



NEW RCD REGULATIONS

New proposed drafts regulations are currently in process after recent analyses of electrical fatalities in non-workplace locations showed alarming results.

Reports show that electrical related fatalities in non-workplace locations over the past 16 years showed 31 of 36 fatalities would not have occurred if an RCD (Residual Current device) had been installed.

i WHAT IS AN RCD (SAFETY SWITCH)

Safety switch is a general name for a Residual Current Device (RCD) or earth leakage circuit breaker. These safety switches, RCDs are electrical safety devices specially designed to immediately switch the electricity OFF when electricity 'leaks' to earth at a level harmful to a human. These devices offer a high level of personal protection from electric shock.

WILL FUSES OR OVER CURRENT CIRCUIT BREAKERS DO THE SAME?

No! Circuit breakers and fuses provide equipment and/or installation protection and operate only in response to an electrical overload or short-circuit when high fault currents flow. Short circuit flow to earth via your installation's earthing system causes either the circuit breaker to trip or fuse to blow, disconnecting the electricity from the faulty circuit.

However, if the electrical resistance in the earth fault current path is too high to allow a circuit breaker to trip (or fuse to blow), then electricity can continue to flow to earth for an extended time, creating dangerous voltages and currents. Safety switches (with or without an over current device) can detect a very low level of electricity flowing to earth and immediately switch the electricity off.

WHAT THE LEGISLATION PROPOSES

Energy Safety, a division of the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, has proposed a legislation that all owner occupier residential premises must be fitted with at least two RCD's in premises constructed prior to the 1st January 2000.

The proposed legislation obliges the owner of residential premises to have at least two RCD's installed, in accordance with the wiring rules, prior to the transfer of the land title.

It also obliges the owner of residential premises that are leased, rented or hired to have at least two RCD's installed;

1. prior to the transfer of the land title,
2. prior into entering a tenancy agreement with a new tenant,
3. prior to making it available for rent,
4. within 24 months of the legislation coming into force.



2-Pole Residual current device

WHEN IS THE LEGISLATION COMING IN?

It is anticipated the regulations will be published in the Government Gazette by Mid 2009, and will come into force three months after the date of publication.

RCD FACTS & CONCERNS

It is estimated that less than 25% of pre 2000 dwellings have not been voluntarily fitted with RCDs.

Concerns also arise with;

Pre 1960's homes are mostly wired with VIR (Vulcanised India Rubber) insulated cables, a known safety risk since the 1980's. Ceiling spaces for example, whereby the wires are exposed to high temperatures, the insulation becomes brittle and can result in exposed live wires.

Western Australia prior to the 1980's also allowed cabling joints in accessible ceiling spaces to be made without suitable enclosure. This also presents serious risk of electrical shock to persons including trades persons entering ceiling spaces.

RCD's will play a large part in reducing the risk of injury to persons who come into contact with previous bad electrical practice.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

It is recommended that all property owner occupiers or managers of dwellings built pre the year 2000 to take account of the new proposed legislation.

We advise that all parties concerned investigate doubts by using qualified electrical expertise for safe analysis and to provide an opportunity to act on it.

RCD Packages are available at Power On Electrix.

LIGHTER SIDE

- One lightning bolt has enough electricity to service 200 000 homes.
- First Lighthouse to use electricity - Statue of Liberty (1886)
- In 1957 a battery was discovered in Bagdad. It was made by the Parthians, who ruled Bagdad from 250 B.C, and was used to electroplate silver.