

4. IS3217 Emergency Lighting

Fire Officers acting for local authorities have for some time expressed concern in relation to the validity of Emergency Lighting Certs submitted for new buildings and for premises such as pubs, clubs etc which need to renew their licenses each year.

It is felt that many of these Certificates are being signed without adequate testing of the installation or by people who are not familiar with the requirements of IS3217.

To deal with this problem NSAI have started the process of setting up a Register of persons qualified to test and certify Emergency Lighting Installations.

Initially it was intended to include Designers and Installers in this Register, but after further meetings it appears to have been accepted that Consulting Engineers who design Emergency Lighting Systems are adequately qualified and regulated by their own professional Associations, while the installation of Emergency Lights falls into the scope of the ETCI

Wring Rules and Installers are therefore registered and regulated by the existing Regulatory Bodies, ECSSA and RECI.

The concentration therefore is going to be on Commissioners and Certifiers who sign off on new installations and periodic tests.

It is likely that a Course will be devised to bring contractors who want to be involved in Emergency Lighting Certification up to speed with the Regulations and best practice in this area of the industry. A common Cert will be designed which will be acceptable to the Fire Officers once it is signed by a Registered Emergency Lighting Certifier.

The system has still quite some work to do on it, so look out for further updates in future Newsletters.

5. IS3218 Fire Alarms

IS3218:2009 has now been issued by NSAI and supersedes IS3218:1989.

As in the case of Emergency Lighting, it is clear that an existing premises with a fire detection system which complies with IS3218:1989 cannot be expected

to immediately conform to the additional requirements of IS3218:2009.

Likewise contractors certifying such installations should not certify them as being in compliance with the 2009 Standard when in fact they may not be so, but should certify these installations as being compliant with the 1989 Standard.

All new installations must of course be designed, constructed and tested for full compliance with the most recent Standard.

A member has recently reported to us that on checking the fire detection installation in a pub, he found that all the detector heads fitted were in fact heat detectors.

These would probably have been the only practical units to use when smoking in pubs was common place, but now that the practice is no longer permitted in pubs, clubs or restaurants, it would provide far better detection to replace heat detectors with smoke detectors, and where possible, the owners or occupiers of the premises should be encouraged to do so.

Autumn 2009 Verification & Certification Courses

Date	Location	Venue	Date	Location	Venue
1 21/10/2009	Galway	The Clayton	14 11/11/2009	Kildare	The Genroyal
2 21/10/2009	Navan	The Ardboyne	15 12/11/2009	Waterford	The Remada
3 22/10/2009	Ennis	The West County	16 12/11/2009	Dublin	Legrand
4 22/10/2009	Dublin	Legrand Offices	17 25/11/2009	Kilkenny	New Park Hotel
5 28/10/2009	Portlaoise	Maldron Hotel	18 25/11/2009	Sligo	Sligo Park Hotel
6 28/10/2009	Athlone	Radisson	19 26/11/2009	Mallow	The Hibernian Hotel
7 29/10/2009	Limerick	Kilmurry Lodge	20 26/11/2009	Cavan	Cavan Crystal Hotel
8 29/10/2009	Dublin	Legrand Offices	21 02/12/2009	Galway	The Clayton Hotel
9 04/11/2009	Cork	Silver Springs	22 02/12/2009	Tullamore	Tullamore Court
10 04/11/2009	Dundalk	The Fairways Hotel	23 03/12/2009	Limerick	Kilmurry lodge
11 05/11/2009	Killarney	Ecssa Offices	24 03/12/2009	Dublin	Legrand Offices
12 05/11/2009	Dublin	Legrand Offices	25 09/12/2009	Dublin	Legrand Offices
13 11/11/2009	Carlow	Seven Oaks	26 10/12/2009	Killarney	Ecssa Offices
			27 10/12/2009	Dublin	Legrand Offices

Timetable : All Courses run from 2.00pm to 5.00pm

Cost : €150 per person

Members are reminded to bring: Test Instruments – (Check batteries & leads in particular 3 leads for Loop Impedance Shower Testing. New leads can be purchased from ECSSA)

A Booking Form is included in this Newsletter and is also available for download on our website at WWW@ecssa.ie



ECSSA News

AUTUMN 2009

Dear Member,

Regrettably the general air of doom and gloom continues to prevail in the construction industry, with the obvious knock-on effect on the electrical contracting industry. New connections have now slowed down to a trickle, representing perhaps less than a quarter of those which were common-place during the building boom.

One clink of light is that there now appears to be an upturn in the area of re-wiring, refurbishment and extensions. Perhaps the fact that these are now being undertaken results from the difficulty which householders encountered in getting trade's people to do small jobs at affordable prices during the height of the boom. Many members inform us that they can still find enough to keep themselves busy, but most have been forced to downsize and let some, or all, of their staff go.

