

MAKE A WORLD
OF DIFFERENCE

TO YOUR BUSINESS ENERGY COSTS
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

When purchasing lighting products, remember to choose the energy efficient option.

For more information about energy efficiency, e-mail us at business@esb.ie visit www.esb.ie/business or call our Business Centre on 1850 372 787.



Customer Supply

www.esb.ie/business

ESB Customer Supply are wholly committed to supporting energy efficiency measures and are currently running an Energy Efficient Lighting Promotion in conjunction with ECSSA, AEI, RECI, & ECA members of these organisations will have received details of the promotion in the post last September. This is supported by electrical wholesalers (members of AEW) and by selected lighting manufacturers. The promotion means contractors can save 25% off the purchase cost of a range of energy efficient lamps. Contact your local wholesaler for details.

Important Notice

It has been brought to our attention that some builders are now using polystyrene sheets or beads to replace the traditional fibre glass insulation in attic spaces.

This creates a highly dangerous situation when polystyrene comes in to direct contact with PVC cables.

It appears that a chemical reaction takes place whereby the PVC migrates from the cable to the polystyrene and with the failure of the cable insulation short circuits and fires are very likely to occur.

In many cases the electrical wiring will have been carried out at a far earlier stage than the putting in place of this polystyrene insulation material with the result that the electrical contractor, who is well aware of the dangers of mixing polystyrene and PVC cables, does not become aware that this particular hazard exists in the particular installation until it is too late and irreparable damage has been done to the cable.

This is a relatively new problem and counter measures have not yet been fully explored but it is clear that whatever actions have to be taken, either by a change of cable type, or by enclosing the PVC cables in flexible conduit, there will be a substantial cost increase in the wiring of a house where it is intended to use this type of insulation. Any contractor who discovers that wiring, which he

has installed, has subsequently been brought in to contact with polystyrene in either bead or sheet form, should inform both the builder and the homeowner that the situation cannot be allowed to continue and if the parties concerned are not prepared to take corrective action, the electrical contractor should seek legal advice on the most appropriate means of ensuring that when the inevitable fire occurs, he is not held liable for any subsequent damage.

Article 522.5 of the ETCI Regulations deals specifically with the problems encountered when cable is subjected to the presence of corrosive or polluting substances.

This is the reason why all cables in cavities, where there is polystyrene insulation, have to be enclosed in conduit.

Contractors are aware of this requirement and have been conforming with the Regulation. However, a totally different situation arises when the contractor is not aware that the customer intends to use polystyrene insulation in attics and between floor joists.

It is therefore vitally important that the question be raised before any wiring is commenced or before any estimate is given, as a totally different approach to the wiring layout may be necessary if polystyrene insulation is likely to be used in the premises.

Survey Draw

Fluke Voltage (140)

1	99368	5	99913	9	30081
2	30335	6	99436	10	30852
3	99970	7	30076		
4	97306	8	97613		

Beha Model 93446 Digital Multi Meter

1	97676	10	99832	19	99092
2	97753	11	99160	20	30307
3	30941	12	97274	21	30276
4	97745	13	97710	22	99742
5	97640	14	97133	23	30476
6	30310	15	97522	24	99820
7	31007	16	97051	25	99035
8	30501	17	30242		
9	31043	18	99161		

Beha Model 93445 Analog Multi Meter

1	30856	10	97205	19	97680
2	99406	11	99501	20	30451
3	99891	12	97652	21	99472
4	30174	13	99106	22	97276
5	30810	14	97812	23	97801
6	30287	15	30479	24	97394
7	30446	16	99274	25	97294
8	97334	17	30860		
9	99853	18	30094		

Overall Winner: Fluke 1653 Multi Function Installation Tester

Tadhg McMahon Electrical
Ballybane, Liscarroll
Mallow

The draw was carried out at the ECSSA office on Friday, 31st of March, under the independent supervision of Alan Verso, Peace Commissioner

Industry News

Grade and Category of Fire Detection & Alarm Systems for dwelling houses as per revised and updated BS 5839: Part 6: 2004

There has been widespread uncertainty among contractors as to what level of fire detection and alarm systems are required in dwelling houses under current legislation.

