49² deaths and 3,477² injuries.

So, in an attempt to see these figures reduced, this Guide addresses periodic inspection, testing and reporting of electrical installations, and the inspection and testing of portable electrical equipment (where provided by yourself). It also offers some guidance on what to look for when assessing the competence of an employee, or selected contractor, to undertake such work.

¹ Number of deaths recorded under W86 and W87 categories as reported to the World Health Organisation, minus those from HSE data, given in confidence, for the year 2007

² Data supplied by the Department of Communities and Local Government

Moreover, should you not be aware of it, electrical safety is not all about protecting persons from the dangers of electric shock. An overloaded circuit or faulty electrical wiring, for example, can cause a fire. Therefore an overview of fire alarm and emergency lighting systems is also provided in this Guide, together with an insight into 'fire risk assessments'.

This Guide is intended to complement our popular *Landlords Guide to Electrical Safety*.

Since it was first published in 2009, it has been downloaded around 30,000 times and over 10,000 copies of it have been distributed in booklet form. If you are not familiar with it, you can download it from:



www.esc.org.uk/industry/industry-guidance/other-downloads/guidance-for-landlords

Finally, in an attempt to avoid reproducing all of that 'good and trustworthy' material already in the public domain, this Guide highlights the key information you need and, where appropriate, signposts you – by way of an 'infographic' – to the original source of the information, or via another infographic to download a particular document (which, unless otherwise stated will be free of charge). If we didn't do this, the guide would (probably) run to hundreds of pages.

The main two infographics used throughout this guide are:

A dashed purple rounded rectangle containing two icons and their descriptions. The first icon shows a purple arrow pointing down to a computer monitor, with the text 'Download a file (a signpost to a specific document or publication)'. The second icon shows a purple hand pointing to a computer monitor, with the text 'View a webpage (for further information)'.

Download a file
(a signpost to a specific document or publication)

View a webpage
(for further information)

Now, before you dip into specific sections of the Guide, we strongly recommended that you take a few minutes to read through the next two sections, which deal with the 'legal requirements' that you are obliged to comply with and 'Fire Risk Assessments'.

ADVANCE NOTICE: The Department for Communities and Local Government have commissioned the development of 'fire safety guidance for purpose built blocks'. This fire safety guidance is expected to be made available in the second half of 2011, so please visit our website regularly to check the latest news. The Electrical Safety Council is part sponsoring the project.

2. Legal requirements

The legal requirements for electrical safety are dispersed across many pieces of legislation, including Acts of Parliament and regulations (Statutory Instruments). The main ones include the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*, the *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (EAWR)*, and the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)*.

These, together with an overview of a few others, are introduced in Part 1 of our Landlords' Guide to Electrical Safety. Therefore, if you are not familiar with one or more of them, or the Guide itself, you can download the Guide from:



www.esc.org.uk/industry/industry-guidance/other-downloads/guidance-for-landlords



We would also like to inform you that you have a 'common duty of care' to anyone who visits your property. Covered under the *Occupiers' Liability Act 1957* and the *Occupiers' Liability Act 1984*, an 'occupier' of a building (or land) may be found liable for any injury caused to another party whilst on their land (or premises). For example, if a tradesman is working on your property, slips on a spillage that leads to injury, you could be liable. The 1957 Act deals with lawful visitors and the 1984 Act deals with trespassers.

An 'occupier' is the person occupying or having control over any fixed or moveable structure, including any vessel, vehicle or aircraft; so its scope is far reaching. The 'occupier' can be a local authority, a company, an individual or a partnership.

Section 2(2) of the Act states that '*... the common duty of care is a duty to take such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purpose for which he is invited or permitted to be there ...*'

Interestingly, Section 2(3)a of the Act recognises that '*... an occupier must be prepared for children to be less careful than adults ...*'

Now, without worrying you too much, it seems fair to say that most of us already have a good understanding of what to do. For example, it is reasonable to assume that most of us know that when a 'tripping hazard' is identified at work, some sort of 'action' is needed to remove that hazard. Likewise, there is always someone in the office these days that knows that electrical equipment has to be 'checked' from time to time, for reasons of electrical safety.

Finally, If you are not aware of this, a piece of legislation - known as the *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005* (FSO) - came into effect on 1 October 2006. It replaced over 70 pieces of fire safety law, and has significantly changed fire safety law and practice. The FSO applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales, including the **common parts (such as staircases, hallways, and landings - especially the internal fire escape routes) of blocks of flats and some houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).**

For further information on the FSO, refer to [Appendix A](#) of this Guide.

3. Risk assessments

As explained in Appendix A of this Guide, the ‘responsible person’ must carry out a **fire safety risk assessment** and **implement and maintain a fire management plan**. If you need assistance with this, information on what you need to do when carrying out a risk assessment is available in a 5-step fire risk assessment checklist produced by the government.

An image of that checklist is given in **Appendix B** of this Guide and, if you require a copy of the document, it can be downloaded from:



www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/151102.pdf

General risk assessments

If you require a more general guide on risk assessments, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) makes available a very useful short document, which can be downloaded from:



www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf

The HSE also makes available another useful document detailing an **example risk assessment for maintenance of flats**, which can be downloaded from:



<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/pdf/flats.pdf>



NOTE: Where a business employs **five or more people**, the responsible person must record any findings gathered during the risk assessment. In particular, the following points should be documented:

- ▶ any significant findings (on a form like the one shown in Appendix B of this Guide)
- ▶ measures taken, or to be taken, to ensure general fire and electrical safety, and
- ▶ the persons identified as being especially at risk.



A copy of the 'significant findings' form (in MS Word format) can be downloaded from:

www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/doc/153887.doc

If you feel that you need more practical advice (to identify hazards when undertaking the fire risk assessment), or for information on how to compile a fire safety plan, your local Fire and Rescue Service should be able to help. However, they will not take any responsibility for either the risk assessment or the fire safety plan. You may therefore prefer to employ the services of a fire safety specialist, but it may be worth your while consulting with your insurer for a recommendation first. Companies providing such services are usually listed in local directories or on the Internet.

The responsible person is required to review risk assessments regularly. This can be achieved by reviewing it annually and updating it if changes are made to the building or its use.

All risk assessments should be recorded in your risk assessment document(s), even if you do not find anything different from the last inspection. This will indicate to others that a review had taken place.



Walking the building

Whilst 'walking the building', looking for fire hazards or material changes to the building, it is an ideal time to look out for broken accessories (such as sockets), damaged plugs and other electrical hazards, that could pose a risk to life and/or the building. Examples of 'other' electrical hazards include the extensive use of trailing leads, incorrect placement of heat sources and incomplete enclosures or missing covers from wiring systems and/or electrical switchgear.

