

Electricians' Guide to **PART P**



Amicus Technical Bulletin

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Amicus Electricians' are highly skilled and experts in their field

AMICUS POSITION ON PART P

The purpose of this guide is to give Amicus members a concise technical overview of Part P in its current form. Therefore its technical contents do not debate the advantages or shortfalls of the new building regulations. However, Amicus believe that a Government rethink is needed on Part P to drive out the cowboys once and for all.

For that reason a statement by Amicus National Officer Paul Corby is reprinted overleaf outlining our current industrial position in relation to Part P.

PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

From 1st January 2005, anybody carrying out electrical installation work in dwellings in England & Wales will be required to make "reasonable provision in the design, installation, inspection and testing" of this work to protect persons against fire or injury.

Part P has been introduced due to the number of electrical accidents in the home, and cowboys operating in the domestic marketplace. Up until now there has been no control over such rogue traders in domestic electrical installation. Part P aims to tighten up electrical safety in the home by clamping down on the cowboys and on homeowners doing DIY electrical work.

Fires, Accidents and Deaths

Despite the fact that faulty electrics result in fires, and are also the cause of 19 deaths and over 2,000 non-fatal electric shock accidents each year, until now electrical installations in the home have not been subject to statutory Building Regulations, so employing bona fide competent electricians, and electrical contractors such as those who are members of the ECA and NICEIC for all electrical work has been left to the common sense of the homeowner.

Definition of a 'Competent Person'

The law will now require that electrical work in homes be notified to the local authority or carried out by a 'competent person', this is an unfortunate legal phrase that has understandably created confusion. The definition of the 'competent person' for Part P means the firms that are responsible for carrying out the work, and who are registered with a Government approved self-certification scheme. Of course, firms can be single person entities, but they are not, for example, employees. Therefore the term 'competent person' actually refers to a firm rather than an individual. Firms will need to be registered with a competent person scheme to avoid having to notify every in scope job to the local authority, and appoint Qualified Supervisors to sign off work (discussed later in this bulletin).

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Amicus calls for rethink on Part P of the Building Regulations



Amicus National Officer for construction and electrical contracting Paul Corby said:

“The new regulations designed to protect homeowners from shoddy domestic electrical work are sadly lacking substance. In normal circumstances the union welcomes regulations that intend to enhance safety, and with faulty electrical installations resulting in 19 deaths and over 2,000 non-fatal electric shock accidents in the home each year Government intervention is long overdue.

*Unfortunately we believe Part P in its current form does not adequately address the situation. The new regulations will not stop the cowboys and incompetents from carrying out sub-standard electrical work in people’s homes. As it stands rogue traders will continue operating within an ambiguous framework that does not guarantee competency to the consumer. In stark contrast, our electrician members are fully qualified and time served. **Their level of competence is by far over and above the standards required by Part P.** They undertake work in the total electrotechnical process, working on everything from house rewires to commissioning a power station”.*

He added: *“We want electrical work only being undertaken by fully qualified electricians, and see the cowboys driven out forever. Recognition by Government that the Joint Industry Board’s Electrotechnical Certification Scheme (ECS) sets the standards for electricians, and that ECA firms have delivered quality installations since 1901 is needed. We are seeking meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister to sort this problem out, ensuring our members skills are recognised and that consumers are guaranteed the professional service and protection they deserve.”*

Amicus has represented electricians since the Electrical Trades Union was formed in 1888, and the ECA (The Electrical Contractors Association) has represented professional electrical contracting and electrical engineering firms since 1901.

As a union we have worked pragmatically and closely with the ECA for over a century, developing world-class standards in qualifications for electricians, which are outlined by the Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry (JIB). Our members and ECA companies rigidly follow the IEE wiring regulations.

Amicus and the ECA through the JIB have developed a Qualified Supervisor endorsement for those electricians who inspect, test and sign off the work of their colleagues to be in compliance with all aspects of installation, not just those in the home. Further, the ECA has a self-certification scheme in place for its member firms to comply with the new regulations. Therefore the mechanisms are in place as the level of competence in the industry represents a world-class standard.