Non-payment of their sub contractors by builders tends to form the basis of many of the complaints received by ECSSA these days, with

the customer caught in the middle between a builder who has been paid and an electrical contractor to whom the payment has not been passed on and who, not surprisingly, then refuses to proceed any further with the work. While one can have sympathy with the position of a householder who finds himself in this unhappy position, one also has to be conscious of the fact that, if the householder wants the job finished, somebody is going to have to be paid for doing the work, and it generally appears that the householder does not take this into account when asking for a change of contractor and ends up in a situation where the original contractor is denied the chance to recover even part of his losses on the job.

As work becomes even scarcer and contractors become even more desperate to win jobs, the problem of a low collection rate is undoubtedly set to grow. Contractors should be conscious of the fact that getting a job is only part of the process. Doing it, and collecting payment for it, are equally, if not more, important. It is a pointless exercise being busy

inputting time and materials into a job where the chances of getting paid range between slim and nil. In particular contractors should be very wary of jobs where they are asked to take over a partially completed installation and should at all times satisfy themselves as to why the original contractor has left the job. While there are of course genuine reasons in some cases, the vast majority of withdrawals by the original contractors will simply be because they have not been paid. A contractor taking over in such circumstances should realise that if the builder or householder was prepared to leave the first contractor go unpaid, there is every chance that his replacement will suffer the same fate.

Mike Marshall
Technical Manager

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Minister Eamon Ryan - June 09

SOLAR INSTALLER



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DUBLIN Mon 12th - Wed 14th Oct
GALWAY Mon 19th - Wed 21st Oct
CORK Tue 27th - Thur 29th Oct

INSULATION INSTALLER



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CORK 12th-14th Oct
DUBLIN 26th-28 Oct
GALWAY 19th-21st Oct

REFRIGERATION EFFICIENCY



Refrigeration Principles & Systems Course Principles, functions, composition, layout and hazards of refrigeration systems.
DUBLIN 16th -21st Nov

CCTV & LIGHTING



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CORK Mon 28th Sept - Thur 1st Oct
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GALWAY Mon 9th - Thur 12th Nov

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Insurance – Final Notice

For the past number of years we have tried through every means in our power to bring to the attention of contractors that their public liability insurance must comply in all respects with that demanded by the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) in the CER Criteria.

Despite this, a considerable number of insurance cover notes still arrive here each day with the wrong levels of indemnity, incorrect wording, or absence of the specific indemnities to parties who must be named on the policy. These parties are; the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER), the Electro Technical Council of Ireland (ETCI), ESB Networks (ESBN), and the Electrical Contractors Safety & Standards Association (ECSSA).

The Criteria is quite specific about these requirements and an Indemnity to Principals is not acceptable as a substitute in the absence of the indemnities to the named parties.

Unfortunately, as trading conditions become more difficult, contractors are seeking alternative insurers who are anxious to obtain business by offering insurance cover at substantially discounted rates. Most of policies sourced on a basis of price alone do not comply with the CER requirements.

There are currently only three Irish Insurance providers whose policy documents comply fully with the Criteria requirements. These are AON/Eagle Star, Arachas/Hibernian, and FBD.

Neither the CER nor ECSSA have any desire, or indeed any right, to exclude any insurer from the market for electrical contractors liability insurance, but it is clear that both Bodies have the right to set out policy requirements which are felt to be essential for the industry and it's regulation.

Far too much time has been spent in the past by ECSSA staff trying to interpret whether a particular policy complies with the CER requirements, and indeed it is not the function of ECSSA to set itself up as an insurance expert to decide which policy is acceptable and which must be rejected.

We have sought, and obtained, the approval of CER to reject without further correspondence any policy which is not worded in accordance with the requirements of the Criteria, and which does not contain all the specific indemnities required.

It is therefore vital that an electrical contractor, before committing himself to a particular insurer, should ensure that the policy document issued is fully compatible with the Criteria requirements, as anything else will be rejected and will only lead to delay and frustration when the contractor's Certs cannot be processed.

Finally, ECSSA cannot direct any contractor where he should get his insurance but it has every right and obligation to say that if the policy does not meet the clearly outlined requirements of the Criteria, then it will be returned to the contractor and will either have to be amended by the insurers or an alternative policy will have to be found. We appreciate that this may prove inconvenient for a number of contractors, but in fairness, we have been highlighting this issue for the past few years and all we would say to contractors is that the requirements set out are the minimum which will satisfy the Criteria, and also that contractors should always beware that a policy which appeared attractive at the time when it was obtained, may prove ineffective at the time when needed, because of some clause, exclusion or limitation of liability contained in the policy.

1. ESB Safety Message

ESBN has informed us that there are instances where the service cable, end box (main fuse holder), and meter may be installed in advance of certification. This often arises when a scheme of houses is being cabled, but the main fuse is left out and the end box sealed until such time as a Completion Cert is submitted in respect of the particular house. Some contractors have been connecting Customer Tails into the meters prior to the issue of a Completion Cert, or the fitting of the main fuse by ESBN.

