

## A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO USING CERTIFICATES OF ELECTRICAL SAFETY (COES)

	<b><i>Prescribed</i></b>	<b><i>Non-Prescribed</i></b>
<b><i>When to use</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See back of the Prescribed COES or page 3 of the booklet “<i>The Certificate of Electrical Safety System Explained</i>” for a definition of prescribed work. Refer also to the OCEI Guidelines for introduction of “like for like” electrical installation work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All other work on fixed wiring above ELV (50V AC or 120V ripple-free DC)</li> <li>Refer to the OCEI Guidelines for “like for like” electrical installation work</li> </ul>
<b><i>What an REC must do (or other Responsible Person)</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase COES</li> <li>Ensure COES is completed, signed &amp; issued to LEIWs for all work</li> <li>Obtain copy of completed COES from LEIWs</li> <li>Arrange for inspection by a licensed electrical inspector</li> <li>Lodge required information on COES into IVR</li> <li>Provide copies of COES to customer, inspector, OCEI, Distribution Business (electricity supplier)</li> <li>Keep ‘Responsible Person’ copy of COES</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase COES</li> <li>Ensure COES is completed, signed &amp; issued to LEIWs for all work</li> <li>Obtain copy of completed COES from LEIWs</li> <li>Lodge required information on COES into IVR</li> <li>Provide copies of COES to customer &amp; OCEI (Electricity Supplier may request a copy at times)</li> <li>Keep ‘Responsible Person’ copy of COES</li> </ol>
<b><i>What an LEIW must do</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure work complies with the regulations and standards and is tested</li> <li>Complete and sign a COES for all work to certify compliance</li> <li>Provide completed COES to REC (or other responsible person)</li> </ol>	
<b><i>When to complete &amp; sign</i></b>	<u>Within 4 business days</u> of completing the work	
<b><i>When to register on the IVR</i></b>	<u>Within 2 business days</u> of completing the certificate of compliance	
<b><i>When to arrange inspection</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Inspection must occur w/n 8 business days</u> of completing COES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Not applicable</u></li> </ul>
<b><i>When to issue certificate to customer and other parties</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Within 4 business days</u> of receiving certificate of inspection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Within one month</u> of completing the COES</li> </ul>
<b><i>Special comments &amp; tips</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A certificate may be required even if changing a switchboard as planned and the Electricity Distribution Business is not advised/involved. (A truck appointment may apply) Refer to the OCEI Guidelines for “like for like” electrical installation work.</li> <li>Need to issue a certificate even if work is inspected and found to have defects (defects can be recorded on the certificate).</li> <li>Where defects are found, need to issue new COES and refer to the original COES number at Item 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you require a licence to complete the work, you must issue a certificate</li> <li>Issue a new certificate each time a circuit or equipment is put into service and made available to the customer for use.</li> <li>Where defects are found during an OCEI audit, need to issue a new COES and refer to the original COES number at Item 5</li> </ul>
<b><i>Help &amp; More Information</i></b>	Refer to the booklet “ <i>The Certificate of Electrical Safety System Explained</i> ”, <i>OCEI Guideline for “like for like” electrical installation work</i> and to <i>the Act and Regulations</i>	

Notes: 1. This is a practical guide only and is not intended to cover all situations. Refer to the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and the Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 1999 for full details.  
 2. This guide assumes that the Registered Electrical Contractor is the person responsible for the work. Where there is no REC responsible, the electrician in charge is the responsible person and takes on responsibility for the tasks listed for RECs in this guide. This may mean that the LEIW is responsible for both REC and LEIW tasks listed above.

(Version current as at 9 May 2001)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Do certificates have to be issued even if the customer doesn't want one?

- Yes, RECs and responsible persons are required by law to issue certificates for prescribed and non-prescribed electrical installation work to help ensure the safety of the public and workers. The certificate also indicates to the customer that the work has been carried out by a registered electrical contractor or a licensed person rather than an unlicensed person. Electrical installation work is "installation, repair, alteration and maintenance".

### 2. When is a job considered completed?

- When any circuit is reactivated (put into service) or made available to the customer for use.
- In practice, this means that you should provide a certificate at the completion of each days work or part thereof if the circuit has been put into service or made available to the customer to use.
- This is not necessarily the same time you invoice the customer (see below).

### 3. I carry out non-prescribed maintenance work? Can I issue one certificate for all the work in that month with my monthly invoice?