The JIB was set up in 1968 by Amicus (then the ETU) and the ECA to ensure the electrical contracting industry develops and maintains the most effective technical and safety standards, practices and industrial relations in the electrotechnical sector.

The ECS (Electrotechnical Certification Scheme) is administered by the JIB. The ECS enshrines skills competency and common standards for electricians, proving their qualifications and professional ability to carry out electrical work. Only qualified electricians and contractors should be allowed to carry out electrical work. As Part P currently stands, this is not the case. The ECS should set the standards for those who are able to carry out the work.

Scope of work

On 22nd July 2004, the Statutory Instrument introducing electrical safety into the building regulations was laid before Parliament. Approved document P of the Building Regulations lays down in law requirements for the safety of fixed electrical installations in dwellings and associated gardens, greenhouses and outbuildings.

Basically Part P enforces BS 7671: 2001 (16th Edition) of the IEE wiring regulations as statutory in the domestic environment, before January 2005 the IEE Regulations were for guidance, and although legally admissible to a court in regard to bad practice were non-statutory. The work in scope of Part P now makes the IEE Regulations statutory in that environment.

Part P applies to electrical installations in buildings comprising:

- dwelling houses and flats
- dwellings and business premises that have a common supply – for example shops and public houses that have a shop above;
- common access areas in blocks of flats such as corridors and staircases;
- shared amenities of blocks of flats such as laundries and gymnasiums.

Part P applies also to parts of the above electrical installations:

- in or on land associated with the buildings – for example Part P applies to fixed lighting and pond pumps in gardens;
- in outbuildings such as sheds, detached garages and greenhouses.

The Building Regulations

All building work is subject to the relevant building regulations governing the type of work being carried out. As has been the practice, electrical installation work must comply with the other parts of the Building Regulations in general. Such requirements include those placed by:

- **Part A** – (Structure): depths of chases in walls, and size and position of holes and notches in floor and roof joists;
- **Part B** – (Fire Safety): fire safety of certain electrical installations; provision of fire alarm and detection systems; fire resistance of penetrations through floors, walls and ceilings;
- **Part C** – (Site preparation and resistance to moisture): moisture resistance of cable penetrations through external walls;
- **Part E** – (Resistance to the passage of sound): penetrations through floors, walls and ceilings;
- **Part F** – (Ventilation): mechanical ventilation rates for dwellings;
- **Part L** – (Conservation of Fuel and Power): energy efficient lighting; reduced current-carrying capacity of cables in insulation;
- **Part M** – (Access to and use of buildings): heights of switches and socket outlets, etc.

These approved documents may be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at www.odpm.gov.uk

Failure to comply with the Building Regulations is a criminal offence and local authorities have the power to require the removal or alteration of work that does not comply with the requirements. Contravention can result in a fine of up to £5000 and £50 each day the contravention continues.

(Source: ODPM and The Institute of Electrical Engineers)

The 16th Edition BS 7671: 2001 will now apply to **all work** in the domestic environment from 1st January 2005. Other buildings not in the scope of Part P benefit from the Electricity at work Regulations 1989. Installations also benefit from the Electricity Supply Regulations 1988.

How to comply

The requirements of Part P will be met by adherence to Chapter 13, 'Fundamental Principles', in BS 7671: 2001. These fundamental principles can be achieved by following:

- The requirements of BS 7671: 2001, and
- The guidance given in installation manuals which are consistent with BS 7671: 2001, such as the IEE On Site Guide and IEE Guidance Notes 1 to 7.

Notification to Building Control

Notification of work

Apart from the following circumstances, notification of proposals to carry out electrical installation work must be given to the building control body before work begins.

Work that need not be notified to building control bodies

- Electrical Installation work undertaken by a firm or an individual under an authorised competent person scheme, or
- Electrical Installation work which is restricted to the type described in Table 1 and does not include the provision of a new circuit. Table 1 shows work that does not need to be notified to building control bodies (This work must still be in compliance with BS7671). Certain work carried out in kitchens or special locations as shown in Table 2 is excluded from Table 1 and is therefore notifiable.

