

5. Polarity

An important check which is often ignored by contractors when connecting new houses is the verification of polarity. While ESB Networks get this right 99% of the time, there is always the danger, particularly in rural areas that phase and neutral can be reversed. Anybody who is familiar with the bundles type overhead conductors knows that the only difference between phase and neutral is a single raised ridge running along the length of the phase. In wet or cold conditions it is sometimes hard to feel this ridge and even then mistakes can be made when making the final connections. It is vital that a contractor, before making connections, ensures that the

incoming phase and neutral are at the correct terminals in the meter or isolator. This can be quite easily done by checking for voltage between the incoming live and the customer's main earth. The voltage should be equal to the voltage between the incoming phase and neutral. If there is a substantial difference between the phase/neutral voltage and the phase/earth voltage, no connection should be made and ESB should be contacted. Quite apart from verifying polarity of the incoming supply, this test also verifies the efficiency of the customer's main earth electrode. It takes less than a minute to carry out the test and doing so can prevent serious damage to the installation or injury to occupants to the premises.

News from CER

Good progress has been made on the redrafting of the CER Criteria and it is hoped that in mid to late 2008 the new Regulatory Model will be well on the way.

One of the major changes which will impact on contractors is that it will be no longer possible for registered contractors to have Completion Certs signed by an employee, unless that employee has completed a training course on Verification and Certification.

It is proposed that electricians who complete this course will be given an individual number which will identify them as Authorised Certifiers and this number must appear with the electrician's signature on all Certs which he/she signs on behalf of his/her employer. It is expected that an agreement will

be reached whereby an electrician who completes the Course with either Regulatory Body will be able to sign Certs on behalf of his/her employer, irrespective of whether that employer belongs to the same Regulatory Body which provided the Course and Authorised Certifier Number for the electrician. In addition if there are recognised Courses provided by commercial training centres, these too will be required to issue an identifying number to each successful participant and these authorisations will have to be recognised for the purpose of signing Completion Certs.

Obviously it will take some time before the system can be fully implemented, as contractors who have been on Courses in the past have not been issued with an Authorised Certifier Number but ECSSA proposes to issue Authorised Certifier Numbers to all participants in our Courses commencing on Oct. 19th.

Members should take the opportunity to ensure that employees who have not been on courses to date, but who normally sign Certs, attend a Course as early as possible as a situation cannot continue where people who have never been assessed as to their ability to verify and test an installation, continue to sign Completion Certs.

A Booking Form is enclosed with this Newsletter and it is vital that this be used when booking any of the Courses. (N.B. One booking form per person). It is equally important that a photograph of the participant be included as an Authorised Certifier's Card similar to an ECSSA Membership Card will be issued to each successful participant.

Contractors who may wish to have individual Courses set up for their employees should contact ECSSA.

Training & Verification Training Course Schedule for 2007

No	Day	Date	Location	Trainer	Inspector	Hotel
1	Friday	19th Oct. '07	Kildare	Denis Crone	Jimmy Batten	Glenroyal Hotel
2	Friday	19th Oct. '07	Galway	Michael Guerin	Wally Forde	The Clayton
3	Saturday	20th Oct. '07	Dublin(1)	Denis Crone		Legrand Offices
4	Saturday	20th Oct. '07	Ennis	Michael Guerin	Wally Forde	West County
5	Wednesday	1st Nov. '07	Dublin (2)	Denis Crone		Legrand Offices
6	Thursday	1st Nov.'07	Kerry	Michael Guerin		ECSSA
7	Saturday	3rd Nov.'07	Kerry	Michael Guerin		ECSSA
8	Friday	2nd Nov.'07	Navan	Denis Crone	Tony Murray	The Ardboyne
9	Saturday	3rd Nov.'07	Dublin (3) 9am -12	Denis Crone		Legrand Offices
10	Friday	16th Nov.'07	Waterford	Michael Guerin	Paul Keane	Remada
11	Friday	16th Nov.'07	Mullingar	Denis Crone	Tony Murray	Mullingar Park Hotel
12	Saturday	17th Nov.'07	Cork	Michael Guerin	Paul Keane	Doughcloyne
13	Saturday	17th Nov.'07	Dublin (4)	Denis Crone		Legrand Offices
14	Wednesday	28th Nov. '07	Dublin (5)	Denis Crone		Legrand Offices
15	Friday	30th Nov.'07	Dundalk	Denis Crone	Tony Murray	The Fairways
16	Friday	30th Nov.'07	Limerick	Michael Guerin	Jack Gleeson	Kilmurray Lodge
17	Saturday	1st Dec. '07	Dublin (6)	Denis Crone		Legrand Offices
18	Saturday	1st Dec. '07	West Limerick	Michael Guerin	Jack Gleeson	Lanterns Tarbert

Details of 2008 Courses will be published in the December Newsletter (Price €120 per person)

ECSSA news

Autumn 2007



Chairman's Comments

Welcome to the Autumn 2007 Edition of the ECSSA Newsletter!