- Not unless you have completed only one electrical job for that customer during that month.
- Where you complete maintenance work on a single visit to the customer, and re-activate the circuit, a non-prescribed certificate will be required each time work is completed on that day and the circuit is made available to the customer to use. As a result, you may need to issue more than one certificate during the month, although you have 30 days from completing the work to provide the customer with copies of the certificates.
- The opportunity is available for the REC and/or responsible person to plan their work effectively.

### 4. Can I complete and sign a certificate?

Licence type	Answer – Can I complete and sign a certificate?
Apprentice	No **
E – Electrician	Yes – for his/her own work and that of the person they are supervising
ES – Electrician (supervised)	No** - except for disconnect/re-connect for primary task
L – Supervised worker	No** - except for disconnect/re-connect for primary task
D – Disconnect/re-connect	Yes – related to the primary task
O – Occupiers	Yes
I – Inspectors	No –except for the certificate of inspection on the prescribed certificate.

\*\* If no, the 'E' electrician who is providing the effective supervision is to sign the certificate.

### 5. Do certificates for non-prescribed electrical work have to be registered on the OCEI IVR telephone system?

- Yes, the same as for certificates for prescribed electrical work.

### 6. Can non-prescribed electrical work be included on a certificate for prescribed electrical work?

- Only when the non-prescribed electrical work is completed at the same time as the prescribed electrical work
- Note that a new certificate for non-prescribed work is required following a temporary / permanent supply pole for each case where additional non-prescribed work is carried out (e.g. convert single GPO to multiple GPOs within an installation)

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 7. *Is changing a switchboard as planned work prescribed or non-prescribed work?*

- This changing of a switchboard assembly is prescribed electrical work and requires a prescribed certificate of electrical safety.
- Reference should also be made to the OCEI Guidelines for “like for like” electrical installation work.

### 8. *What is the difference between “Date of Completion of Work” and “Date Certified” on a certificate?*

- The date of completion is the actual date the electrical work on the certificate was completed.
- The date certified is the date the COES was completed and certified in writing (signed).

### 9. *What restrictions apply to the work that can be carried out by supervised workers, apprentices and trades assistants?*

(Note – the following table is a simple summary guide only – it does not include all details of electrical work and restrictions on work by these parties)

<b>Description</b>	<b>Restrictions on Work</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Electrician (Supervised) (ES)</b> (B grade licence under old system) OR <b>Supervised Worker (L)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Must be supervised</u> ** when carrying out electrical work other than disconnect/re-connect work <input type="checkbox"/> Can perform electrical installation work under supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Can NOT connect the work to supply <input type="checkbox"/> Can <u>NOT</u> sign off on certificates of electrical safety [except for disconnect/reconnect for primary task ]	<input type="checkbox"/> The supervising licensed electrician must test, connect and sign off on Certificates for work conducted by these workers <input type="checkbox"/> These workers need to complete and sign certificates of electrical safety for disconnect/re-connect electrical work
<b>Apprentice</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Must be supervised</u> ** when carrying out electrical work <input type="checkbox"/> Can perform electrical installation work under supervision** <input type="checkbox"/> Can NOT connect the work to supply <input type="checkbox"/> Can <u>NOT</u> sign off on certificates of electrical safety of any kind  ** Refer to Regulation 105 for definition of “effective supervision”	<input type="checkbox"/> The supervising licensed electrician must test, connect and sign off on Certificates for work conducted by apprentices <input type="checkbox"/> Upon completion of an apprenticeship, the person has 3 months to obtain a licence, during which time they can continue to work under supervision. After the 3 months, no electrical work can be carried out unless licensed
<b>Trades Assistant</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Can <u>NOT</u> carry out electrical work (even if supervised), except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work on wiring supports and enclosures under supervision of a licensed electrician</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Can <u>NOT</u> install or connect cables <input type="checkbox"/> Can dig holes or cart goods/tools	<input type="checkbox"/> Need to use other licensed workers or an apprentice to carry out electrical work

### 10. *How do I obtain more information from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector (OCEI)?*

- Most information is available on the OCEI website: [www.ocei.vic.gov.au](http://www.ocei.vic.gov.au)
- Requests for more information can be made by sending an email to : [info@ocei.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@ocei.vic.gov.au) , by facsimile 03 9686 2197 or by letter to PO Box 262, Collins Street West Vic 8007.

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