All replacement work is non-notifiable, even when carried out in a kitchen or a special location shown in table 2.

Work that must be notified to building control bodies

Work undertaken by a firm or an individual **not registered under an approved competent person scheme**, must be notified to the appropriate building control body. This includes the following:

- Work which involves the provision of at least one new circuit
- Work, including minor work, which is carried out in **kitchens**. As mentioned above, the only exception is replacement work.

DIY Work

Electrical DIY work will still be permitted after the introduction of Part P. Those doing notifiable DIY work will have to submit a building notice to the local authority before work begins and will have to pay a building control fee to have their work inspected and tested by the local authority.

DIY work by qualified electricians who are not a firm (and therefore have not joined a 'competent person' scheme) must be notified to the building control body, or alternatively, prior to carrying out the work, you can arrange with your employer to have the work signed off if their firm is a member of a 'competent person' scheme.

Amicus are seeking clarification from the ODPM that qualified electricians who have suitably inspected and tested their own work, will upon satisfactory evidence being presented to the building control body, have their work signed off by building control. Model forms are reproduced in Approved Document P, also in IEE Guidance Note 3, 2002 edition, or can be downloaded from the IEE website at www.iee.org/Publish/WireRegs/forms.cfm

TABLE 1: WORK THAT DOES NOT NEED TO BE NOTIFIED TO BUILDING CONTROL BODIES

Work consisting of:

- Replacing accessories such as socket-outlets, control switches and ceiling roses.
- Replacing the cable for a single circuit only, where damaged, for example, by fire, rodent or impact (a).
- Re-fix or replacing the enclosures of existing installation components (b).
- Providing mechanical protection to existing fixed installations (c).

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

- Adding lighting points (light fittings and switches) to an existing circuit (e).
- Adding socket-outlets and fused spurs to an existing ring or radial circuit.
- Installing or upgrading main or supplementary equipotential bonding (f).

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) Special locations and installations are listed in Table 2.
- (e) Only if the existing circuit protective device is suitable and provides protection for the modified circuit, and other relevant safety provisions are satisfactory.
- (f) Such work shall comply with other applicable legislation, such as the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.

TABLE 2: WORK THAT MUST BE NOTIFIED – SPECIAL LOCATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

- Locations containing a bathtub or shower basin.
- Swimming pools or paddling pools.
- Hot air saunas.
- Electric floor or ceiling heating systems.
- Garden lighting or power installations.
- Solar photovoltaic (PV) power supply systems.
- Small scale generators such as MicroCHP units.
- Extra-low voltage lighting installations, other than pre-assembled, CE-marked lighting sets.

Notes:

- (a) See IEE Guidance Note 7 which gives more guidance on achieving safe installations where risks to people are greater



ECS Qualified Supervisor

The ECS (Electrotechnical Certification Scheme) in England and Wales (Administered by the JIB, representing the parties being Amicus and the Electrical Contractors Association - ECA) has agreed with both the ECA and the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) a means of identifying "Qualified Supervisors" on ECS cards.

To obtain the Qualified Supervisor endorsement the cardholder must be employed by an organisation, which is certificated to the Electrotechnical Assessment Scheme (EAS) or enrolled on the NICEIC Approved Contractors Scheme and recorded as a Qualified Supervisor within the terms of certification or enrolment.

Examples of the cards can be seen pictured on the right. The endorsement will identify the cardholder's employer and will also include a logo identifying which scheme has enrolled the Qualified Supervisor e.g. ECA or NICEIC. **The endorsement is only valid while the cardholder is employed by the organisation shown on the card.**

You will see that in the pictures an invented example with 'Ivor Sparkes' who works for a firm called 'JIB Contracting Services Limited' has been used. The name of the firm (competent person) you work for will occupy this space on the card if you undertake the role of a Qualified Supervisor for your employer, or for yourself if you are in business. **The card will need to be returned for replacement if the holder changes employer*.**

*(Upon a change of employer, the new card will only be endorsed with Qualified Supervisor status subject to the new employer and certifying body agreeing and requiring the endorsement).

