

Media Release

Local Councillor Prosecuted for Undertaking Dangerous and Illegal Electrical Works

- Under the Electricity Regulation Act 1999, it is a criminal offence for any individual or company to undertake Restricted Electrical Works if they are not a Registered Electrical Contractor
- Works carried out created a potential safety hazard for the occupants

Wednesday, 24 May 2017: The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER), Ireland's independent energy regulator, has successfully secured a prosecution against Mr. Michael Gallagher, Drumconrath, Navan, Co. Meath, a local councillor, for illegally carrying out restricted electrical works while not being a Registered Electrical Contractor.

The case was heard in Virginia District Court on Tuesday, 23 May 2017 under presiding Judge McLoughlin, who convicted and fined Mr Gallagher €1,500 for undertaking restricted electrical works while not being a member of the safety supervisory body, Safe Electric. Judge McLoughlin awarded a contribution of €750 plus VAT for costs to the CER.

Mr. Gallagher pleaded guilty to the charge of undertaking restricted electrical works while not being a member of the relevant safety supervisory body for electrical contractors in Ireland, Safe Electric (previously RECI). The electrical works undertaken in January – February 2016, consisted of re-wiring a dwelling house and wiring an extension to a dwelling house and constituted a real safety hazard to the incoming occupants of the house, located in Kingscourt.

Judge McLoughlin heard the facts of the case from Seán Ward, the CER's Electrical Safety Officer, that the electrical works carried out created a potential safety hazard for the occupants due to inadequate earthing, incorrect colours used as live conductors, reverse polarity at socket outlets and breached a number of the national wiring standards.

Judge McLoughlin commented that it is difficult to appreciate the danger caused by the dangerous electrical works carried out, adding that it was not a leap to state that it could have resulted in a serious tragedy. He was critical of the main contractor and stated that he should never have hired Mr. Gallagher as an electrical contractor. Judge McLoughlin stated that he found it incomprehensible that the main building contractor here used an unregistered electrical person, noting that the television advertising campaign was directed at homeowners to use only registered electrical contractors.

Members of the public who wish to report an unregistered individual who has undertaken Restricted Electrical Works or has portrayed themselves as a Registered Electrical Contractor

should visit www.safeelectric.ie. Since October 2013, it has been a legal requirement for anyone who carries out restricted electrical works to be a Registered Electrical Contractor.

Only Registered Electrical Contractors give confidence to consumers that they are using a contractor who is competent, insured and subject to inspection to ensure their work is undertaken to the required standards.

The CER's Commissioner for Energy Safety and Chairperson, Dr. Paul McGowan, said: "*Anybody engaging an individual or company to carry out electrical work needs to be confident that they are suitably qualified and a Registered Electrical Contractor. The CER is committed to investigating and prosecuting unregistered individuals who carry out restricted electrical works or portray themselves as Registered Electrical Contractors. Registration is required to protect the safety of the public.*"



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Note to Editors:

1. Under the Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 the CER has responsibility to regulate the activities of electrical contractors with respect to safety. It is an offence under the Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 to portray oneself as a Registered Electrical Contractor unless registered with a designated Electrical Safety Supervisory Body. It is also an offence under the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (Restricted Electrical Works) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 264 of 2013) for any individual to carry out Restricted Electrical Works unless they are a Registered Electrical Contractor.
2. Safe Electric is operated by one Electrical Safety Supervisory Body, the Register of Electrical Contractors of Ireland (RECI), on behalf of the CER. RECI carry out the day to day operations of the electrical safety scheme on behalf of the CER, such as inspecting the Registered Electrical Contractors annually.
3. There are approximately 3,900 Registered Electrical Contractors (RECs) in Ireland. All Registered Electrical Contractors are insured and must issue the customer with a certificate of conformance to show the work is to an approved standard, thereby improving safety standards.
4. For further information and to find a Registered Electrical Contractor please visit www.safeelectric.ie.