The Institution of Engineering and Technology

http://www.theiet.org/cpd

Use of Electricity in the Workplace

Health & Safety Briefing No. 34a

February 2015

www.theiet.org

This Briefing is UK legislation specific.

Did you know that...

The use of Electricity in the workplace is subject to "The Electricity At Work Regulations 1989"

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, (EAWR) have wide applicability to all electrical systems and equipment and require precautions to be taken against the risk of death or injury from electricity in work activities.

The design of systems and equipment, their construction, operation, use, maintenance and work are covered.

The EAWR state the requirements for electrical safety for people or equipment. Duties are imposed on employers, self-employed persons and employees, who are required to comply with the EAWR as far as they relate to matters within their control. Employees are required to co-operate with their employer to enable the safe discharge of the employer's duties.

Duties in some of the Regulations are "absolute" where compliance is a requirement irrespective of cost. In others the requirement is of "reasonable practicability" where the risk considered on one hand is assessed against the cost and physical difficulty of reducing the risk to an acceptable level on the other.

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 is made under The Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974. There are 33 regulations in all, 13 of which apply to mines only.

- A Memorandum of Guidance on the Regulations - Reference HS(R)25, ISBN 9780717662289.
  http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsr25.htm is available from HSE Books.

The Memorandum sets out technical and legal guidance on the EAW based on an HSE view. Only the courts can provide an interpretation.

Commonly called the IET Wiring Regulations, BS 7671:2008 17th Edition, is the UK IET/BSI joint standard for the design, selection, erection, inspection and testing of electrical installations under 1000 V ac or 1500 V dc in industrial, commercial and domestic premises. These Regulations apply in addition to the EAWR on systems under 1000 V ac or 1500 V dc, and can be purchased from the IET technical regulations department

- http://electrical.theiet.org/books/index.cfm
  Email: technical@theiet.org
  Tel: +44 (0)1438 767328
  Fax: +44 (0)1438 767386

A selection of Frequently Asked Questions can be found in briefing 34b

- http://www.theiet.org/factfiles/health/hsb34b-page.cfm

and an outline of portable appliance testing (PAT) requirements can be found in briefing 34c

- http://www.theiet.org/factfiles/health/hsb34c-page.cfm

Further Information

- Health and Safety Executive Electrical Safety at Work website
  www.hse.gov.uk/electricity
- Electrical Maintenance, an essential reference book for managers and technicians with responsibilities for electrical aspects of building maintenance ISBN 9780863415630 available from the IET website
  http://www.theiet.org/publishing/wiring-regulations/index.cfm
- Electricity at Work - Safe Working Practices, HSE book HSG85, ISBN 9780717621644
  http://www.hse.gov.uk/PUBNS/books/hsg85.htm
- Electrical Safety and You – free leaflet available from the HSE website INDG231
  http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg231.pdf

These Briefings contain a summary of recent Health & Safety issues, provided for general information purposes only, and should not be relied upon as legal advice. The IET has tried to make the Briefings accurate and informative, but they have not been prepared by a lawyer and may not constitute an up-to-date summary of the law. The IET accepts no liability for your use of these Briefings. Further details and information on broader Health & Safety issues can be obtained from the Government's Health and Safety Executive. Legal advice should be obtained on any specific issues.

The Institution of Engineering and Technology

For further information about the IET's Health and Safety Policy Advisory Group only, please contact:

Health and Safety Policy Advisory Group Secretary
Policy Department
IET,
Michael Faraday House,
Six Hills Way,
Stevenage.
SG1 2AY
01438 765690
email: policy@theiet.org
www.theiet.org/policy
www.theiet.org/factfiles/

This content can contribute towards your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as part of the IET's CPD Monitoring Scheme.
http://www.**theiet.org**/cpd

© The IET 2015

The Institution of Engineering and Technology is registered as a Charity in England & Wales (no 211014) and Scotland (no SC038698).