This uncertainty has not been helped by virtue of the fact that the fire alarm systems for dwelling houses, as outlined in the 1997 Building Regulations, Technical Guidance Part B: Fire Safety, refer to the British Code BS 5839: Part 6: 1995, notwithstanding the fact that the Irish Standards Authority (NSAI) also produce Irish Standard IS 3218 which deals with the Code of Practice for Fire Detection & Alarm Systems in Buildings.

BS 5839: Part 6:1995 was revised and updated in September 2004 and is now referred to as BS 5839: Part 6: 2004.

The Technical Guidance Part B, originally printed in 1997, was reprinted in May 2005, but did not include the amendments to BS 5839 which had come in to place in the previous September.

The 2005 version of the Part B Building Regulations are therefore totally out of date in regard to the present requirements for fire detection and alarm systems in dwelling houses.

As a result of this, it would appear that, strictly speaking, a high proportion of new houses currently do not comply with the minimum required by the Fire Officers.

Kilkenny County Fire Service and, in particular Assistant Fire Officer Killian Hennessy, have been most helpful in providing us with a precise interpretation of what they see as the minimum grade and category of Fire Detection and Alarm Systems in a typical dwelling. This is Grade D, Category LD2 d.

LD2 - a system incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling, and in all rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants.

d - Heat detectors should be installed in every kitchen and the principal habitable room. Where more than one room might be used as the principal habitable room, a heat detector should be installed in each of these rooms. The detector in the principal habitable room (but not the kitchen) may alternatively be a smoke or a carbon monoxide fire detector. However, a heat detector is preferred in view of its low potential for false alarms and the lesser need for maintenance.

While the above might appear to be straightforward, there still remains an element of doubt with regard to what should be construed as designated rooms and contractors should ensure before commencing that what is proposed meets the local Fire Officers requirements.

ECSSA news

Spring, 2006



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Welcome to the
Spring 2006 Edition
of the ECSSA Newsletter!

2006 has started on a high note for ECSSA with over 160 new members joining our ranks since January 1st bringing our membership very close to the 2,500 mark.

We are extremely pleased with this development and it is especially gratifying when we learn that most of these new members have joined on the recommendation of a friend or acquaintance who is already an ECSSA member. It proves once again that word of mouth is still one of the most effective forms of advertising around.

We had a very good response to our Survey carried out in conjunction with Membership renewal and are currently analysing the information submitted to us by the members who returned the completed Survey Forms. The names of the lucky winners in our draw for all those who returned the Survey are included in this Newsletter and they will shortly be receiving their prizes in the post.

Contractors who have not yet forwarded their 2006 membership fee would need to do so before March 31st as we need to update ESB Networks on April 1st as to the current valid membership list.

Contractors not appearing on that list will have their Certs rejected by ESB Networks.

Certification and Verification Courses have been well attended at most venues but some Contractors still failed to take seriously the CER requirement of attending such a Course at least once in three years.

New Members in particular should note that they are expected to attend a Course at the earliest possible opportunity following their affiliation.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to wish our Members another successful and profitable year's trading in 2006.

John O'Loughlin
Chairman of ECSSA

www.ecssa.ie

Notice to Members

1. Membership Renewal

All 2006 membership renewals must be completed before March 31st 2006 as Contractors not renewed by that date, run the risk of not having their Completion Certs accepted for connection by ESB Networks.

While the numbers who have not renewed are relatively small, nevertheless, they have had 3 months grace during which ESB continued to honour their Completion Certs and we cannot expect ESB to go on doing so indefinitely.

2. Insurance Renewals

Members should take note that there is an onus on each one of them to ensure that ECSSA has a copy of their policy on file at all times.

We regularly get calls from engineers, architects and others checking if a particular member is fully insured and while there is every likelihood that the member concerned has full cover in place, we cannot confirm that unless we have it in our possession. We know of one contractor who has been overlooked for a contract which he would otherwise have got if we had been in a position to definitely verify the existence of insurance cover.