Application for ECS Qualified Supervisor Endorsement

If undertaking a Qualified Supervisor role to sign off work, an ECS 'gold carded' Electrician will have the endorsement added to their JIB card upon a satisfactory nomination and confirmation by their employer, and verification by the relevant body, e.g. ECA or NICEIC. The operative will be a Qualified Supervisor, signing off work as instructed by their employer, including work in scope to Part P.

As well as being a 'gold carded' electrician, an operative will typically hold a City & Guilds 16th Edition qualification and the City & Guilds 2391 in Inspection and Testing. A one-day course for JIB graded electricians is also being offered by the ECA in the building regulations (detailed overleaf). This course is not mandatory, but offers an overview of the building regulations. If your employer decides to utilise this course, your employer should meet its cost and your wages. Upon Qualified Supervisor status being granted, the body e.g. ECA / BREC or NICEIC will assess the Qualified Supervisor every 12 months. This is very similar to existing arrangements where an inspector visits firms to verify good workmanship.

The application form for the endorsement on an ECS card can be downloaded from the publications section of the JIB website:

www.jib.org.uk or by telephoning the JIB on: **020 8302 0031**

Part P only Qualified Supervisor

The ECA and NICEIC are also offering short courses to firms in the building regulations, these are particularly aimed at electricians who are sole traders in the domestic market, and have not kept up with the NVQ structure and ECS scheme, as they have not worked in the JIB environment for some time.

A separate white Part P 'Qualified Supervisor' card is being developed by the JIB for these individuals. This will only denote the role of a 'Qualified Supervisor' to sign off work in scope to **Part P only**. The card will not infer practical technical ability, a JIB grade or electrician status, not unless the holder can meet all the requirements of the current ECS scheme, including proven competence to NVQ3 or equivalent. The holder will need proven knowledge to inspect and test under the building regulations and IEE wiring regulations. Contact the ECA, NICEIC or JIB for more details.

As previously discussed, the following course is not mandatory, however if you undertake the role of a Qualified Supervisor for your employer to inspect and test the work of your fellow electricians in your firm, the course will provide you with an obligatory knowledge of the building regulations.

PART P – BUILDING REGULATIONS COURSE

ECA Education and Training have developed a one-day course, providing qualified electricians with the obligatory knowledge of the relevant applicable Building Regulations in order to support applications to become a Qualified Supervisor under Part P, concluding with Unit 1 of the EAL Domestic Electrical Installer assessment.

The course is designed for qualified electricians involved in work on new buildings, refurbishment and major and minor works on domestic property or dwellings and who require the underpinning knowledge to support their application to become a Qualified Supervisor under Part P of the Building Regulations.

Objectives

At the end of the course, delegates will be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- What the Building Regulations are and when they apply
- The key areas of responsibility under Building Control
- Building Control Certification requirements
- What Competent Persons are and when they should be used
- What work falls within the scope of Part P
- Applicable Building Regulations and Approved Documents

Talk to your employer about enrolment on the course (your employer should meet the cost and your wages) or contact the ECA direct on **020 7313 4800**

‘COMPETENT PERSON’ (FIRMS) SELF-CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

Competent Person Self-Certification Schemes have been developed, primarily, for firms wishing to apply to become a ‘Competent Person’ for Part P, i.e. firms that will be able to self-certify that their electrical installation work complies with Building Regulations and, thus, will not have to notify, or be subject to inspection by, Building Control Bodies.

If for example you are an electrician who is a sole trader and own your own firm, undertaking domestic re-wires and electrical installations in people's homes, then your firm should consider joining one of the following schemes, this will be beneficial by avoiding bureaucracy, and having to notify work to the local building control body. Firms will appoint Qualified Supervisor(s) from their ranks, and the **scheme operators will assess Qualified Supervisors every 12 months for external verification purposes.**

ECA

The **ECA** Competent Person Scheme is provided by **BRE Certification Ltd (BREC)**, working in co-operation with the **Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA)** and the **IEE**.

