

What is ECSSA?

The Electrical Safety & Standards Association (Ireland) Ltd (ECSSA) is a Regulatory Body for electrical contractors.

Founded in 1997, ECSSA has operated on a voluntary self regulatory basis

since then and now has almost 3,000 registered members throughout the whole island of Ireland.

From January 2009, ECSSA will become one of the two statutory Electrical Safety Supervisory Bodies

(ESSB) appointed for a seven year period by the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) under the terms of the Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.

What are the Roles and Functions of an ESSB?

The primary role of an ESSB is to evaluate applicant contractors for registration as registered electrical contractors, and if found eligible for registration, to enrol these contractors on the register of electrical contractors which the ESSB maintains and publishes.

Once registered a contractor is subject to the Rules of Membership, has his work audited and inspected on a regular basis, and may be subjected to the disciplinary process of the ESSB if a complaint from an Inspector, or a member of the public, indicated breaches of the National Wiring Rules.

The ESSB's have a secondary role in providing training courses for electrical contractors in the testing and certification of installations.

What type of complaints can be dealt with by an ESSB?

ESSB's can deal with complaints which allege breaches of the National Wiring Rules, failure to complete an installation, failure to deal without delay with problems arising in a completed installation, or failure to issue a Completion Cert to the person for whom the work was done.

Complaints of a commercial nature are not within the remit of the ESSB so that allegations of overcharging, excessive charges for extras, or other complaints which have money as their core issue, cannot be handled.

Neither will ECSSA get involved if an electrical contractor has exercised his perfectly valid right of withdrawing from a job where he has not been paid, nor can an ESSB force a contractor to go back and do further work thereby exposing himself to further loss over and above that to which he is already exposed, provided always of course that if the installation has been made live, that it has been left in a condition which does not present danger to the owners or occupiers of the premises.

Other than advise all parties that they should seek to settle their differences by consultation and compromise rather than by confrontation

and litigation, the ESSB can have no further involvement in complaints which are based on contractual differences between the contractor and his customer.

What are the requirements for membership of ECSSA?

An Applicant for membership must produce proof of having served a recognised apprenticeship, or of having worked in the trade for at least 5 years, or such other evidence as proves that the applicant possesses a level of competence needed to carry out the type of electrical work in which he intends to become involved, and that he is familiar with the verification and testing procedures involved in issuing a Completion Cert for his finished work.

He must also hold public liability insurance to an indemnity level to at least €6.35 million and must agree to be bound by the Rules of Membership of ECSSA.

What is ECSSA Policy?

It is the policy of ECSSA to create and maintain a Regulatory System which protects the safety and wellbeing of the General Public, while at the same time ensuring that its Members are protected against unfounded allegations from the users of the members services.

To this end, it has put in place Policies, Procedures and Systems which will ensure that Members work is carried out to the highest levels of safety and in accordance with current ETCI Wiring Rules, while at the same time providing an unbiased, accessible and efficient Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure, where the principals of Fair Play and Natural Justice are paramount.

How is ECSSA governed?

ECSSA is governed by a Board of Directors which ensures total impartiality by not allowing any trading electrical contractor to be a member of that Board.

It also seeks to ensure that a broad spectrum of experience from the legal, financial, technical, and political fields are included in the Board, and that its decisions and policy directives ensure that the stated objectives of ECSSA are fully maintained at all times.

From January 1st 2009 the Board of ECSSA will be made up of the following:

Jimmy Leahy Tralee, Co. Kerry
Retired ESB Employee and former ECSSA Inspector

Brian Moran Terenure, Dublin
Retired ESB Employee and former ECSSA Inspector

Wally Forde Merlin Park, Galway
Retired ESB Employee and former ECSSA Inspector

Hugh O'Flaherty Dublin
Former Judge of the Supreme Court

Breeda Moynihan Killarney, Co. Kerry
Former TD and Chair of the Labour Party Cronin

Liam O' Connor Killarney, Co. Kerry
Managing Director of Kerry Die Products Ltd

Evelyn Cremin Killarney, Co. Kerry
Secretary

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Murphy Print & Design 064 34650



ECSSA news

SPRING 2009

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Dear Member,

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2009 and ECSSA's first Newsletter in its role as an Electrical Safety Supervisory Body.