Furthermore, members should be aware that since our website is updated regularly from our member's database, a member can easily 'fall off' the website if his insurance expires and we have not been notified that renewed cover is in place. Our database automatically removes a members name once the expiry date on his insurance is reached and if he has not been reinstated before the next update his name will not appear on the list of contractors posted on our site. While this might appear harsh, we cannot continue to advertise to the public, as being insured, any contractor who may not be covered. Our assurance to the public is that by choosing an ECSSA Member, they can be certain that the contractor concerned is fully insured. If a customer were to choose a contractor from the ECSSA Website and it subsequently transpired that this contractor's insurance had lapsed, ECSSA could well find itself liable on the grounds that it had misrepresented to the customer the true position regarding this contractor's insurance. We would therefore

urge all members to ensure that they pay constant attention to ensuring that ECSSA is kept fully up to date regarding their insurance cover.

3. Level of Cover for Contractors Insurance

The CER Criteria for the Issue of A Licence to Licensed Regulatory Bodies such as ECSSA and RECI puts the onus on the Regulatory Bodies to set the minimum level of indemnity for members public, products and employers liability policies.

It was generally accepted that the minimum level of employer's liability should be €13 million with €6.5 million cover under both the public and products liabilities.

Indeed both Hibernian and Eagle Star who between them insure the vast majority of contractors, both have levels of employer liability cover which exceed this minimum figure and equal the minimum on the products and public categories.

Recently, however, we have had a number of new policies sent to us where the level of cover provided is far lower. We have raised the matter with CER to see if we are obliged to maintain the previous levels set. CER have not yet given us a decision but the likelihood is that they will pass the buck back to us saying that what the Criteria calls for is a level of insurance which has to be set by the Regulatory Bodies.

We have also sought the advice of various professionals and the consensus of opinion is that, having operated with a certain level of cover since ECSSA was set up it would now be tantamount to a lowering of standards if we were to settle for lower indemnity levels. Therefore for the foreseeable future, or until otherwise directed, the minimum level of cover required remains at €13 million for Employers liability, with €6.5 million each for both public liability and product liability.

Contractors should also note the amount of excess for each claim in their policies. It offers very poor cover if, for example, the contractor has to pay the first €2,000 or €3,000 of each claim before the insurance takes over.

4. Non Delivery of Orders

Over the past twelve months, we have had an increasing number of instances where orders which have been sent from ECSSA, have not reached the contractor who ordered them. We have raised the matter with An Post but there seems little they can do in relation to items lost when sent by normal prepaid post.

We are reluctant to make widespread use of either Express Post (formerly Swift Post) or Registered Post, not only

because of the additional cost to the member but also because of the unacceptable amount of time which would have to be spent recording all items sent.

We have however, managed to trace the reason why some of these items have gone astray. This has been solely due to the fact that some contractors never bother to inform us when they change address and the goods are dispatched to the address at which they appear at on our database.

In a few instances, we have had contractors come back after a period of two or three weeks complaining that they have not received goods ordered. It is far too late at that stage to make any attempt to trace the whereabouts of the missing package.

It is the policy of ECSSA that all orders received on any given day are dispatched in the same day's post subject to (a) that the membership is up to date (b) that insurance cover is valid (c) that the correct amount of money has been sent with the order.

Any contractor who has not received an order within a week of posting the order to ECSSA should immediately inform the Office and cancel any cheque enclosed while the matter is being investigated. This would also enable ECSSA to cancel any Completion Certs issued and to inform ESB that any of these Certs, if presented, should be rejected.

It is of course vital to quote your Registration Number on all correspondence with the Office.

We still receive Bank Drafts and Postal Orders for varying amounts with no indication whatsoever as to who it came from, or what it is for. Our only way of tracing the source and purpose of this money is to wait until somebody eventually realises that he has sent money for something he has not got, and rings up about it.

We currently have a number of such payments on hold so if you have recently sent any money to ECSSA without any accompanying identification please let us know so that we can process the order.