BRE Certification

Tel: **0870 6096093**

Email: partp@eca.co.uk

Web: www.partp.com and www.eca.co.uk

NICEIC

NICEIC Domestic Installer Scheme

Tel: **0800 013 900**

Web: www.niceic.org.uk

The above two schemes are listed as they link into the Qualified Supervisor endorsement for the ECS card administered by the JIB.

There are four other schemes in operation, however, Amicus cannot comment on these schemes, as they are not linked to the ECS. Furthermore we believe that only qualified electricians should be able to carry out the installation work, with qualified electricians who have Qualified Supervisor status, and electrical engineers at local authorities being the only people able to sign off work. Furthermore a common umbrella logo needs to be established for the schemes to avoid confusion amongst consumers.

Useful Websites

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)

www.odpm.gov.uk

To download approved document P (Part P) for free go to:

www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_buildreg/documents/page/odpm_breg_029960.pdf

For Government information on Part P go to:

www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_buildreg/documents/sectionhomepage/odpm_buildreg_page.hcsp

Local Authority Building Control (LABC)

www.labc-services.co.uk

Industry websites

www.amicustheunion.org - The Official Amicus Website

www.eca.co.uk - The Electrical Contractors Association

www.jib.org.uk - The Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry

www.niceic.org.uk - National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting

www.partp.com - The ECA and IEE Part P website with BREC

www.iee.org - The Institute of Electrical Engineers IEE

www.iee.org/Publish/WireRegs/PartP.cfm - Part P specific information from the IEE

www.iee.org/Publish/WireRegs/forms.cfm - BS 7671: 2001 Model forms for downloading from the IEE

www.eeiba.org - The Electrical and Electronics Industries Benevolent Association (EEIBA)

www.mpaforum.org.uk - The Mechanical and Electrical Major Projects Agreement

www.summitskills.org.uk - The Sector Skills Council for the M&E Industry

www.net-works.org.uk - National Electrotechnical Training

www.jtlimited.co.uk - The website for JTL, the training arm of the JIB

www.select.org.uk - SELECT the Scottish Electrical Contractors Association

www.sjib.org.uk - Scottish Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry

www.sectt.org.uk - Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust

www.connected4life.org.uk - SECTT training website

www.technicaltrainingsolutions.co.uk - The Amicus preferred training provider

www.worksmart.org.uk - Useful information for working people from the TUC

Frequently Asked Questions

As a fully qualified electrician do I have to notify work I do for myself to the local authority?

Yes. Anyone undertaking electrical work has to formally notify work that is notifiable to the local authority, although a firm that is a member of a 'competent person' scheme does not need to notify. This is because, like many other forms of building work, electrical work in the home is to become a 'controlled service' from 1st January 2005. If you are undertaking work in your spare time you should comply with relevant laws and have public liability insurance. If you are an employee, you should also make yourself aware of any 'prohibition of spare time working' clauses in your contract of employment.

As an electrician and employee do I need to go back to college?

No. Your employer may only need one or two Qualified Supervisors who they will appoint. For example, in a medium sized firm, normally the electricians who have specialised in the inspection and testing of work by others will take up this role.

One-day courses in the building regulations are available as previously discussed, but these are not mandatory.

I am taking on the role of a Qualified Supervisor for my firm, am I entitled to more pay?

The union are in talks with the ECA on grading and pay progression for JIB Approved Electricians. The issue of the Qualified Supervisor is being discussed for a plus payment. Members are also reminded that responsibility money of up to £1 is available under the JIB agreement; also if able to meet the grading criteria members can consider lodging an application for regrading to Site Technician.

As a Qualified Supervisor will I be legally bound to the work I sign off?

Electricians sign testing and inspection forms all the time. Your employer should by law have suitable public liability and indemnity insurance in place. As a Qualified Supervisor you are appointed by the 'Competent Person' (the firm) to sign off work. You are employed to do a professional job, however responsibility ultimately lies with the firm.

As a Qualified Supervisor will I be assessed?