The past three months have been notable for the amount of comment circulating regarding the downturn in the Construction Industry and especially in the housing sector.

While it is obvious that there has been a slowdown, this is not as yet reflected in any reduction in the amount of Completion Certs being processed through ECSSA for new connections.

What is noticeable, however, is that many housing developments are now having their connections made in the name of the Developer rather than in the name of a Buyer. This obviously indicates that Developers are no longer in the happy position of being able to sell their houses before completion, but are instead stock-piling completed houses.

It is generally accepted that house prices have fallen slightly, but this should not be taken as an excuse for builders to force down, once again, the already ridiculously low prices which electrical contractors are getting for house wiring.

The electrical installation costs in a house, more than anything else, have lagged far behind all other trades over the past 30 years. Back in the late 70's, when a house could be bought for under £5,000, the usual cost of an electrical installation was in the region of £400 – £500, i.e. 10% of the overall cost.

These same houses nowadays are selling at closer to €400,000, but the idea of 10%, or €40,000, for wiring such a house would be ridiculed. One would be lucky to get 1% of the cost, i.e. €4,000, and we have heard of instances where three-bedroom houses are being wired for half of this figure. This is unsustainable and will inevitably lead to short cuts, a lowering of standards, and the eventual financial failure of the contractors concerned.

As a Regulatory Body it is not our remit to advise people on what they should charge, but it certainly concerns us when we see prices eroded to such an extent that one has to question how the contractor can do a proper job and, equally importantly, how a contractor can afford to use quality materials and spend adequate time testing and certifying an installation.

We would strongly advise members not to get involved in a race to the bottom and to ensure that, even if they do less work, they can stand over that work and that Completion Certs issued by them are a genuine reflection of adequate testing to ensure compliance with the relevant safety standards.

John O'Loughlin
Chairman of ECSSA

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ECSSA OFFICE HOURS:

Monday to Friday:
9am to 1pm and
2pm to 5pm

CLOSED FOR LUNCH
1pm to 2pm

John O'Loughlin
Chairman of ECSSA



Notice to Members

1. Incorrect MPRN's

One of the errors which causes major problems in verifying Completion Certs arises from what appears to be a fairly common practice on housing estates. When the initial application is made by the Developer to ESB for supply for the estate, a site map is furnished showing the layout and the proposed house numbers. ESB then allocate an MPRN to each individual house number, but at some stage between that point in time and the completion of the estate, the Developer changes the house numbers so that, for example, what was house No 1 on the ESB plan could well be house No 30 in the final layout of the estate. The electrical contractor gets a list of MPRN's from the builder and proceeds to enter these against the numbers shown on the doors of the houses, with the inevitable result that there is total confusion and the Certs usually have to be scrapped and re-issued. While the MPRN number is valid, it is only valid in respect of the actual house which ESB saw on the original site plan and there have been instances where ESB have gone out and made supply available in houses where the wiring was very far from complete.

It is therefore important to confirm with the builder that there have been no changes in the layout or numbering of the estate from that which was submitted to the ESB and on which the MPRN list is based. Apart from the delay and confusion which is caused, it means that the contractor will have to issue Certs and Surcharge Stamps a second time, and recovering the cost of these can often be more trouble than it's worth.

2. Agri Certs

The recent availability of substantial Grant Aid for farm buildings has seen a considerable increase in the amount of Agri Installations being carried out by contractors. A normal Domestic Completion Cert must be issued for each of these installations. If a new connection is required, the Cert obviously has to go be sent directly to ECSSA, for onward transmission to ESB. If the supply is being taken from an existing meter, the Cert, including post connection tests, should be given to the farmer. In addition to the normal Cert, a Supplementary Agri Cert must be issued, so that the farmer can claim his grant. The Supplementary Agricultural Cert is purely an undertaking by the electrical contractor that the work has been carried out in accordance with ETCI National Wiring Rules and the number of the Domestic Cert issued should be inserted on the Agri Cert. The Agri Cert should then be given directly to the farmer. There is no need to send the Agri Cert to ECSSA with the Completion Cert, even if a new connection is required.

