



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR

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GUIDELINES for Owners & Occupiers of Premises in relation to Electrical Work

The Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector (OCEI) has been concerned for some time about unqualified and unlicensed persons carrying out their own 'electrical work' including appliance repairs and installation of fixed wiring. As such, the OCEI provides the following information to assist owner and occupiers of premises for the carrying out of electrical work:

- Throughout Victoria and Australia, most household building and renovations, plumbing, including gas fitting, and electrical work must, by law, be performed by licensed persons or registered tradespersons. By using the right kind of licensed or registered tradespersons, customers, including householders, are legally protected in the event of any problems with workmanship. Builders must have professional indemnity insurance and be registered with the Building Control Commission. Plumbers are required to provide a householder with a compliance certificate for such work as gas fitting and must have appropriate insurance in place. For electrical work, registered electrical contractors must have at least \$5million public liability insurance in place and issue a certificate of electrical safety. All tradespersons are required to perform work to the required standards and these standards are usually set out in legislation and/or regulations or in the relevant Australian Standards which are accepted nationally.
- If for any reason a tradesperson does not carry out the work to the satisfaction of a householder or to the required standards, there are organisations which exist to assist, namely:
 - Building Control Commission (for registered builders);
 - Plumbing Industry Commission (for plumbing, gas fitting or air conditioning installation);
 - Office of Gas Safety (to ensure gas standards are maintained); and
 - Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector (to ensure electrical safety standards are met).
- In Victoria, all electrical work must be carried out in accordance with the Electricity Safety Act, Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations and the Wiring Rules. All other states in Australia have similar legislation and regulations in place which require all electrical work to comply with the Wiring Rules - AS/NZS 3000:2000 (which have been adopted across both Australia and New Zealand).
- The requirement for a person to be registered or licensed to carry out electrical work has been in place for around 80 years in Victoria.

- Currently, all electrical installation work is required to be undertaken only by registered electrical contractors and/or licence holders (such as licensed electricians) with a certificate of electrical safety being used for issuing to customers such as householders. The certificate of electrical safety is required to be certified by a licensed electrician to indicate that electrical work has been carried out in accordance with the Electricity Safety Act, Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations, the required standards (such as all the required safety standards including the Wiring Rules published by Australian Standard - AS/NZS 3000:2000) and has been tested before connection to electricity supply.
- The development and maintenance of the legislative, regulatory, licensing and registration requirements in Victoria (and Australia) have been necessary to ensure that all electrical work is carried out to the required standards. The Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector (OCEI) has in place significant auditing and monitoring processes as well as a major public awareness campaign to ensure that electrical work is only performed by licensed persons or registered electrical contractors to the required safety standards. Consequently, Victoria continues to have the lowest electrical fatality rate (per million population) of all Australian mainland States and the results for recent financial years clearly indicates a significant improvement in safety.
- However, through the OCEI's auditing and monitoring program the OCEI becomes aware of instances where unlicensed and unqualified persons have attempted to perform electrical work or to repair electrical appliances around the home. Unfortunately some of the results are very tragic with people being killed or suffering serious injury due to them being electrocuted.

For example, early in 2001, a 54 year old home handyman died in NSW while reportedly rigging up garden lights. According to the report, the victim believed he had cut off the power to the house and climbed into the roof space where he contacted a live wire. A further example is that a person who carried out repairs and alterations to electrical equipment in Victoria early in 2001 received an electric shock and was killed when he attempted to use that equipment from a 240 volt power outlet. Again, an unqualified person was electrocuted in Western Australia in 2003 when attempting to maintain an evaporative airconditioner on a shop roof.

As such, the consequences of electrical work being undertaken by unqualified people can be very serious.

If you need any further information or clarification, please contact the OCEI on telephone 9203 9700 or by email (info@ocei.vic.gov.au).

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