Yes, you will be assessed by the Self-Certification Scheme every 12 months to make sure you are in compliance, this will normally be at a random site(s), similar to the NICEIC 12 month inspection and ECA 2 year inspection that your firm undergoes if they are members of these organisations.

Will I be allowed to keep my Qualified Supervisor endorsement on my JIB ECS card if I go to another employer?

The card will need to be returned for replacement if the holder changes employer, and your status as a Qualified Supervisor is only valid at the firm you are working for and referred to on the endorsement. Your employer can also take away your Qualified Supervisor status at his discretion. Upon a change of employer, the new card will only be endorsed with Qualified Supervisor status subject to the new employer and certifying body agreeing and requiring the endorsement.

Please turn over for Part P Frequently Asked Questions

Part P Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is 'Part P'?

Part P of the Building Regulations imposes the requirement that:-

"Reasonable provision shall be made in the design, installation, inspection and testing of electrical installations to protect persons against fire or injury.

Where an electrical installation is provided, extended or altered, sufficient information shall be provided so that persons wishing to operate, maintain or alter the installation in the future can do so reasonably safely.

2. Why has Part P been introduced?

Part P has been introduced to reduce the risk of death and injury caused by electricity, or fires started by electrical faults.

3. Does it Apply to Me?

If you carry out electrical installation work in dwellings, almost certainly yes.

4. What are the consequences for Electrical Contractors?

All fixed installation work in dwellings will become a "controlled service" under the Building Regulations.

Unless the work is carried out by a "Competent Person" for Part P it will have to be notified before work commences to the Local Building Control office, in order that they may inspect the work during construction and upon completion.

This will apply to all work carried out, professionally or as DIY, with the following exceptions:-

- Where the proposed work is to be undertaken by a "competent person" for Part P authorised to self-certify.
- Where the work is of a minor nature and is not in a kitchen or special location.

5. What should Electrical Contractors do?

An electrical contractor that wants to be able to self-certify compliance with Part P and wants to avoid the complications and costs of using building control should consider becoming a 'Competent Person'.

6. What are the Benefits of becoming a Competent Person?

Competent Persons would save on the time and trouble associated with the submitting of building notices to, and having their work inspected by, Building Control and, as a consequence, they would not incur building notice and inspection fees.

7. What are the Costs of becoming a Competent Person?

Electricians who are employees or work directly for an electrical contractor will not normally need to join a 'competent person' scheme for a firm (see question 14 for definitions).

To become a 'Competent Person' for Part P a firm is assessed for its competence to work in compliance with BS7671 and the Building Regulations. On becoming a 'Competent Person', the work of the firm is monitored by means of annual surveillance visits.

Fees are chargeable to firms both for the initial assessment and the subsequent, shorter surveillance inspections. (For more information on fees contact a self-certification scheme).

8. When will Part P come into effect?

Part P will come into effect on 1st January 2005.

9. What will be the Requirement of Part P?

The electrical safety requirement in the new Part P of the Building Regulations is simply that:-

- "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".
- The requirement applies to fixed electrical installations in dwellings intended to operate at low voltage or extra-low voltage.
- The requirement applies to alterations and extensions to existing electrical installations in dwellings as well as to new construction.

10. What do I need to do to comply with Part P?

Compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations will be achieved by following the safety rules and the applicable regulations in the IEE Wiring Regulations BS7671, and the guidance published in the IEE On-Site Guide.

Part P will require electrical installation work to be inspected and tested during and on completion to verify that it is safe (e.g. for compliance with BS7671).

11. Will my Firm be affected by Part P?

If your company undertakes work in dwellings or anticipates being asked to undertake such work in the future you will almost certainly be affected.

12. What is the scope of Part P?

Part P will apply in England and Wales and is restricted to fixed electrical installations in dwellings and:-

- combined dwellings and business premises such as shops with a common supply;
- common access parts in blocks of flats;
- shared amenities in flats (e.g. laundries, gyms)

12a. Why is Part P restricted to Dwellings?

Other buildings benefit from the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

13. What is a dwelling as defined in Part P?

The following definition of a dwelling is given in Approved Document B (Fire Safety). It may be equally applicable to Part P.