This is a dangerous practice in that the contractor does not have a means of checking polarity of the supply at the meter prior to the fitting of a main fuse, and if a polarity mistake had been made by the ESB technicians, connecting the installation could lead to a dangerous situation.

Contractors should ensure that supply is available at the meter terminals, and should personally check polarity before customer tails are connected. We have suggested to ESBN that, when fitting meters which are not immediately made live, they should place a Warning

Notice on the sealing screws of the customer terminals of the meter, but we have not received any confirmation as yet that this will happen, so currently the onus remains on the contractor to satisfy himself that supply is present and polarity is correct before connecting. It should also be noted that CER requirements now call for the fitting of a Seal by a contractor on the customer's connection cover of the meter. The individual number of this Seal should be noted by the electrical contractor and recorded on the Test Record Sheet of the installation.

2. Training Courses

A full list of Training Courses in Verification & Certification is published in this Newsletter. Venues have been selected bearing in mind where best attendances have been achieved in previous years. There are however a number of changes in the Courses which are now about to begin. Firstly, Courses will now take place midweek, either on Wednesdays or Thursdays. In all cases the Course will run from 2.00pm to 5.00pm. A maximum of 18 participants will be accepted for each venue. A person who attends the Course and passes the Assessment will be issued with a Qualified Certifiers Card valid for 3 years from the date of the Course. It is essential that contractors take the opportunity to get on to a Course as early as possible as we are now commencing the lead-in period after which Certs, which have not been signed by a Qualified Certifier, cannot be processed.

In particular, it is vital that new contractors, who have not yet been on a Course, should immediately participate at their nearest venue. The cost of the Course is €150 per person and this includes a copy of the ECSSA Verification & Certification DVD and a copy of the Verification & Certification Booklet on which the DVD is based. A Booking Form is included in this Newsletter and should be returned in good time ahead of the date of your selected Course. Participants should bring along their own test instruments and should ensure that batteries, leads etc are all in good condition.

3. ETCI 4th Edition

The 4th Edition of the National Wiring Rules published by ETCI comes into force on October 1st 2009. The 4th Edition publication has been available for some time now but unfortunately contains a significant number of errors which makes it essential for a contractor to download

the five pages of corrections published on the ETCI website and then go through the book page by page and make the corrections. It is regrettable that having spent so long preparing the new edition, ETCI allowed it into circulation before a proper check for accuracy was carried out. ECSSA has requested that the present publication be withdrawn and replaced by a re-print which incorporates all the corrections needed, but we are not certain as to whether this will happen. It might well be that ETCI will publish the amendments in printed form which can be distributed free of charge with the main publication as has happened in the past, but contractors would still be well advised to transfer these amendments into the relevant pages of the Rule Book. In the meantime contractors should not rely on what is contained in the 4th Edition without first having downloaded the corrections which can be found at www.etci.ie and amended the Rule Book accordingly.

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Most contractors should by now have received information on NECTA, the National Electrical Contractors Trade Association which has been set up by two former Directors of ECSSA. For the past number of years, ECSSA has found itself constantly answering queries from worried contractors who were being harassed by EPACE in relation to compliance with the Registered Employment Agreement. While we always pointed out to contractors that dealing with such queries was not part of ECSSA's function, nevertheless it would have been impossible to ignore the worry and fear which these contractors, and in many cases their wives, expressed to us in the face persistent invasive intimidation by EPACE. Additionally, we constantly received requests for advice on such issues as insurance, employment contracts, employment law generally and debt collection.

Again, we had to point out to members that providing this advice was outside our remit, but the constant reply was

that members felt that they had no where else to turn to other than ECSSA.

Once ECSSA became a statutory Body in January 2009, it was clear that it would have to remain strictly within the terms of it's appointment by CER and therefore could not act in a representative or an advisory capacity on matters outside of it's core business of regulating compliance with the ETCI Wiring Rules.

Two former Directors of ECSSA, who could not continue as Directors of ECSSA due to the CER requirement that no trading electrical contractor may be a member of the Board of a Regulatory Body, decided that they could not stand idly by and see members left without any source of guidance, advice or representation. They decided to create NECTA to provide that voice for contractors and can now do so without any of the constraints which prevent ECSSA from filling that role.

We would strongly recommend to all contractors who are not already members of a Trade Association such as AECI, ECA or NECI, to join NECTA and create the largest single Trade Association in the country which, through strength of numbers, will be in a position to provide

a voice at all levels, to provide advise on a wide variety of relevant matters, and to negotiate on all issues which affect the well-being and viability of it's members. ECSSA has negotiated a special deal for it's members who wish to join NECTA. An initial membership of €100 paid now will ensure membership to the end of 2009, and a specially reduced renewal fee of €100 from January will provide membership for 2009 members to the end of 2010.

It is the intention of the Directors of NECTA to keep membership fee to the lowest possible amount consistent with the provision of a first class service to it's members. Obviously the greater the number who join, the easier it will be for the Directors to achieve this objective.

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