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Autumn 2015

ECSSA news

Dear Member,

Welcome to the Autumn 2015 Newsletter!

We are pleased to note that a level of growth continues to become apparent in the industry, although that growth does not appear to have had much effect as yet in rural Ireland. Nevertheless new applications for membership are still coming in almost on a daily basis and some contractors who have not been members for many years are returning to the fold.

Membership is now at highest level since the peak of the boom in 2007.

A certain level of activity has also been noted in the Agricultural sector, as farmers gear up for the removal of quotas and the expansion of dairy herds.

However, this expansion is being somewhat curtailed by the current low milk prices where farmers claim that milk is being sold below the cost of production.

The announcement of European Aid to tide the industry over what will hopefully be a temporary setback is to be welcomed and hopefully will lead to a resumption of the upgrading of electrical installations in the dairy sector.

Above all we would appeal to contractors who are engaged in this sector of the industry not to lower standards in the face of competitive pricing, as the agri-sector has always been rightly regarded as one of the most dangerous environments in which a person can work.

Please ensure that your electrical work does not add to that danger.

Breeda Moynihan Cronin
Chairperson



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Chairperson of ECSSA



1. V & C Courses

Unprecedented demand for V & C Courses means that very few places remain on the ECSSA Schedule of Courses between now and the year end.

It is not possible to put on additional Courses as the primary duty of the three Inspectors, who act as Tutors, is their core function of inspecting the work of RECs.

We cannot therefore allow additional time spent on Courses to impinge on their Core Activities and indeed these three Inspectors are already working much longer hours than they normally would in order to sustain the level of inspections required before year end.

Once again we would ask all RECs to check the Expiry Date of their Qualified Certifier Numbers so that they do not find themselves in a situation of having Certs returned to them by reason of an expired QCN.

2. Use of 13 Amp Outdoor Socket Outlets. (IP.56)

There are a number of versions of such socket outlets available on the market from various reputable manufacturers.

These are ideal for domestic use where the socket outlet is used for outdoor appliances e.g. electric lawnmowers, Hedge trimmers etc.

Fixing instructions should always be in accordance with the Manufacturer's Instructions in order to maintain the IP rating of the outlet and its enclosure.

Where cable glands are required they should also be appropriate to the IP Rating of the enclosure.

These types of Socket Outlet are not acceptable for use in Agricultural Installations in this Country as ETCL National Wiring Rule 705.554 clearly states that socket outlets and couplers shall comply with I.S EN 60309 Parts 1 & 2, (industrial types).

Perhaps Rule 705.554 should be reviewed by ETCL Technical Committee No 2 as 16 to 13Amp adaptors are commonly used for items such as Electric Fence Controllers, many of which are supplied with moulded 13Amp plug-tops.

Could the rule be amended to allow for specified limited use of the IP 56 Type 13 Amp Socket-outlets as this might be preferable to the use of adaptors in agricultural situations?

3. Main Overcurrent Device. Rule 533.3.5

Following feedback from our Inspectors who have found instances of non-conformance with this Rule we wish to stress the following using a standard domestic Installation (12kVA, 16mm² Tails) as an example.

- The Overcurrent device shall be an MCB Rated 63Amp.
While Rule 533.3.5 (a) states **"The Device shall be an MCB"** not specifying a particular type (B, C or D).
Rule 533.3.4 states **"MCB's & RCBO's shall be selected so as to be suitable for the Duty intended"**.
ECSSA has always recommended use of a "B" type in Domestic Installations because of the variation in value of the incoming DSO Earth Fault Loop Impedance.
In the majority of Domestic Installations there is no significant inrush current necessitating the use of a "C" type MCB (5-10In). However there may be some instances' (e.g. some geothermal heating systems) where the "C" type may be appropriate, however the Loop Impedance value measured at the end of the Meter Tails (at the Distribution Board) must not exceed 0.36Ω for a 63Amp ("C" type) MCB.
- It shall have a Breaking Capacity of 10kA (Rule states 9kA however the closest Industry availability is 10kA).
- Where the Tails exceed 3m in length, the device shall be located in the bottom right-hand side of the Meter Cabinet, in an I.P. 55 (Min.) non-conducting enclosure with a hinged transparent cover.
- The Consumer unit should then have a load-break Isolator installed.

Where the Tails are less than 3m the following applies:

- The consumer unit shall have the above type MCB fitted as the Main Overcurrent device.

Some Manufacturers offer options as to which device is included in the Consumer unit i.e. Isolator or MCB.

It is the responsibility of the REC (Registered Electrical Contractor) to adhere to Rule 533.3.5

4. REC's Responsibilities

When a member of the Public engages an REC it is not unreasonable for them to expect that the REC is conversant with the current National Wiring Rules and is capable of carrying out installations in accordance with these Rules.

All REC's are required to possess a Copy of the Current National Wiring Rules (ET 101:2008) including Amendment No.1. 2011.

However, it is not enough to merely possess the publication; it should be referred to on a regular basis in order to become familiar with the Rules and their practical implications when carrying out an installation.

5. Return of Non Conformance Notices (NCNs)

Despite constant reminders, some RECs do not appear to fully understand the correct manner in which Non Conformance Notices issued by their Inspectors should be closed out.

In order to close out an non-conformance, it is necessary for the REC, once the issues which have been highlighted have been dealt with, to sign and return to ECSSA the document which he received from his Inspector.

This is the only manner in which the block on the processing of further Certs for that Contractor, which is put in place once the Inspector returns his Copy of the NCN to the office, can be lifted.

We regularly have instances of unsigned NCNs being returned by RECs.

These unsigned documents will not remove the block as, in effect, a signed Non Conformance Notice is an undertaking by the Contractor (REC) that the matters listed have been dealt with by the REC.

An unsigned document is worthless and will be returned for signature, with the block remaining in place until such time as a signed NCN can be placed on the contractors file.

In cases where the non-conformance related to the Calibration of Instruments, the signed NCN should be accompanied by copies of current Calibration Certs for the Instruments concerned.

Where non possession of ET101 is involved, a copy of an Invoice proving purchase of the National Wiring Rules should be submitted as proof.

This Invoice should show the name of the contractor to whom it was issued.

While it would not be practical to revisit every site to check that remedial work has been carried out, nevertheless, Inspectors have been instructed to carry out spot checks, particularly if they have any reason to believe that the work might not have been carried out.

ECSSA would take a very serious view of a false declaration by an REC that the matters contained in the NCN had been attended to when in fact this was not the case.

6. Earth Electrode in older dwelling houses

REC's who are engaged in Alterations to, or the Re-connection of older installations, should check for the presence of an "Earth Electrode" and if none can be found then a new electrode should be installed along with a new Earth conductor in accordance with Table 54 of ET101:2008.

The existing Bonding and Earth Fault Loop Impedance should also be checked and upgraded where deemed appropriate.



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