'A unit of residential accommodation occupied (whether or not as a sole or main residence)

a. by a single person or by people living together as a family, or

b. by not more than 6 residents living together as a single household, including a household where care is provided for a resident'.

14. What and who is a 'Competent Person'?

This is a somewhat unfortunate legal phrase used to describe a firm that has been independently assessed, by a government approved scheme, as competent to self-certify that its own work complies with the Building Regulations.

Thus, a "Competent Person" is the firm that is responsible for carrying out the work. Firms can be a

sole trader but they are not for example employees.

15. Is all electrical work in Dwellings covered by Part P?

All electrical installation work must comply with the requirement of Part P, but minor work does not need to be notified to Building Control, unless it is in high-risk area such as the kitchens, bathrooms or special locations.

16. How does my firm comply with Part P?

Your firm will meet the requirement of Part P if the electrical installation work it carries out complies with the requirements of BS7671, the IEE Wiring Regulations.

17. Does BS7671 suffice for complying with the Building Regulations?

No! You must bear in mind that the non-electrical, builder's work, you carry out in connection with the electrical installation work, should also comply with all the applicable requirements of Building Regulations - not just Part P.

18. How will Part P be enforced?

Local Authorities (Building Control) have the responsibility for enforcing the Building Regulations. Solicitors responsible for conveyancing property will seek the appropriate documentation certifying that any electrical work carried out does comply with the Building Regulations. Once the 'Home Information Pack' is introduced this should reinforce the need for the appropriate documentation and hence the effectiveness of enforcement.

19. Will there be sufficient capacity in the industry to assess all the firms that want to become 'Competent Persons' prior to the implementation of Part P?

Reliable figures do not exist about the number of firms that are likely to want to become 'Competent Persons'. Numbers in excess of 80,000 firms have been cited. However, it is anticipated by everyone that as the implementation date approaches there will be a rush of firms seeking assessment and this could well lead to delays.

20. Will any electrical installation work in dwellings be exempt from Part P?

No. The requirement will apply to all fixed electrical installation work in dwellings, whether carried out professionally or by DIY, whether or not minor, and whether or not the work is notifiable to a building control body.

There may be certain relaxations regarding requirements for the inspection, testing and certification of minor works undertaken as DIY.

21. Will Part P cover Periodic Inspection Reporting?

No. Part P covers electrical installation work only, not the inspection and testing of existing electrical installations to determine their suitability for continued use. However, any remedial work carried out to correct deficiencies identified in a periodic inspection report will come within the scope of Part P.

22. What work will need to be notified?

All proposed electrical installation work in dwellings, will need to be notified to a building control body before work commences, unless:

- the proposed work is to be undertaken by a prescribed Competent Person (see question 14 above) authorised to self-certify compliance on completion of the work, or
- the proposed work is minor, and it is not a kitchen or in an area classified as a special location.

23. What is 'minor work'?

'Minor work' is electrical work which does not include the provision of a new circuit, but is work which includes the addition of socket outlets, lighting points or switches to existing circuits not in a kitchen or a special location.

24. What is a 'special installation or location'?

The following are classified as special installations or locations for the purposes of Part P:

- solar photovoltaic power supply systems
- electric floor and heating systems
- extra-low voltage lighting installations, other than pre-assembled sets.
- small scale generators
- locations containing a bath tub or shower basin
- swimming pools and fountains
- hot air saunas
- garden electrics

All electrical installation work in such areas (as well as kitchens) will need to be notified, or self-certified by a prescribed 'competent person' (firm), even for only 'minor works'.

25. How will Part P affect the DIY market?

After the introduction of Part P, anyone will still be able to undertake electrical work in dwellings, even the householder. However, this work "must" comply with the requirements of Part P and, the majority of such work will need to be notified to Building Control prior to its commencement. Building Control will wish to inspect the work in order to confirm that the work complies fully with the Building Regulations.

Part P Questions 1 to 25 compiled in conjunction with the ECA Technical Department

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