5. EPACE UPDATE

EPACE continue to harass our members by sending letters demanding access to their books, payroll, etc. The continuing advice of ECSSA is that no member is under any obligation to co-operate in any way with EPACE.

EPACE is a private limited company and has no statutory powers whatsoever to demand the co-operation of any contractor.

Furthermore, even if a contractor has been fooled into believing that EPACE has the right to any information, one has to question whether any evidence of an alleged irregularity found in the course of an EPACE investigation would be admissible in any Court given that such evidence was obtained on foot of misrepresentation to the contractor that EPACE does have a right to demand an examination of their payroll or other records. There is a Labour Inspectorate whose function it is to enforce current Labour Law and any relevant agreements. These Inspectors have a statutory right and duty to enforce the law of the land.

It is not acceptable that a private group or company sets itself up as the enforcer of the law.

Therefore, members should be quite blunt with EPACE when first contacted by them and they should be told in no uncertain terms that they do not have the right to demand any co-operation from contractors and that none will be given to them.

6. The Irish Electrical Benevolent Association

has existed for many years and maintains a fund, largely contributed to by the major electrical manufacturers, which provides assistance to families of people within the electrical industry who have suffered loss of income through sudden death or illness.

We have been asked by the IBEA to assist them in two ways. Firstly, they need our help in bringing to the attention of their Committee instances where support from the fund is needed in a case of hardship. All a member has to do is contact ECSSA with brief details and in turn ECSSA will pass those details to IBEA who will then deal with the matter in complete confidence. Obviously the fund also needs a continuing source of income and we have agreed that we would ask each member to contribute €10 to the fund in the course of 2006. This is a very small amount but if everybody plays their part it will mean that ECSSA can, on behalf of its members, hand over €25,000 at the end of the year.

We would appreciate your co-operation in supporting this very worthwhile cause by sending an additional €10 with your next order. We would however, ask you to send the money in a separate cheque / postal order or cash as this money will be lodged in a separate account solely for the purpose of the IBEA fund.

ESB Customer Supply supporting ECSSA

Changes in the Electrical Industry continue apace and it is vitally important for you to remain abreast of that change. As you are already aware the Irish electricity market has been fully opened to competition since February 2005. ESB has been facilitating this, and has made changes in the way the company is structured. As a contractor your understanding of some of these changes can be vital to the smooth running of your contracting business.

What does Market Opening mean?

Historically in Ireland, the supply of electricity has been the sole responsibility of ESB. In accordance with the European Energy Directive, Ireland is now facilitating the establishment of a single European market for electricity. This means that competition is being introduced into the electricity market and that customers can choose their electricity supplier.

How does this affect my business?

For your business, Market Opening means you will have the freedom to choose from a number of independent licensed suppliers, as well as ESB Customer Supply.

Who is ESB Customer Supply?

ESB Customer Supply is the business within ESB Group that sells electricity on the basis of published tariffs. ESB Customer Supply currently provides electricity to 1.8 million residential and 140,000 Business customers. We aim to provide you with services that meet your needs and with appropriate advice to help you use electricity more efficiently, while also saving you money.

Typically you would contact ESB Customer Supply for the following: -

- Opening New Accounts
- Closing Accounts
- Change of Address
- Billing and account queries, residential & business
- Pricing and Tariffs
- Energy Efficiency Advice
- Online Account Queries

Contact Details: Residential queries 1850 372 372. Business Queries 1850 372 787.

Who are ESB Networks?

ESB Networks builds, owns and maintains the electricity network throughout the Republic of Ireland. ESB Networks connect all customers to the electricity system regardless of their supply company.

Typically you would contact ESB Networks for the following: -

- New Connections
- Increased Supply
- Metering Services
- Quality of Supply Complaints
- Supply failure and Fault repair
- Notification of Maintenance Outages
- Fallen Lines and other matters of Public Safety

Contact number 1850 372 757

ECSSA OFFICE HOURS

Monday to Friday: 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5 pm • CLOSED FOR LUNCH 1pm to 2pm