

Electrical installations to comply with new Part P of the building regulations

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The Building Regulations

The Building Regulations 2000 provide for the control of building work in England and Wales. They require builders or developers to notify the Local Authority of any building work within the scope of the regulations and require them to notify the Local Authority when that work is completed. If the Local Authority is satisfied the work is in compliance with the regulations then a certificate is issued.

At the present time, electrical installations in dwelling are excluded from the scope of the Building Regulations in England and Wales although this is not the case in Scotland, where the Buildings Standards (Scotland) Regulations apply.

The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, now called the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, has published a consultation document to include requirements for electrical installations in the regulations. The consultation document is available on the DTER website ([see below](#)) and comments were requested by the 13 September. Included in the document is the Draft Approved Document P: Fixed Electrical Installations.

Requirement P proposed, to be added to the schedule of the building regulations, is reproduced in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Requirement P, Fixed Electrical Installations in Dwellings	
Requirement	Limits on application
Fixed electrical installations in dwellings	
P. Fixed electrical installations in dwellings shall be suitably designed, installed, inspected and tested so as to provide reasonable protection against their being the source of a fire or a cause of injury to persons.	Requirement P applies only to fixed electrical installations that are intended to operate at low voltage or extra-low voltage which are not controlled by the Electricity Supply Regulations 1988 as amended or the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 as amended.

This requirement would be added to Schedule 1 of The Building Regulations.

The Draft Approved Document P is 43 pages and is included within the 87 page consultation document available on the DTER web site ([see below](#)). The basic requirement is that the electrical installations should meet the fundamental principles of Chapter 13 of BS 7671 : 2001 (or other EEC countries wiring rules). The intention is that installations should comply with Parts 3 – 7 of BS 7671. However it looks as though the detailed advice in draft Part P will be of little help to the professional installer.

Notices to the Local Authority

Persons generally are required to give notice to the Local Authority when they are to carry out any electrical installation work in a dwelling. This includes not only work in new dwellings, but also work in existing dwellings. However it is not necessary to notify electrical installation work to building control bodies in the following circumstances:

- i) Where persons of a class or description prescribed in relation to these matters by the Secretary of State undertake the proposed installed installation work.
- ii) Where the proposed electrical installation work is minor work and does not include the provision of a new circuit, see Table 1.

Table 1 - Minor electrical installation works in dwelling that need not be notified
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Additional lighting points (light fittings and switching) on an existing circuit.¹2. Adding socket-outlets to an existing ring or radial circuit.¹3. Replacement of accessories such as socket-outlets, control switches and ceiling roses, but excluding circuit protective devices.4. Installation and/or upgrading and testing of main equipotential bonding.5. Upgrading and testing supplementary bonding.6. Replacement of the cable for a single circuit only, where damaged, e.g., by fire, rodent or impact.²7. Re-fixing and/or repairing the enclosures of existing wiring systems.³8. Providing additional mechanical protection to existing equipment.⁴
Notes <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Only if the existing circuit protective device is suitable and provides protection for the modified circuit and other safety provisions are satisfactory.2 On condition that the replacement cable is identical in manufactured specification, follows the same route and does not serve more than one sub-circuit through a distribution board.3 On condition the circuit's protective measures are unaffected.4 On condition the circuit's protective measures and current-carrying capacity of conductors are unaffected.

Persons who would not need to notify the local authority building control are persons (this legally includes firms) who are registered with an accredited certification body. This would include the NICEIC and ECA. The Institution of Electrical Engineers is making arrangements to maintain a register of accredited bodies and their members which will enable Local Authorities and other interested persons to confirm registration.

Completion of the work

On completion of the work the firm or person undertaking the work are required to notify the Local Authority control of the completion. If they are a person of a class of description prescribed by the Secretary of State as not having to notify building control bodies, they would be required to give a completion certificate to the Local Authority signed by a person or persons competent to do so. The certificate is required to be the completion forms prescribed in BS 7671. This includes Schedules of Inspections and Schedules of Tests as well as the Electrical Installation Certificate itself.

Minor Works Certificates

When minor work is undertaken for financial gain the Approved Documents says that one way of showing compliance would be to follow BS 7671 and issue to the person ordering the work a minor electrical installation works certificate. It is not clear what would be the consequences of a firm not issuing such a minor works certificate. However, it is to be hoped that kitchen fitters and all persons carrying out minor work, including fire alarms and smoke alarms, would be required to issued a minor works certificate and that this would require them to employ a person competent to issue that certificate.

DIY Work

The guidance says that for DIY work one way of showing compliance would be to follow the IEE guidance or guidance in DIY manuals and where prudent have the work inspected and tested. It is to be presumed that persons carrying out other than minor work, would be required to notify the Local Authority before commencement and notify them on completion and arrange with them to have it inspected and tested by the Local Authorities inspector.

Electricity at Work

It is to be noted that the Building Regulations apply to dwellings and that they do not apply to installations at places at work where the Electricity at Work Regulations will continue to be the appropriate legislation.

Visit the DTER web site for further information:

For the consultation document including the

Draft Approved Document P click

<http://www.safety.odpm.gov.uk/bregs/consult/electric/index.htm>

For *Building Regulations* consultation documents click

<http://www.safety.odpm.gov.uk/bregs/conindex.htm>

For *Building Regulations Approved Documents* (final versions) click

<http://www.safety.odpm.gov.uk/bregs/brads.htm>