It is perhaps indicative of how well the voluntary self regulatory system worked for the past number of years that very little changes have had to be introduced once the two existing Regulatory Bodies were appointed as Electrical Safety Supervisory Bodies (ESSB).

The main change from ECSSA's point of view is that a new Board of Directors had to be appointed to comply with the CER requirement that no trading electrical contractor could be a member of the Board of the ESSB.

The makeup of the new Board is shown elsewhere in this Newsletter and we feel that it reflects a good mix of technical, legal, financial and administrative experience.

From a contractor's point of view, not a great deal of change will become immediately apparent, but obviously as new procedures are developed in conjunction with CER, there will be a greater emphasis on training and a higher level of enforcement on the requirement of person's signing Completion Certs to have completed a mandatory Training Course within the previous 3 years.

These are challenging times for the country as a whole, and for the construction and it's related industries in particular, and it is only with imagination,

attention to detail, the ability to diversify and prudent management that contractors will survive the severe downturn now being experienced.

However, we believe that the majority of contractors have the ability and resilience to ride out this storm, and the experience gained in times of difficulty will serve them well when the economy begins to grow again, as it inevitably will, perhaps as soon as beginning of 2010.

MIKE MARSHALL

Technical Manager





Notice to Members

01 Verification & Certification Courses

Discussions are due to commence shortly with the CER on the creation of a Verification & Certification Course which will be common to anybody providing such a course, eg. ECSSA, RECI, ETCl, and private training Courses.

If the concept of Qualified Certifier is to be introduced and progressed, then it is important that the training of the Qualified Certifier be the same irrespective of who provided the Course which lead to the issue of his qualification. In that way, a Qualified Certifier who, for example did his training course with ECSSA should be able to sign Certs on behalf of a RECI registered contractor if he subsequently went to work for the RECI member.

The development of this whole Qualified Certifier system is some way off as yet, but it would make sense to progress it as soon as possible as the CER Criteria requires that a person signing Certs should have completed a training course within the previous 3 years, and if training courses are to be provided, it is important that these courses are the universally accepted format which will lead to the issue of Qualified Certifier recognition.

02 ESB Sap Upgrade

We have been notified by ESB Networks that a major upgrade of their SAP system which forms part of the processing of Completion Certs will take place between April 9th and 14th. This means that it will not be possible to transmit any Completion Certs to

ESBN between those dates.

ECSSA has taken the opportunity to upgrade it's own software during the same period, and therefore the office will be closed on Good Friday April 10th and will re-open on Tuesday morning, April 14th.

03 Wind Turbines

Considerable confusion has been caused in the industry by statements made by a Government Minister in relation to the economics of micro generation.

On the one hand customers are being encouraged to shop around for the cheapest supplier of electricity, while at the same time being urged to get involved in micro generation on the assumption that they will be paid for all units of electricity exported to the grid.

What people are not being made aware of is that currently ESB are the only supplier who are willing to pay for excess electricity exported by consumers, and it is only possible to have the facility for export if an import/export meter is installed in the premises. To date a very small proportion of domestic premises have such meters installed.

There is also a level of unrest being created by the suggestion that these micro turbines can be installed by any plumber. What we are dealing with here is an installation which not only has to produce electricity which is compatible in terms of voltage and frequency with the mains, but which must also shut down in the event of mains failure in order to prevent back feed into the Networks which could have potentially fatal consequences for any operator

working on the lines, or any person or animal coming into contact with fallen lines. At the moment Courses are being organised to ensure that micro generators are correctly installed and connected to mains in a safe and proper manner and it is likely that ESBN will demand that the installers of micro generation turbines have been found to be competent in this area. The course assumes a level of qualification not less than that of a qualified electrician, and that being the case it is unacceptable to see advertisers promoting their products and claiming that they can be installed by any plumber.

