

## Part P / Building Regulations - Getting Started

The Government has announced that it intends "to amend the Building Regulations to include a requirement on electrical safety in dwellings as soon as suitable competent persons scheme are in place". This guide explains what this new requirement is, what it means for electrical contractors and their customers, what a 'competent person' is and how an electrical contractor can become one. Sources of further information are provided throughout the website.

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#### 1.0 Introduction

- **1.1** Following a decade of intensive lobbying, the Government has announced its intention to introduce legislation that will provide better statutory support for the IEE Wiring Regulations, BS7671. This action will take the form of introducing a **Part P** of the **Building Regulations** concerning fixed electrical installations in dwellings. As a result, fixed electrical installations in dwellings will become a "controlled service or fitting" as defined in the Building Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/2531).
- **1.2** However, Government has also stated that it will not introduce Part P until "*appropriate competent person schemes are in place*". Competent persons are firms that are adjudged to be sufficiently competent to self-certify that their work has been carried out in compliance with all applicable requirements of the Building Regulations.
- **1.3** This guide summarises the main aspects of Part P and indicates how it is likely to bear upon both electrical contractors and their customers. In addition, it explains how a competent person scheme for electrical contractors will work, the way in which the competence of electrical contractors will be assessed and how electrical contractors can apply to obtain the certification necessary to demonstrate their competence.

Further information :-

See, '**Proposals for new safety requirements for electrical installation work in dwellings**', available from the Building Regulations section of Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website, [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk).

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## 2.0 Part P

- **2.1** The requirement on electrical safety that the Government proposes to introduce will take the form of a new part to the Building Regulations.
- **2.2** This new part will be known as **Part P** and practical guidance on ways of complying with it will be published as **Approved Document P**.
- **2.3** The requirement to be introduced is as follows :-

***"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."***

- **2.4** This requirement will be met by compliance with the **IEE Wiring Regulations, BS7671**.
- **2.5** The requirement will apply in England and Wales only and is restricted to dwellings, dwellings and business premises such as shops that have a common supply, common parts serving dwellings in blocks of flats and shared amenities in blocks of flats, such as laundries and gymnasiums.

Further information :-

See, '**Introduction - Electrical Safety in Dwellings**' and '**Electrical Safety in Dwellings**', both available from the Building Regulations section of the ODPM website, [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk).

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### 3.0 Building Regulations

- **3.1** The introduction of Part P means that 'building work' will be redefined for the purposes of the Building Regulations to include electrical installation work in dwellings.
- **3.2** As a result, electrical installation work will become a 'controlled service' and thus subject to the requirements concerning the notification of this work to, and its inspection by, building control bodies - either local authority building control or an approved inspector. This is a chargeable service.
- **3.3** Alternatively, compliance with the requirements of Building Regulations can be achieved without the need for notification to, and inspection by, building control bodies if the work is carried out by a 'competent person'.
- **3.4** A competent person is a firm that is recognised as competent to certify that the work it carries out complies with Building Regulations.

*Further information :-*

*See, '**Building regulations: explanatory booklet**', available from the Building Regulations section of the ODPM website, [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk).*

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### 4.0 Competent Persons

- **4.1** In the context of Building Regulations, 'Competent Person' is a term that refers to an entity that supplies the controlled service concerned, i.e. it is a **firm**.
- **4.1** Competent Person Schemes are formally recognised by the Government as schemes whose members are adjudged sufficiently competent to self-certify that their work has been carried out in compliance with the Building Regulations.
- **4.2** These schemes should benefit both consumers and the industry. Consumers will benefit from lower prices as building control fees are not payable. They also benefit from reduced delays and from the ability to identify competent firms. Firms who join these schemes will avoid the time and expense of submitting a building notice.
- **4.3** A firm that wishes to join a competent person scheme is vetted to ensure it meets the conditions of membership including the appropriate and relevant levels of competence. If it meets these conditions it is classified as a 'competent person' and its work is then not subject to inspection by building control.

Further information :-

See, '**Competent persons self-certification schemes: introduction**' and '**What are the competent persons self-certification schemes**', both available from the Building Regulations section of the ODPM website, [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk).

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## 5.0 Part P Schemes

- **5.1** The minister responsible for Building Regulations, Phil Hope MP, has stated that for the purposes of Part P, firms that are members of a competent person must be assessed as able to meet the requirements of BS7671.
- **5.2** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has further indicated that this assessment should be carried out as required by the **Electrotechnical Assessment Scheme (EAS)**, or equivalent. Furthermore, the bodies carrying out this assessment should be accredited by UKAS to EN 45011.

Further information :-

See, '**How to apply to run a scheme**', available from the Building Regulations section of the ODPM website, [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk).

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## 6.0 EAS

- **6.1** The EAS is published by the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) and a copy of this scheme may be downloaded from the IEE website (see below).
- **6.2** The scheme includes requirements concerning :
  - the technical reference documents a firm should hold (e.g. BS7671);
  - the test instruments it should have;
  - the way it certifies its work;
  - its insurances;
  - and its personnel.

- 6.3** In particular, a firm seeking certification under the EAS is required to nominate at least one of its personnel as a Qualified Supervisor. The Qualified Supervisor is the person who has direct responsibility for the safety and technical standard of the work carried out by the firm. The EAS sets out the minimum requirements concerning the training and experience of a Qualified Supervisor.
- 6.4** Firms are assessed by a certification body, accredited by UKAS for this purpose, against these requirements and are subject to periodic surveillance visits thereafter to ensure they continue to comply with the scheme.

*Further information :-*

*See, Wiring Regulations section of the Institution of Electrical Engineers' Website, [www.tee.org/Publish/WireRegs](http://www.tee.org/Publish/WireRegs), where a copy of the EAS may be downloaded.*

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## 7.0 Time Scale for Implementation

- 7.1** Government is currently working to the following timetable for the implementation of Part P :-

Oct 15, '03 closing date for applications to run Part P Competent Person Schemes;  
 Nov '03 interview of applicants by the Building Regulations Advisory Committee;  
 Dec '03 approval of schemes by minister based on BRAC advice;  
 Feb '04 legislation introduced establishing schemes and amending Building Regulations to introduce Part P;  
 July '04 '**P-Day**' - Part P comes into effect.
- 7.2** These dates are indicative only. In particular, the date for implementation is still under discussion. However, taking this timetable at face value, firms that are planning to obtain certification as competent persons by the end of June 2004 should bear in mind that there may well be a large number of other similarly motivated firms that want to become competent persons and that this might lead to queuing and delays in achieving the desired status.

*For further information contact :-*

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## 8.0 Getting Started

- **8.1** According to Government sources there may well be up to 30,000 firms seeking competent person status for the purposes of Part P. Thus, depending on the length of the period Government allows between introducing the necessary legislation and bringing Part P into effect, there is likely to be considerable pressure on the schemes approved by Government to process all the applicants in time for 'P-day'.
- **8.2** However, no schemes have yet been approved by Government as competent person schemes for the purposes of Part P and none will be approved until the end of the year.
- **8.3** But, BRE Certification is currently accredited by UKAS to EN45011 for the purposes of providing EAS certification, i.e. the Government's stated benchmark for a Part P competent person scheme.
- **8.4** BRE certification, in partnership with ECA, has applied to run a competent person scheme based on its existing EAS certification service and it is anticipated that all those firms that have been certificated under the EAS by BRE Certification will become competent persons.

*For further information contact :-*

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