Where such hazards are identified, you have a duty of care to put the situation right as soon as practicable, even if the next periodic inspection of the electrical installation is not due for several months or years. Documenting your findings will demonstrate to others, if required, that you have a system in place to identify potential hazards and remove them as soon as is practically possible.



Firefighting

Where necessary, in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons (whether due to the size and/or shape of the premises, the activity carried on there, any hazard present or any other relevant circumstances), the responsible person must ensure that:

- ▶ the premises are, to the extent that it is appropriate, equipped with appropriate fire-fighting equipment and with fire detectors and alarms, and
- ▶ any non-automatic fire-fighting equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers) so provided is easily accessible, simple to use and indicated by signs.

NOTE: The provision of fire extinguishers is a subject of much debate as they can be beneficial to restrict the development and spread of small fires. However, unless such fires are very small, the latest advice is to evacuate the building to a place of safety, and call the fire and rescue service. This is because for larger fires, people need training to know what type of fire an extinguisher can be safely used on, how to tackle a fire safely, and when to give up and get out. The installation of extinguishers can also lead to problems if they are not properly maintained, discharged through mischievousness and/or damaged by vandalism.

4. Electrical Installation Condition Reports (Periodic Inspection Reports)

Every electrical installation deteriorates with use and age.

It is therefore important that you ensure that persons entering or using your property are not put at risk, by confirming that the electrical installation is maintained in a safe and serviceable condition.

One way of confirming an existing electrical installation is safe for continued use is to have the installation periodically inspected and tested and a 'report' on its condition issued to the person ordering the work.

Electrical Installation Condition Report

Periodic inspection is an inspection on the condition of an existing electrical installation, to identify and prioritise any deficiencies against *BS 7671*, the national standard for the safety of electrical installations.



A comprehensive periodic inspection should, amongst other things:

- ▶ find any potential electrical shock risks and fire hazards within your electrical installation,
- ▶ highlight any lack of earthing or bonding,
- ▶ reveal if any of your electrical circuits or fixed equipment are overloaded, and
- ▶ identify any defective electrical work.

An 'Electrical Installation Condition Report'³ is, as the title indicates, a report, not a certificate. It relates to an assessment of the in-service condition of an electrical installation against the requirements of the current edition of *BS 7671*. The report is primarily for the benefit of the person ordering the work, and for anyone else subsequently involved in additional or remedial work, or further inspections. A report may be required for a variety of reasons. For example, a report can be useful when buying (or selling) a property. Another use for the report would be to record the inspection and testing of an electrical installation after (say) a flood or fire.

Periodic inspection and testing of an electrical installation is also recommended at the end of the period stated on the electrical installation certificate, or the last electrical installation condition report (periodic inspection report).

³ Between the early 1990s and July 2011, an 'Electrical Installation Condition Report' was formerly known as a *Periodic Inspection Report (PIR)*.

An Electrical Installation Condition Report should include details of the extent of the installation to which it relates and of any limitations of the inspection and testing, including the reasons for any such limitations. It should be noted that the greater the limitations applying to the inspection, the lesser is the scope of the inspection and testing carried out, and hence the value of the report is diminished.

Each report is supposed to include a record of the inspection and the results of the tests undertaken at the time the inspection and testing work was carried out. The report provides a formal declaration that, within the agreed and stated limitations, the details recorded, including the observations and recommendations, and the completed schedules of inspection and test results, give an accurate assessment of the condition of the electrical installation at the time the electrical installation was inspected.

The main purpose of having your electrical installation checked is therefore to identify, so far as is reasonably practicable, and report on, any factors impairing or likely to impair the safety of the electrical installation.

The aspects to be covered include:

- ▶ safety of persons against the effects of electric shock and burns
- ▶ protection of property against damage from fire and heat, arising from an installation defect
- ▶ confirmation that the installation is not damaged or deteriorated, so as to impair safety
- ▶ identification of installation defects and departures from the requirements of BS 7671, that may give rise to danger.

An electrical installation condition report should:

1. identify the area(s) and/or circuits of the property to which the report relates
2. identify anything that may cause electric shocks and high temperatures, which would potentially lead to burns, fire and other injuries and/or death
3. identify any damage and/or wear and tear that might affect safety
4. identify the results of inspection and tests carried out on the installation, to indicate the electrical installation is safe for continued use until the next inspection (following any remedial work needed to make it safe, if applicable).
5. provide an important record of the installation at the time of the inspection, and for future inspection and testing.

Changes to Recommendation Codes (BS 7671: 2008 + A1: 2011)

BS 7671 is amended from time to time to take account of technological advancements, improve harmonization with other national and international standards and, to a lesser extent, recognise changes to working practices. Amendment 1 to BS 7671: 2008, which will be published in July 2011 and will come into effect on 1 January 2012, will include certain changes to periodic inspection and reporting. Amongst other things, the 'Recommendation Codes' will be reduced from four codes to three, as shown in the following table.

Pre-Amendment 1 Codes		Amendment 1 Codes	
Description	Code	Classification Code	Description
Requires urgent attention	1	C1	Danger present. Risk of injury. Immediate remedial action required.
Requires improvement	2	C2	Potentially dangerous. Urgent remedial action required.
Requires further investigation	3	C3	Improvement recommended.
Does not comply with BS 7671: 2008	4		No longer applicable

NOTE 1: Amendment 1 Classification Codes C1, C2 and C3 may be used for Condition Reports for periodic inspections carried out after 30 June 2011, and must be used for Condition Reports for periodic inspections carried out after 31 December 2011.

NOTE 2: It would not be reasonable to indicate a 'Satisfactory' assessment of an electrical installation if any observation in the report had been given a 'C1' or 'C2' recommendation code.

NOTE 3: The option to flag an 'observation' as a Code 3, 'Requires further investigation', will no longer be valid after 31 December 2011. However, where an inspector needs to identify something as 'further investigation required', this can be done on the form itself, by way of a 'yes/no' column in Section M of the report. Further investigation would generally be linked to a Classification Code.

(ii) Visual Condition Report

In general, a Visual Condition Report is suitable only where the installation has been inspected and tested within the last two years and the results were reported on an Electrical Installation Certificate or an Electrical Installation Condition Report (Periodic Inspection Report), as appropriate, having a 'Satisfactory' outcome, or where the Electrical Installation Condition Report contained Code 1 or Code 2 departures, they had been rectified.

It is important to note that a Visual Condition Report includes only the findings of the inspection of an electrical installation; it does not include the results of any electrical testing.

Frequency of Inspection and testing

The maximum interval between periodic inspections depends on the type and age of an installation, its use and/or level of misuse (e.g. vandalism), the extent of wear and tear, and damage and/or deterioration found at the time of the last inspection.

To aid those carrying out periodic inspection and testing (and for those having the responsibility of organising them), a number of organisations publish guidance on the frequency of such inspections. However, the period of 10 years quoted for 'domestic' installations relates to the period from the 'initial verification' (i.e. when the installation was first installed) to the first periodic inspection and test. Therefore, an inspector should always apply engineering judgement before specifying a similar period to the next inspection.

