



Application Note

Building Regulation requirements in addition to Part P

From 1st January 2005 the Government introduced new legislation, regulating electrical work carried out in homes and gardens. The new rules affect anyone considering electrical work in the home, including DIY enthusiasts.

You DO NOT need to tell your local authority's Building Control department about:

- repairs, replacements, maintenance work;
- or extra power points or lighting points or other alterations to existing circuits (except in a kitchen or bathroom or outdoors).

You need to tell them about most other work.

If the work DOES need to be notified, you have 2 choices;

- Choose a registered, competent electrician who is a member of a competent person scheme. The work will then be notified to the local authority on your behalf and the electrician can provide you with the legally required certification, confirming the work to be safe in accordance with the new legislation.
- If the work is to be carried out by you, a friend or relative, or an electrician who is not a member of a competency scheme, the local authority's Building Control department must be notified direct. They will then send an Inspector to assess the work and provide you with the certification confirming the work to be safe.

Building Regulation requirements in addition to Part P

Contractors self-certifying compliance with Part P will also have to certify compliance with other relevant parts of the Building Regulations that have been affected by the electrical work, such as Part B (fire safety), Part F, Part M (accessibility) and Part L1 (energy conservation).

If you have any doubts as to whether the work needs to be notified or how to be sure that your chosen electrician is competent, contact your local Building Control department. Also, extensive information is available through the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/electricalsafety>) which has driven the new legislation. They have produced a leaflet that further explains the process.

What is a Competent Person?

A 'Competent Person' is a firm that has been approved by one of the government-approved Part P schemes as sufficiently competent to self-certify that its work complies with the Building Regulations. Schemes authorised by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (<http://www.dclg.gov.uk/>) are listed on its website.

A registered firm is not required to notify a building control body of its proposals to carry out electrical installation work before it begins or to have the work inspected on completion. This reduces costs for the customer as the additional charges for calling out a building control body can be avoided.

If a firm wishes to become a Competent Person it must first be vetted to ensure it meets the conditions of registration, including the required levels of competence. The minimum standard of technical competence required is as follows:

- Electrical work in dwellings is designed, installed, inspected and tested to the standard required by BS 7671
- Applicants for a Part P Competent Person Scheme are assessed to be able to work to these standards

Why should I use a Competent Person?

A firm registered as a 'competent person':

- Can deal with all the new rules for you.
- Is qualified to carry out electrical work to BS 7671, the national safety standard
- Will give you a certificate to confirm their work follows the new rules

Using a 'competent person' ensures that:

- You do not have to pay Building Control charges
- You have the option of taking out an insurance-backed guarantee for the work
- You have access to a formal complaints procedure if you are not happy with the work

If you decide against using a registered firm to carry out any work for you, bear in mind the following points:

- There is no guarantee that the electrical installation is safe
- You will have no official record of the work you've had carried out
- You may have difficulty selling your home if you do not have the right electrical safety certificates
- Your local authority's Building Control Department may insist that you put right any faulty work

Failing to comply with the Building Regulations is a criminal offence; however, registration with a Competent Person scheme is not compulsory. If you decide to use a firm that has not registered as a Competent Person, you must ensure that the firm has submitted notification of the work and arranged for it to be inspected and certified by your local authority's Building Control Department on completion.

Does Part P Apply To Me?

Part P applies to **all** electrical installation work carried out in dwellings. However, you do not need to tell your local authority's Building Control department about:

- repairs and maintenance work or
- extra power points or lighting points or other alterations to existing circuits (***except in specially defined areas such as a kitchen, bathroom or outdoors***)

If you are unsure you should contact your local authority's Building Control department or, if you are already dealing with a Competent Person, they should be able to advise you.

To find your local Building Control department visit the LABC website.

Can I Carry Out DIY?

Yes. Anyone is entitled to carry out electrical installation work in dwellings. However, when carrying out electrical work, there are two points to consider:

- All work - however minor - must, by law, comply with Part P requirements

Certain work must be notified to your local authority's Building Control department