



CER Press Release - 28th September 2011

CER Proposes Safety Restrictions on Electrical Works in the Home

The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) has today published a proposal that will make it illegal to carry out electrical work that requires any modification to the fuse or distribution board in a home unless the work is carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor (REC). This move is designed to protect the safety of consumers in the home. It is expected that the new law will be in place in early 2012.

The CER's proposed decision paper ([CER/11/177](#)) sets out the scope of electrical works which it proposes to legally restrict to RECs. Restricted Electrical Works will essentially encompass any electrical work that would require a modification, replacement or addition to the main distribution/fuse board. Anyone wishing to carry out Restricted Electrical Works will be required to register as a Registered Electrical Contractor under the [Safe Electric](#) scheme. This is important given that fire authority statistics show how electrical installation faults are the cause of at least 4 fires per week in Ireland. Having a properly qualified REC do the work should help address this situation.

All RECs must be fully insured, have appropriate qualifications and are required to carry out their work in line with the relevant electrical safety standards and rules. They also must issue the customer with a Certificate of Conformance upon completion of their work. All RECs are subject to regular audit and inspection of their work under the Safe Electric scheme.

Commenting on the CER's **proposed** decision on the Scope of Restricted Electrical Works the CER's Commissioner Garrett Blaney said:

"The CER advises people to hire a Registered Electrical Contractor for all electrical work in the home, and under today's proposal it will be illegal for someone to carry out any electrical work that would require a modification, replacement or addition to the main distribution/fuse board. This is designed to ensure high safety standards in the home, thereby saving lives and protecting property"

Ends.

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Notes to Editors:

The CER is the independent body responsible for regulating the electricity and natural gas sectors in Ireland. The Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2006 gave CER the statutory authority to "regulate the activities of electrical contractors with respect to safety". For further information, please see www.cer.ie.

- Safe Electric is operated by both the Register of Electrical Contractors of Ireland (RECI) and the Electrical Contractor Safety and Standards Association of Ireland (ECSSAI) on behalf of the CER. These bodies carry out the day to day operations of the scheme on behalf of the CER. For further information please see www.safeelectric.ie.
- There are currently 4,206 electrical contractors registered under the Safe Electric Scheme.
- Other international jurisdictions already have similar restrictions in place that are enforced through licensing regimes such as New Zealand and Australia.



Following a review of responses to the CER's Restricted Electrical Works Consultation paper ([CER/11/077](http://www.cer.ie/CER/11/077)), the CER is proposing the following **Definition of Restricted Electrical Works which will be limited to Installations in a Domestic Property to include the following:**

- the installation, commissioning, inspection, and testing of a new fixed electrical installation requiring connection or reconnection to the electricity network;
- the modification, installation or replacement of a Distribution Board or Consumer Unit including customer tails both sides of the main protective device, or new installation in special locations as defined in Part 7 (swimming pools, saunas, fountains, caravan parks & marinas) of the current edition of the National Wiring Rules;
- the installation, or replacement, of one or more extra circuits in an existing installation, including the installation of one or more additional protective devices for such circuits on a distribution board;
- the inspection, testing and certification of existing electrical installations in accordance with the current edition of the National Wiring Rules and to conform to Regulation 89 of S.I. No 732 of 2007.

Once Restricted Electrical Works are drafted into regulations it will be illegal for any person other than a Registered Electrical Contractor to carry out such works. In such instances, a person who is guilty of this offence will be liable:

- On conviction on indictment to a fine not exceeding €15,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 years or to both, or
- On summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding €5,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or to both.