As a matter of course, the Electrical Safety Council recommends that electrical installations within communal areas are periodically inspected and tested at least every five years. However, for those that keep up-to-date records on the condition of their electrical installations and/or have an adequate regime of continuous monitoring and maintenance by competent persons (i.e. not caretakers or porters), there may be justification to increase the period between subsequent periodic inspection or not have them at all, but adopting such a regime should not be considered as one's first choice to providing electrical safety within communal areas.

In any event, the *Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006* requires that every fixed electrical installation in an HMO is inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding five years by a person qualified to undertake such inspection and testing. A report from the person conducting that inspection and test, specifying the results of the inspection and test, must be obtained and supplied to the local housing authority within seven (7) days of receiving a request in writing for it from that authority.

PAT Testing

The inspection and testing of electrical appliances (commonly referred to as portable appliance testing (PAT)) is not included in either of aforementioned reports. Information on the inspection and testing of such appliances is given in the next section of this Guide.

I have many properties, which CANNOT all be inspected and tested in one year

Where previous Electrical Installation Condition Reports (Periodic Inspection Reports) are available, up-to-date, and cover your complete portfolio of properties, it may be beneficial, not only for financial reasons, to spread the inspection and testing of those properties over five years. For example, if you have ten properties, having two properties checked for electrical safety each year is a lot easier to manage than having all ten done at once. This option should not, however, be considered if any of the electrical installations in your portfolio have not been inspected and tested within the last five years.

A 'clean bill of health'

Being in receipt of an electrical installation condition report that has been attributed with a 'Satisfactory' outcome may not always be seen as a good thing. For example, signing off an installation as 'satisfactory' following remedial work to put right aspects of the electrical installation that were considered unsafe, without recording them on the appropriate part of the form, is not considered correct or best practice. This is because, without having such evidence documented, it would be difficult for you to demonstrate that you are responsible landlord or managing agent when it comes to overseeing electrical safety.

Note: If necessary, continue on additional page(s), which must be identified by the Domestic Periodic Inspection Report serial number and page number(s).

Date(s) of the inspection:	01/12/09
Overall assessment of the installation:	Satisfactory
<i>(Entry should read either 'Satisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory')</i>	

Remedial work carried out as a result of observations noted on the Electrical Installation Condition Report would need to be verified and the results recorded on an Electrical Installation Certificate (EIC) or a Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate (Minor Works Certificate). The EIC or Minor Works Certificate for the remedial work, in conjunction with the original Electrical Installation Condition Report, would satisfy the reporting/certification requirements until the next periodic inspection became due.

Labelling

A period inspection label, as required by Regulation 514.12.1 of BS 7671, should be fitted on completion of installation work (including alterations and additions) and on each completion of periodic inspection, in a prominent position at or near the origin, giving the recommended date by which the installation should be re-inspected.

IMPORTANT	
This installation should be periodically inspected and tested and a report on its condition obtained, as prescribed in the IET Wiring Regulations BS 7671 Requirements for Electrical Installations.	
Date of last Inspection	Recommended date of next inspection

5. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Statistically, faults in and misuse of electrical appliances are the highest cause of accidents and fatalities in the home. So, if we extend these figures into the workplace (where most people think 'it's someone else's responsibility to look after a particular job or thing') we are possibly more at risk of electric shock, burns, fire and, at worst, death from the likes of faulty plugs, leads and appliances.

Therefore, in order to reduce those accidents and deaths, you (or your appointed person or contractor) can take some simple steps to ensure that electrical equipment is safely used, stored, and regularly checked. But, remember, the safety of appliances also relies (to some extent) on the standard of the fixed wiring of the electrical installation.

You should also appreciate that the incorrect and/or inappropriate use of any hand-held electrical appliance (or accessory, such as a socket-outlet) can lead to an increased risk of electric shock to the user. The same is also true for appliances that are inappropriately kept in (say) a cupboard or storeroom. For example, after using an appliance, such as a portable electric heater, if the user wound the flex around the appliance, it could create a twist or kink in the flex which, if repeated over a period of time, would more than likely damage the flex, thus increasing increase the risk of electric shock or fire.

Providing portable appliances

Before providing any type of portable (or fixed) electrical appliance, you should check that the appliance has at least the 'CE Mark', which is the product manufacturer's claim that it meets all the requirements of European safety legislation. The Electrical Safety Council also recommends that appliances with additional safety marks, such as the British Standard 'Kitemark' or the BEAB Approved Mark (which indicates that the equipment has been assessed by an independent body as meeting with the relevant product standard), are purchased, as these appliances tend to provide greater assurance of electrical safety.



It is also important to ensure that the electrical equipment provided by you is suitable for the location(s) and/or environment(s) to which it likely to be subjected. For example, an item of equipment for use in a room containing a bath or shower should have a degree of protection to at least IP4X (splash proof), or where the equipment is likely to be exposed to water jets (e.g. for cleaning purposes) it should have a degree of protection to at least IP5X (jet proof). The 'IP' Code is an international protection coding system, also referred to as 'Ingress protection', used by designers, manufacturers and installers.

Where portable electrical equipment is provided, users of the equipment should always be told to read and follow the equipment manufacturer's instructions. Ideally, copies of the instructions should be left in the property so that they can be referred to, as and when required. To help people use an appliance safely, some manufacturers provide a 'user checklist', which can be found within either the instructions or a separate document.

Checking portable appliances

To ensure that electrical appliances are safe for continued use, regular basic safety checks should be carried out. The checks that you (or the user) of the appliance can safely carry out include checking that:

- ▶ there are no cuts or abrasions in the cable covering (sheath)
- ▶ the plug body is not cracked or damaged and the pins are not bent
- ▶ there are no loose parts or missing screws
- ▶ there are no signs of burning, particularly at the plug
- ▶ the outer covering of the cable is secured by the clamp (or grip) in the plug so that no coloured cable cores are visible from outside of the plug. (The function of the clamp (or grip) is to prevent the internal connections being pulled loose)
- ▶ no part of the appliance is excessively damaged (for example, cracked or badly dented) or missing (such as a terminal cover).

The majority of dangerous defects in electrical appliances can be identified by undertaking some simple checks, as detailed in the table shown opposite.