3. Certifications for Disconnections

In recent time we have had a number of complaints from contractors who claim that ESB have requested a Cert to allow the disconnection of a supply. It would appear that this does not arise throughout ESB but merely in some Districts where there seems to be a misunderstanding of what ESB directives are. There is no basis for such a request. To issue a Completion Cert one needs to be able to carry out at least the pre-connection tests on the installation. A Completion Cert is meant to refer to work completed and was never meant to be used as

a mechanism for triggering internal work orders within ESB. We are currently discussing with CER acceptable procedures for the reconnection of supply in instances where supply has had to be disconnected for an emergency, or a planned switched out where re-connection is required shortly afterwards. As part of the revised Criteria we expect that these procedures will be agreed between the Regulatory Bodies and ESB and will be set out in writing as part of the overall Regulatory structure and, following approval by the CER, that the procedures will be followed in similar fashion in all ESB Districts and by all contractors.

4. Insurance Reminder

It is vital that contractors registered with ECSSA send proof of renewal of their insurance to ECSSA on or before the day on which the current cover expires. AON/Eagle Star provide a daily fax confirming renewal of cover or new business taken on during that day. Arachas/Hibernian have now agreed to provide this facility as well, but it is important that ECSSA members notify Arachas that they are members of ECSSA, so that the insurer can include the contractor in the daily list of renewed cover.

We welcome this co-operation from the two major brokers, who between them account for over 80% of our members, and we urge contractors who are insured elsewhere to ensure that they get confirmation of renewal to us at the earliest opportunity once renewal has been put in place. This is vital, as we cannot advertise to the public as being insured, any contractor who we do not have positive proof that such insurance is in place. Accordingly, our website is arranged in such a way that a contractor's name is removed once the renewal date has passed without proof that continuing cover exists.

Legrand Courses

At the end of the course, the trainees:

- Will know and understand the range of offer in the catalogue
- Will be able to locate part numbers and pricing information
- Will be able to recognise opportunities and identify product for required applications

Contents

- Introduction to Home networks
- Telecom
- Data (networking)
- Video distribution
- Cat 5 Audio Distribution
- setup & connectivity

- cable selection
- Selecting the required kit
- Additional accessories
- Look through installation guide

Functions and Ranges

- 1 to 4 telephone outlets
- Data (networks) & broadband 8 o/p's – 4 data& 4broadband
- Video 1 to 8 o/p module passive module
- Cat5 cabling, volume controls x 4, source input & distribution module
- Power supply requirements

Study of Layout diagrams

- Using simple home layouts
- Discussion of wiring schemes

Practical work

- Handling product
- Visual demonstration of the audio and video kits
- Practical Wiring up of the different functions

Course Duration 1/2 day

Location Nationwide

For Whom ? New entrants:

- Specifies
- Wholesalers / distributors
- Contractors
- House builders

Conditions

- **max number:** 6 persons
- **Organisation:** Eamonn Tilley
- for any further Information please Contact your local re

Basic Course

At the end of the course, the trainees:

- Will know who our competitors are and the size of the market
- Will know and understand the range of offer in the catalogues
- Obtain support regarding new catalogue
- Will be able to recognise opportunities
- Will understand the different systems and technologies utilised

Contents

- Market Overview
- Competition
- Types of systems available

- Different technologies
- Features and benefits

Functions and Ranges

- Kits
- Analogue systems
- Digital systems
- 2 wire systems
- Entrance panels – aesthetics
- Handsets
- Control equipment

Practical work

- Product Handling
- Visual demonstration
- Practical – wiring up – 1 way Audio
- Covering simple digital and 2 wire practical

Course Duration 1 day

Access Control Course

At the end of the course, the trainees:

- Will know and understand the range of offer in the catalogues
- Will be able to locate part numbers and Pricing information in dedicated Bticino Catalogue
- Will be able to recognise opportunities and identify product for required applications
- Understand Access Control and locking circuits
- Types of Keypads /magnetic locks and fob readers and there use

Contents

- Review of the Introductory module
- In depth look at Stand alone Systems
- Magnetic lock Systems
- Set up, connection & cabling requirements

Functions and Ranges

- Magnetic Lock
- Intercom/Access integration
- Multi Door
- Keypads

Practical work

- Product Handling
- Visual demonstration



Location Legrand Sandyford

For Whom ? New entrants:

- Wholesalers / Distributors
- Contractors
- Specifiers

Conditions

- **max number:** 6 persons
- **Organisation:** Contact Regional Trainers
- for any further Information please Contact: Training Manager, Eamonn Tilley 01 2954465.

- Practical – wiring up of systems
- Didactic panels – to build up systems
- Written exercises

Course Duration Half day

Location Nationwide

For Whom ? New entrants:

- Specifiers • Contractors

Conditions

- **max number:** 6/8 persons
- **Organisation:** For any further Information please contact: Eamonn Tilley.