This is clearly a matter in which the CER should take their responsibility for electrical safety seriously and should put the record straight before poorly installed systems are the cause of serious injury or worse.

04 Incorrectly filled Certs

Up to now it has been the practice of ECSSA to merely return Certs which are incorrectly filled or where the contractor's insurance or membership is not in order.

Unfortunately, in relation to incorrect measurements and incorrect MPRN's, a number of repeat offenders have emerged and while one could tolerate the odd slip in relation to MPRN which might be terminated, there is no excuse for contractors who return insulation values of .1 meg Ohms or Resistance of Protective Conductor greater than 200 Ohms.

Neither is there any excuse for sending in Certs without MPRN Numbers, or

with incorrect MPRN Numbers. It is also important to check with Customers that the Capital Contribution has been paid to ESB in respect of the supply as, even though an MPRN is issued when the customer makes application for supply, it does not become valid until the Capital Contribution has been paid and the customer's cheque has cleared.

Dealing with Certs which cannot be processed for one reason or other occupies a significant amount of time and this time along with the cost of posting Certs back to contractors is something which is not provided for in the €3 Surcharge Stamp, particularly when the Cert has to be re-processed again when it comes back from the contractor.

Consequently Certs which have to be returned to contractors from now on will have the €3 Surcharge Stamp cancelled a further Stamp will have to be added when the Cert is re-submitted.

Despite the current recession, several hundred Certs have to be processed each day, and the carelessness of some contractors invariably leads to delay in getting other contractor's Certs on to the CIS system.

To avoid all this hassle, please ensure that your Certs are correctly filled, that the MPRN is valid, and that your insurance and membership are in order before submitting Certs to ECSSA.

05 Membership

Contractors who have not renewed their membership to date are reminded that from April 1st on we are obliged to notify the CER and RECI of contractors who are not currently registered members.

This is part of the normal exchange of information which is required between the ESSB's and the CER, and is in preparation for the introduction of a scenario where it will be illegal for anybody other than a registered contractor to carry out what the CER will designate as "controlled works".

If you have not already attended to your renewal, please do so without delay.

06 Insurance

While we have advised contractors on several occasions that it is not possible to process a Completion Cert until we have proof of valid public liability insurance from the contractor concerned, it apparently needs to be spelled out again.

The CIS System which is used to transmit the details of Completion Certs to ESBN has a certain number of mandatory fields which cannot be overwritten. Once the system detects from our database that the expiry date of the latest insurance cover note which we hold for the particular contractor has passed, no Cert can be processed. This is not a decision taken by staff on the day, but is a function of the system whereby it immediately rejects what it sees as Cert from a contractor for who it has no proof of insurance.

The onus has always been on contractors to ensure that a replacement Cert or notification from their insurers reaches ECSSA before the expiry date of the previous Cert.

07 ESB Interface Seminars

ESB Networks has organised Seminars on the 4th Edition of the Code of Practice for Customer Interface on the following dates.

April

27th Waterford 28th Kilkenny
29th Portlaoise 30th Cork

May

5th Dublin 6th Dundalk
11th Navan 12th Letterkenny
14th Galway 18th Limerick
19th Killarney

The seminars will commence at 6.15p.m. and will last for approximately 2 hours

There is no charge for attendance and it is well worthwhile for contractors to avail of the opportunity to clarify any questions they may have in relation to interface requirements.

Actual venues will be announced by ESB in the near future.

Death of Member



On March 14th we learned with shock and regret of the death in a road accident on the previous day of ECSSA member

Shane McKenna
of Ballinasloe.

Shane joined ECSSA on April 1st 2005, having served his time with the well known Ballinasloe based firm of Denis Judge & Son Ltd. He had also worked for a time with Distribution and Control Solutions Ltd.

All at ECSSA extend their sympathies to Shane's mother, Winnie, to his brother Fergal and to his partner Verona McGivern.

May he rest in peace.