For further information relating to the frequency of inspection and testing of portable appliances and for the different categories of equipment (like portable, moveable and stationary), refer to Appendix D of the *Landlords Guide to Electrical Safety*. If you do not have a copy, it can be downloaded from:



www.esc.org.uk/industry/industry-guidance/other-downloads/guidance-for-landlords

Recommended frequency of inspection and tests for electrical equipment provided by residential landlords, local authorities, housing associations, freeholder companies, resident management companies and right to manage companies

Type of equipment	User checks Note (1)	Class I		Class II	
		Formal visual inspection Note (2) Months	Combined inspection and testing Note (3) Months	Formal visual inspection Note (2) Months	Combined inspection and testing Note (3) Months
Battery operated (less than 20 V)	None	None	None	None	None
Extra-low voltage: (less than 50 V a.c.) eg telephone equipment, low voltage desk lights	None	None	None	None	None
Stationary equipment	None	24	48(4)	24	None
Information technology equipment	None	24	48 (4)	24	None
Movable equipment	Weekly	12	24	24	None
Portable equipment	Weekly	12	24	24	None
Hand-held equipment	Before use	6	12	6	None
Cables (leads) and plugs connected to the above equipment. (2) Extension leads	Before use	6-24 months depending upon the type of equipment to which it is connected	12-48 (4) months depending upon the type of equipment to which it is connected	6-24 months depending upon the type of equipment to which it is connected	12-48 (4) months depending upon the type of equipment to which it is connected (limited test)

NOTES:

(1) User checks are an important part of the maintenance regime. They are required to be done before plugging in and switching on the item of equipment. Usually, such checks include an external visual inspection of the plug, flex and the casing of the appliance, as well as giving consideration to the suitability of the appliance for the environment it is to be used in.

(2) The formal visual inspection should be carried out by a competent person, often the test operative. The formal visual inspection should be recorded.

(3) The combined inspection and test should be performed by the test operative. The combined inspection and test should be recorded.

(4) Depending on previous experience and records, consideration could be given to extending this to 60 months (5 years), where the test date coincides with the fixed wiring inspection and test.

(5) When requests for tenders are being made for electrical equipment, clients should confirm whether inspection and tests of leads are included within the price quoted for inspection and test of their associated piece of electrical equipment.

6. Finding an electrician

As you will soon find out, electrical work in communal areas of residential premises falls within the scope of Part P of the Building Regulations. The Electrical Safety Council therefore recommends that you use a competent person/business registered with one of the following government-approved self-certification schemes:



Benchmark Certification Ltd
t/a CORGI membership
Tel: 0844 8794798
www.corgi-membership.com



British Standards Institution
Tel: 0845 076 5600
www.kitemark.com



EC Certification Ltd
Tel: 0845 634 9043
www.elecsa.co.uk



NAPIT Registration Ltd
Tel: 0845 543 0330
www.napit.org.uk



NICEIC
Tel: 0870 013 0382
www.niceic.com

Sole traders and the electrical supervisors of businesses registered with one of the government-approved self-certification schemes will have had, amongst other things, their qualifications, experience and samples of their work checked to confirm that they have the knowledge and experience to carry out electrical works in accordance with *BS 7671*. Subsequently, using a 'registered' electrician/installer will place less responsibility on you to decide whether that person/business is competent or not.

The above-mentioned organisations are authorised by Government to assess and register those that are competent to carry out and self-certify electrical work in order to comply with Part P. This means that in addition to receiving the appropriate electrical certificate for electrical work undertaken, you should also receive a Building Regulations Compliance Certificate.

Here are some questions and answers about Part P



What is Part P?



Part P is a part of the Building Regulations for England and Wales that came into effect on 1 January 2005.

Since then, all electrical installation work in dwellings has become a 'controlled service' under the Building Regulations. This means that the technical standard of electrical installation work in **'dwellings'** (generally houses and flats), and certain other parts of buildings (**including communal areas**) in England and Wales is subject to statutory requirements.

These requirements apply not only to new construction, but also to any alterations or additions to existing installations, including full or partial rewires.



How far reaching is Part P?



Very. From 1 January 2005, the legal requirements apply to all electrical installation work in dwellings in England and Wales, whether carried out professionally or by DIY, whether or not 'minor work', and whether or not it is notifiable to a building control body.



Do the Part P requirements extend beyond dwellings?



Yes. In addition to electrical installations in houses and flats, Part P also applies to electrical installations in:

- ▶ **common access parts in blocks of flats, such as corridors and staircases (but not lifts)**
- ▶ **shared amenities in blocks of flats, such as laundry rooms and gymnasiums**
- ▶ combined dwelling and business premises having a common electricity supply, such as shops and pubs with a flat above.

This means that there are some overlaps between Part P and the *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (EWR)*, but this is intentional, to avoid any legal loopholes.



Part P also applies to:



- ▶ Electrical installations in outbuildings (such as boiler rooms and garages) that receive their electricity from a consumer unit in a dwelling
- ▶ parts of electrical installations on land and in gardens associated with dwellings, such as for outside lighting.



Are there any limitations on the application of the requirements?



Yes. They apply to installations intended to operate at low or extra-low voltage.

Low voltage refers to voltages that exceed extra-low voltage but do not exceed 1,000 V a.c. or 1,500 V d.c. between conductors, or 600 V a.c. or 900 V d.c. between conductors and Earth.

The *extra-low voltage* band (covering voltages not exceeding 50 V a.c. or 120 V ripple-free d.c., whether between conductors or to Earth) is included to cover such things as extra-low voltage downlighters (e.g. 12 V), because these have been known to be the cause of a number of fires, for example due to the use of incorrectly sized conductors.

Also, for the purposes of Part P, 'electrical installations' are deemed to include everything downstream of the electricity supply meter. The meter and everything upstream of it are the responsibility of the meter operator or electricity distributor.



Does Part P only apply to new electrical installations?



No. It also applies to all alterations and extensions to existing electrical installations, including full or partial rewires.



Does Part P require parts of existing installations to be upgraded?



Yes, in some circumstances. For alterations and additions to existing installations, there is a requirement to ensure that the parts of the existing installation upon which new work will depend for safety, such as the earthing and bonding arrangements, comply with the current standard.



What work has to be NOTIFIED to Building Control?



All proposed electrical installation work in dwellings (and in communal areas of residential premises) must be notified to a building control body in advance of the work starting, except where:

1. the work is to be undertaken by a Part P 'registered' installer, or
2. the work is of a minor nature not involving the addition of a new circuit – and it is not in a kitchen or a special installation or location, as defined by BS 7671; or
3. the work comprises only the replacement of accessories, such as socket-outlets, control switches and ceiling roses (even in a kitchen or 'special installation or location').

The second and third exceptions are intended to reduce, to some extent, the burden on building control bodies with respect to DIY work and work carried out by in-house maintenance staff or by someone other than a Part P registered installer.

For a comprehensive list of work that does not need notifying to Building Control, refer to Table 1 of Approved Document Part P, downloadable from:



www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/br/BR_PDF_ADP_2006.pdf



What is 'minor work'?



Basically, 'minor work' is any installation work that does not involve the addition of a new circuit. Examples of such work include the addition of socket-outlets or lighting points to existing circuits, and the replacement of accessories such as socket-outlets, lighting switches and ceiling roses.



