

Building Control Advice Note

Please read this *before* starting any electrical work in your home or garden

From the 1st January 2005 a new building regulation, known as 'Part P – Electrical Safety' is being introduced in England & Wales. This regulation is intended to enhance electrical safety in and around the home.

Why? - The objective is to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and fires caused by faulty electrical installations. Each year on average 10 people die and about 750 are seriously injured in accidents involving unsafe electrical installations in the home. This regulation is also intended to make it harder for 'cowboy builders' to leave electrical installations in an unsafe condition. Over-ambitious amateurs and DIY enthusiasts are also responsible for carrying out unsatisfactory electrical work.

What do the new regulations control? – Minor work such as replacing an existing socket outlet or a light switch on an existing circuit will **not** be controlled under the new regulations. Additional lighting points and socket outlets can also be installed to an existing circuit, as long as they are not located in a kitchen or other special location, such as a bathroom, swimming pool etc.

All other domestic electrical work, such as adding a new circuit to an existing system or works within a 'special location' will need to be carried out by a competent person who is registered by a Part P Self-certification scheme, or by an application made to Building Control who will inspect the work.

It is strongly recommended that all electrical work is undertaken by persons who are registered with the self-certification scheme

Any work not carried out by a registered competent person and therefore notified to the appropriate Building Control body, will require a charge to be paid for the requisite inspections to be carried out. There will still be a requirement for the applicant to obtain the appropriate certification that the work has been checked and tested during and at the completion of the installation by a competent person.

What happens if I do not comply with the regulations? – The most important consequence if these regulations are not followed is that the electrical installation might not be safe to use. In addition to this, you will have no records of the work done and therefore you may have difficulty selling your home and also put the validity of your house insurance at risk. The Local Authority Building Control Service may also take enforcement action against you, as it is a criminal offence to contravene the building regulations.

Where can I can further information? - Full details and guidance regarding the new Part P requirements are available from the following sources by:

- Contacting us at Plymouth City Council Building Control on (01752) 304343
- Obtaining a copy of '**Approved Document P – Electrical Safety**' which can be downloaded free of charge from http://www.odpm.gov.uk/approved_documents (or you can buy a printed copy from The Stationery Office ☎0870 600 5522).
- The ECA (Electrical Contractors Association) ☎020 7313 4800 or their website <http://www.eca.co.uk/>