Confirmation of compliance to Building Control



Electrical Installers registered with a Part P competent person self-certification scheme are required to provide certain information to Building Control within 30 days of completion of electrical work.

continued over

The information (in electronic form), routed through the competent person scheme operator, includes:

- ▶ the address where the work was carried out
- ▶ the date the work was completed
- ▶ the installer's company name and registration number
- ▶ the scheme operator, and
- ▶ a brief description of the work.

It should be appreciated that when a Building Regulations Compliance Certificate is issued, the Part P registered installer is confirming that he or she has carried out the said electrical work to Part P and that the work also complies with all of the other relevant parts of the Building Regulations, including:

- ▶ Part A - Structure
- ▶ Part B - Fire Safety
- ▶ Part C - Site preparation and resistance to moisture
- ▶ Part E - Resistance to the passage of sound
- ▶ Part F - Ventilation
- ▶ Part L - Conservation of Fuel and Power
- ▶ Part M - Access to and use of buildings



Where the installer is NOT registered with a Part P competent person self-certification scheme



Where notifiable electrical work is carried out by a person NOT registered with a Part P competent person self-certification scheme, the work should be notified to a building control body (the local authority) before work starts. Notifying a building control body may incur a fee.

Where the work is necessary because of an emergency, the building control body should be notified as soon as possible. The building control body will then become responsible for making sure the work is safe and complies with all relevant requirements of Building Regulations.

NOTE: Under the Building Act, electrical work must be self-certified only by the competent person who carried out that work. This obviously rules out certification of compliance by a third party other than by a building control body, or an agent appointed by them.

7. Competence of operatives

Electrical work should be undertaken by people that have the appropriate knowledge, skill and experience needed to avoid danger to themselves and to others. It is often said that it is easy to make an electrical circuit work, but it is far harder to make the circuit work safely, especially when a fault occurs!

One way of checking the competence of an operative is to check his or her qualifications, but there is more to it than that. If you have never used a particular contractor before there are those usual questions of: how up to date are they with current practice, are they insured, and what happens if something goes wrong with the job.

We therefore recommend that where the type of electrical work that you need doing is notifiable to a building control body, you use a Part P 'registered' installer (by this, we mean with one of the government approved self-certification schemes listed in Part 6 of this Guide). By doing so, virtually all of those questions will have been answered for you as, amongst other things, such businesses are regularly assessed on:

- ▶ their business premises
- ▶ their equipment
- ▶ examples of their work
- ▶ their technical knowledge
- ▶ holding the appropriate level of insurance⁴, and
- ▶ having the ability to supervise employees.

⁴ Depending on the amount, type, and complexity of periodic inspection and testing that electrical contractors carry out as part of their working lives, it may mean that Professional Indemnity Insurance is required as well as Public Liability Insurance.

8. Documentation (certificates and reports)

It is essential that you receive and retain relevant electrical documentation for all completed electrical installation work and any subsequent inspection(s) undertaken on the installation. Such documentation includes certificates and reports, which should include the relevant results of the tests, at the time the job was undertaken.

The type of certification or report you should receive depends on the extent and type of electrical installation work or report you had carried out. For new work, you will issued with an Electrical Installation Certificate or, where applicable, a Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate. Issuing a certificate is part of the job – it is not an extra!

Model forms are given in Appendix 6 of *BS 7671*.

New electrical installations

A correctly compiled Electrical Installation Certificate (EIC) will provide the person responsible for the safety of electrical installation (including contractors, owners and users) with an important record of the condition of that installation at the time that the electrical work was completed. Such certificates also provide an essential basis for subsequent inspection and testing, without which a degree of costly exploratory work might be necessary on each occasion. In the event of injury or fire, alleged to have been caused by an electrical installation, certificates (together with the inspection and testing results) will provide documentary evidence to help demonstrate that, in the opinion of the competent person(s) undertaking the work, the installation had been installed to a satisfactory standard.

An EIC should identify the electrical work that was carried as 'new', an 'addition' or an 'alteration'. The term 'new' is appropriate where the whole installation had been installed as new or a complete rewire had been carried out. The term 'addition' is relevant if an existing installation has been modified by the addition of one or more new circuits. The term 'alteration' is appropriate to where one or more existing circuits have been modified or extended, or items such as distribution boards and switchgear have been replaced.

An EIC must be used for all new electrical installations. It can also be used for an alteration or addition depending upon whether or not a new circuit has been installed. Where an alteration or additional electrical work is carried out which **does not extend to the provision of a new circuit**, a MEIWC or an EIC may be used.

A *Domestic Electrical Installation Certificate* is a reduced form of EIC, for use only on domestic properties.

Minor Work

A Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate (referred to as Minor Works Certificate) may be used only for an addition or an alteration to a single circuit that does not extend to the provision of a new circuit. The Minor Works Certificate therefore has a limited application and must not be used for work outside its scope. Examples of work that would fall within its scope are:

- ▶ the addition of a socket-outlet to a ring or radial final circuit
- ▶ work carried out on a lighting final circuit, including an alteration to the switching arrangements and the addition of a lighting point, or
- ▶ the replacement of an accessory or luminaire.*

* If preferred by a client such as a Local Authority, the client's own documentation (such as a combined works order and certificate) may be used instead of a Minor Works Certificate for the replacement of an accessory or luminaire, provided that the safety declaration, installation details, and the inspection and test results required to be recorded on the alternative documentation are no less comprehensive than those required to be recorded on the Minor Works Certificate, and that a copy of the completed documentation is retained by the contractor.

Comments on Existing Installation box, provided on both certificates

This section of the certificate is applicable only where the work carried out is an addition or alteration to an existing installation, or where a partial rewire of an installation has been carried out and the installation is connected to an existing main incoming supply. Any deficiencies observed in the existing installation that do not affect the safety of the new work must be recorded here, by reference to an additional sheet of the certificate giving the detailed comments. Examples of such deficiencies are deterioration and minor defects. Where there are no comments to be made, the entry should read 'None'.

BS/EN	rating	Earthing conductor		Main protective bonding conductors		Bonding of extraneous-conductive-parts (✓)	
No of Poles	Rated current, I _b	A	Conductor material	Conductor material	Water service	Gas service	
Supply conductors: material	RCD operating current, I _{Δn} *	mA	Conductor csa	mm ²	Conductor csa	mm ²	Oil service Structural steel
Supply conductors: csa	RCD operating time (at I _{Δn})**	ms	Continuity check	(✓)	Continuity check	(✓)	Lightning protection Other incoming service(s)

COMMENTS ON EXISTING INSTALLATION

In the case of an alteration or additions see Section 6.33 Note: Enter 'NONE' or where appropriate, the page number(s) of additional page(s) of comments on the existing installation.

NEXT INSPECTION § Enter interval in terms of years, months or weeks, as appropriate

§ We, the designer(s), RECOMMEND that this installation is further inspected and tested after an interval of not more than

Where the electrical contractor responsible for the construction of the electrical installation has also been responsible for the design and the inspection and testing of that installation, the 'Particulars of the Organisation Responsible for the Electrical Installation' may be recorded only in the section entitled 'CONSTRUCTION'.

It is important to appreciate that any defects that would result in a reduced level of safety in the new work (that is, a level of safety less than would be afforded by compliance with BS 7671) must be corrected before the new work is put in to service. Consequently, no such defects should be recorded on either certificate.

In particular, by the time the installation work is ready to be certified and put in to service, the installer should have ensured that the rating and condition of any existing equipment, such as the main incoming supply, cables and switchgear, which will have to carry any additional load as a result of the new work, are adequate for the altered circumstances and that the existing earthing arrangement, main equipotential bonding and, where appropriate, supplementary equipotential bonding are all adequate.

Electrical Installation Condition Report (Periodic Inspection Report)

(Refer to Part 4 of this Guide.)

NOTE: All certificates and reports should be kept along with other important property documentation and retained for future reference.

Fire Alarm systems

Separate certification is required for the design, installation, modification, and servicing of a fire alarm system in communal areas. A Fire Alarm Inspection and Servicing Certificate is required when the system has been checked for (principally) functionality.

The 230 V electrical supply to a fire alarm system should be identified on an Electrical Installation Certificate.

All fire alarm certificates and reports should be kept along with the fire alarm system log book, together with any other important property documentation, for the lifetime of the installation.

Emergency Lighting Certificates

Separate certification is required for the design, installation, modification, and servicing of an emergency lighting system in communal areas.

All certificates and reports should be kept along with the emergency lighting system log book, together with any other important property documentation, for the lifetime of the installation.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) results

All reports should be kept along with any other important property documentation.

9. Specific installations / considerations

This section of the Guide addresses some of those areas that are thought to be unusual and/or areas of electrical installation work that are sometimes overlooked and/or not considered. The subjects covered are: fire alarm and detection systems, emergency lighting systems, electrical equipment in stairwells and corridors, the inspection and maintenance of lifts, RCD protection of sockets, and the safe isolation procedure.



Fire alarms and emergency lighting systems

As fire can kill, the best form of defence is to prevent one from starting.

An electrical fire is usually started in one of the following ways.

1. Accidents (e.g. misuse of appliances, inappropriate installation of a heat source such as a downlighter near to a flammable surface etc.)
2. Equipment failure including electrical malfunction and/or overheating.

Electrical wiring and equipment can also be a cause of electrical fires. For example, loose connections in electrical equipment and parts of the electrical installation (such as at accessories) can produce arcing and/or heating of terminations and conductors, which can lead to a fire. Incorrectly selected fuses or circuit-breakers can also lead to overheated cables.

To reduce the risk of fire causing harm or even death to you or others, you will need to ensure that (where required) there is a suitable fire alarm system and emergency lighting system installed, and that they are the correct type and grade for the property. You will also need to ensure they are regularly tested and maintained.



Fire detection and alarm system selection

The type and grade of fire alarm system you need in your communal area will vary according to the type of property and its use. Fire detection and alarm systems are covered by *BS 5839-1* but, for ease of reference, guidance on the selection of a fire alarm system can be found in Appendix A of our Landlords' Guide to Electrical Safety, downloadable from:



www.esc.org.uk/industry/industry-guidance/other-downloads/guidance-for-landlords

The presence of a suitable, properly installed and maintained automatic fire detection and alarm system will alert occupants to the presence of a fire in its early stages and enable occupants to evacuate to a place of safety before the escape routes become blocked by smoke or directly affected by fire. The system may also have to be designed to wake people who are sleeping (who may otherwise be asphyxiated by smoke before being able to escape). The system should also be designed to signal the presence of a developing fire in any hidden areas such as boiler rooms, storerooms, cellars and other potentially unoccupied risk areas before that fire affects the escape route.



Emergency lighting

When a fire breaks out, people will try to escape a building in haste, and in a probable state of distress or even panic. At night, when awoken abruptly, they may even be disorientated.

With this in mind, it is crucial that people can find their way out of the property to a safe place. This means having a planned escape route which is free from clutter and has sufficient lighting to ensure a safe escape.

In common escape routes, including stairways and corridors, conventional artificial lighting with a suitable system of control should be provided so that people are able to move within the escape route from a building during the hours of darkness (and during the day in areas that do not have the benefit of daylight). Some buildings will, in addition, require emergency escape lighting in the escape routes. These will include:

- ▶ large buildings with long escape routes
- ▶ buildings with a complex layout
- ▶ buildings having neither natural nor borrowed lighting along the escape route, and
- ▶ buildings with vulnerable occupiers or those posing a specific risk.

For guidance on the selection of escape lighting provision, refer to Appendix B of the *Landlords' Guide to Electrical Safety*, downloadable from:



www.esc.org.uk/industry/industry-guidance/other-downloads/guidance-for-landlords

For information on where emergency lighting luminaires should be located, a pictorial checklist is provided for your use in **Appendix C of this Guide.**

Electrical equipment in escape routes (such as stairwells or corridors)

It is important that escape routes are relatively free from potential sources of fire. To help achieve this, electrical equipment should be installed in a way that doesn't contribute to a fire or become a hazard to those leaving the building when evacuating.

For example, *BS 7671* states that where there is high density occupation and/or difficult conditions for evacuation, wiring systems should not encroach on escape routes unless the wiring in the wiring system is provided with sheaths or enclosures, provided by the cable management system itself or by other means.

Where wiring systems do encroach on escape routes, they should not be within arm's reach (2.5 m from the floor surface to be occupied by persons) unless they are provided with protection against mechanical damage likely to occur during an evacuation. They must also be:

- ▶ as short as practicable and
- ▶ of a type that is non-flame propagating.

Furthermore, if your building has high density occupation and/or difficult conditions for evacuation, the wiring system used to supply the safety circuit(s), like a fire alarm and detection system, must have a resistance to fire of either the time authorised by regulations for building elements or one hour in the absence of such a regulation.

Switchgear or controlgear should also not encroach on escape routes, unless it is enclosed in a cabinet or an enclosure constructed of non-combustible or not readily combustible material. The cabinet or enclosure should be accessible to authorised personnel only.

Individual meter cupboards (like shown in the picture overleaf) should be locked, but residents and/or landlords should still be able to gain access to the equipment to take meter readings etc.

The requirement to enclose electrical equipment within an enclosure constructed of non-combustible is called for in *Building Regulations 2000: Fire safety - Approved Document B Volume 2 - Buildings Other Than Dwellings*.

Section B1 (Means of escape from flats) page 31: Use of space within protected stairways 2.40 states that: '*...in single stair buildings, electricity meters located within the stairway should be enclosed within a secure cupboard which is separated from the escape route with fire-resisting construction.*'



- ▶ An example of a suitably enclosed meter cupboard

Lifts

The law requires that all lifts are thoroughly examined:

- ▶ at least every six months where the lift is used **at any time** to carry people, every 12 months if it **only** carries loads, **or** in accordance with an examination scheme;
- ▶ after substantial and/or significant changes have been made; and
- ▶ following 'exceptional circumstances' such as damage to, or failure of, the lift, long periods out of use or a major change in operating conditions which is likely to affect the integrity of the equipment.

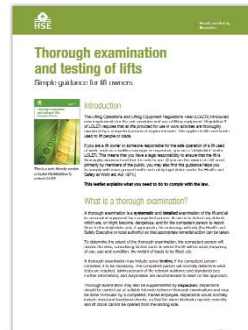
Regulation 9 of the *Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)* requires that all lifts provided for use in work activities must be thoroughly examined by a competent person at regular intervals. This requirement applies to lifts and hoists used to lift people or loads.

If you are the owner of a lift or someone who is responsible for the safe operation of a lift used at work (such as a facilities manager or supervisor), you are a 'dutyholder' under LOLER. This means that you have a legal responsibility to ensure that the lift is thoroughly examined and that it is safe to use.

To find out more about your responsibilities regarding lifts, check out the short guide published by the HSE, downloadable from:



www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg339.pdf



Socket-outlets

Since the introduction of *BS 7671:2008* (Seventeenth Edition of the Wiring Regulations), it has been a requirement for virtually all socket-outlets (rated at up to 20 A for use by ordinary persons for general use) to be protected by a Residual Current Device (RCD) having a rated residual operating current of 30 mA or less.

Such an RCD can help to save lives as it is designed to switch off the electricity rapidly when an earth fault occurs or when someone comes in to contact with a live conductor, thus preventing a fatal electric shock. Government research suggests that such devices also help to reduce the risk of fire.

A fixed RCD is one where the RCD is fitted in, or is in close proximity to, the distribution board or consumer unit (fusebox), or incorporated into a socket (see below).



RCDs installed within distribution boards or consumer units should be tested quarterly, by pressing the test button marked 'T' or 'Test', as stated on a label that should be on or next to the distribution board or consumer unit.

Where there is no RCD in the distribution unit or consumer unit, an alternative solution would be to replace or install, as appropriate, one or more socket-outlets with RCD protection built into them. These devices are known as SRCDs and offer individual protection to the appliance that's plugged into them. One advantage of having these devices over fixed RCD protection means that when the RCD 'trips', from (say) a faulty appliance plugged into it, the electricity supply remains available at other sockets.



Observation and Recommendation Code to be recorded following Periodic Inspection

As *BS 7671:2008* recognises that existing installations installed in accordance with earlier editions of the Wiring Regulations may not comply with the latest edition in every respect, this means that such installations are not necessarily considered to be unsafe for continued use or in need of upgrading.

For guidance on which 'Recommendation code' electrical operatives should record on an Electrical Installation Condition Report where sockets are observed not to have protection by means of 30 mA RCD, and many other defects, refer to our Best Practice Guide No. 4 *Periodic inspection reporting - recommendation codes for domestic and similar*, downloadable from:



www.esc.org.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/industry/best_practice/BPG4_08.pdf

Safe Isolation

Experience shows that anyone involved in work on electrical equipment is particularly at risk of death or serious injury from electric shock or burns if they fail to follow safe working procedures.

To help protect against this, the Electrical Safety Council, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive and other leading bodies, has produced a Best Practice Guide covering the subject of safe isolation. Its purpose is to provide practical guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed on the management of electrical safety, with particular emphasis on safe isolation procedures for low voltage installations (including 230 V and 400 V) to be followed during construction and refurbishment projects, and during maintenance activities.



The guidance is aimed at protecting employees and other workers against serious or fatal electrical injuries. Although the principles apply generally, the guidance is particularly relevant to circumstances where work is being carried out in the presence of other trades, and to sites where more than one electrician is employed.

The guide explains what needs to be done to make sure workers on site are not exposed to danger when working on or near live electrical systems in buildings, particularly in the final stages of construction.

By law, employers must ensure that all employees involved in work on electrical equipment are competent. Employees should be instructed on, and trained in, the implementation of safe systems of work.

This may involve employees being issued with written rules and instructions, and having access to, and using, appropriate locking-off devices, warning/caution notices, proprietary voltage detectors and, where appropriate for the type of voltage detector being used, proving units.

The *Guidance on management of electrical safety and safe isolation procedures for low voltage installations* can be downloaded from:



www.esc.org.uk/pdfs/business-and-community/electrical-industry/BPG2_09.pdf

Appendix A.

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)

As stated in Part 1 of this Guide, the FSO came into effect on 1 October 2006, replacing over 70 pieces of fire safety law. The FSO has significantly changed fire safety law and practice, and applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales, including the **common parts (such as staircases, hallways, and landings — especially the internal fire escape routes) of blocks of flats and some houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).**

The FSO also applies to virtually all premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open spaces including:

- ▶ the shared areas of properties that several households live in (housing laws may also apply)
- ▶ premises that provide care
- ▶ community halls, places of worship and other community premises
- ▶ offices and shops
- ▶ pubs, clubs and restaurants
- ▶ schools and sports centres
- ▶ tents and marquees
- ▶ hotels and hostels
- ▶ factories and warehouses, and
- ▶ car parks, gardens and refuse areas (where appropriate, following a fire risk assessment).

It does **not** apply to:

- ▶ people's private homes, including individual flats in a block or house, but other regulations may apply.

Fire certificates

Your local Fire and Rescue Service no longer issues 'fire certificates,' as these were abolished when the FSO came into effect. Consequently, if you have one, it is no longer valid. Instead, the law puts emphasises on you:

1. '**... to take such general fire precautions** as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of any of your employees, and
2. in relation to relevant persons who are not your employees, take such general fire precautions as may reasonably be required in the circumstances of the case to ensure that the premises are safe ...'

To help you reduce the risk of fire, and identify the general fire precautions that you may need to have in place, the Government has made available an excellent set of guidance documents covering a wide range of properties and/or applications. The documents can be downloaded from:



www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/aboutguides

Does the FSO apply to you?

The FSO applies to you if you are:

- ▶ responsible for the common parts of blocks of flats or some types of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)
- ▶ a contractor with a degree of control over any premises
- ▶ an employer or self-employed with business premises
- ▶ responsible for the business premises
- ▶ providing accommodation for paying guests
- ▶ responsible for a part of a dwelling where that part is solely used for business purposes
- ▶ a charity or voluntary organisation.

As you may appreciate, the subject of fire safety is complex and broad. Therefore, if you want to know more about any of the items mentioned here, please refer to:



www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw

What does the FSO mean to you?

Under the FSO, a 'responsible person' must carry out a fire safety risk assessment and implement and maintain a fire management plan.

The 'responsible person' means:

- (a)** in relation to a workplace, the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control,
- (b)** in relation to any premises not falling within paragraph **(a)** -
 - (i) the person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business (such as a landlord or managing agent) or other undertaking (for profit or not); or
 - (ii) the owner, where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on by that person of a trade, business or other undertaking

NOTE: Where a person has, by virtue of any contract or tenancy, an obligation of any extent in relation to:

- (a) the maintenance or repair of any premises, including anything in or on premises; or
- (b) the safety of any premises,

that person is to be treated as being a person who has control of the premises to the extent that his obligation so extends.

Duties of the 'responsible person'

The FSO states that the responsible person must ensure that suitable and sufficient levels of fire precaution are in place. This includes, for example, having appropriate measures in place to:

- ▶ carry out and periodically review a fire risk assessment
- ▶ detect and warn persons when a fire breaks out
- ▶ ensure the means of escape can be effectively used at all times
- ▶ enable persons to escape safely (by means of appropriate signs, notices, and emergency lighting system)
- ▶ ensure persons understand the action to be taken in the event of fire, by way of:
 - ▶ instruction and/or training (and regular fire drills)
 - ▶ use of portable fire extinguishers (where provided for the identified risk)

Fire Risk Assessments:

As a 'Responsible Person' you are required by the FSO to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment, and, where five or more people are employed at the residential building, the findings of that assessment must be recorded.

Even if you do not employ five or more people, it is advisable to record something in writing so that you can prove the risk assessment was carried out.

(Refer to part 3 of this Guide.)

Appendix C.

ICEL's Emergency Lighting pictorial checklist 2003

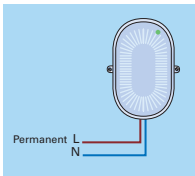
For general information on emergency lighting systems, refer to Part 8 of this Guide.

The following illustrations, reproduced by kind permission of the Industry Committee for Emergency Lighting, is the *ICEL Emergency lighting pictorial checklist 2003*.

The checklist was developed by ICEL for the use of building owners or occupants, to assist them in identifying significant deficiencies in emergency lighting provisions. However, it may also be used by electrical contractors and designers for the same purpose.

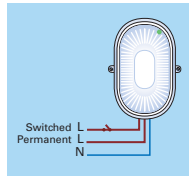
The Industry Committee for Emergency Lighting (ICEL) formulates and promotes standards for emergency lighting and provides guidance on that subject to specifiers, users and contractors.

CHECKLIST:



NON-MAINTAINED







The lighting only operates when the normal mains supply fails (emergency lighting only).



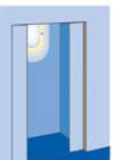



MAINTAINED

The lighting operates normally and continues to operate when the normal mains supply fails (mains lighting and emergency lighting).

▼ Emergency lighting is required at the following locations:

 <p>FINAL EXIT To provide illumination of escape routes.</p>	 <p>JUNCTIONS Install within 2 metres of escape route junctions.</p>
 <p>CORRIDORS Install within 2 metres horizontal distance of a change of direction in an escape route.</p>	 <p>STAIRWAYS Install within 2 metres horizontal distance of change in floor level or stairs (each tread to receive direct light).</p>
 <p>ALARM AREAS Fire alarms, first aid points and fire-fighting equipment, install within 2 metres horizontal distance.</p>	 <p>FINAL EXIT Install externally within 2 metres horizontal distance of any final exits. Please note that sufficient light will be needed to muster a roll call.</p>

▼ Emergency lighting is also required at the following locations:

 <p>ESCALATORS Should not be used as an escape route, but requires the same illumination to protect users on it when the supply fails.</p>	 <p>TOILETS Install in all toilets exceeding 8 m² area or where natural light is not present.</p>
 <p>LIFTS To provide emergency illumination in all lifts.</p>	 <p>CONTROL ROOMS Motor generator, control and plant rooms for essential and safety services.</p>
 <p>HAZARDOUS AREAS Areas of high risk should be illuminated to 10 % of normal lighting or 15 lux, whichever is greater.</p>	 <p>OPEN AREAS Open rooms either with a particular hazard, an escape route passing through or larger than 60 m².</p>

Lighting Requirements:

Where luminaires have been sited to cover locations as shown in this Guide, additional luminaires may be required to ensure minimum lighting levels are achieved — ICEL manufacturers provide spacing tables for this purpose. Spacing tables advise how far to locate the first luminaire, then how far apart other luminaires should be located for a given mounting height. Installation of luminaires to the spacings will ensure the lighting levels will be achieved.

Escape route corridors etc.: 1 lux minimum on the centre line of the escape route.

Open areas: 0.5 lux minimum in the central core to within 0.5 m of the walls.

Exit signs: Signs should apply to the European Signs Directive and be either back illuminated or have an emergency luminaire within 2 m of horizontal height. Signs should be of the same format throughout the building.



For further information on installation design requirements, visit the ICEL website at www.icel.co.uk

Abbreviations and definitions

BS - British Standard

Cables - Wires that carry electricity.

Distribution board - Equipment used to supply and control electricity around (often called the building(s)). It usually contains a main switch, fuses or a fuse box) circuit-breakers and one or more residual current devices (see RCD).

EIC - A certificate given when new electrical installation work is finished.

Electrical installation - A fixed wiring system made up of equipment, for example a distribution board, and lighting and power circuits.

Electrical Installation Condition Report - A report on the condition of an electrical installation. It will explain the condition of the electrical equipment, show whether it is damaged (or worn out) and state whether or not it is safe for continued use.

ESC - The Electrical Safety Council.

EWR - Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

MEIWC - Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate.

HMO - House in Multiple Occupation.

HSE - Health and Safety Executive

IET Wiring Regulations - Also called BS 7671 - Requirements for Electrical Installations (which is the UK Standard for electrical installations).

IET - Institution of Engineering and Technology (IEE prior to 2006).

ISITEE - Code of practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment.

PIR Periodic Inspection Report - a condition report, which includes the results from inspecting and testing of an electrical installation.

RCD Residual current device - a potentially life-saving device that is designed to prevent you getting a fatal electric shock if you touch something live, such as a bare wire – a level of personal protection that ordinary fuses and circuit-breakers cannot provide.

Visual condition report A condition report, which includes the results from inspecting but NOT testing of an electrical installation.

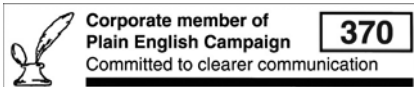


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The Electrical Safety Council is a UK charity committed to reducing deaths and injuries caused by electrical accidents at home and at work.

