

What is involved in an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)

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Q1. What is an EICR?

A. An EICR is an inspection on the condition of an existing electrical installation, to identify (in order of priority) any deficiencies against the national safety standard for electrical installations.

An EICR will:

- Reveal if any of your electrical circuits or equipment is overloaded
- Find any potential electrical shock risks and fire hazards in your electrical installation
- Identify any defective DIY electrical work
- Highlight any lack of earthing or bonding

Tests are also carried out on wiring and associated fixed electrical equipment to check that it is safe.

A schedule of circuits will also be provided, which is invaluable for a property.

Q2. Why is an EICR needed?

A. Every electrical installation deteriorates with use and age. It is important for the person responsible for the maintenance of the installation to be sure that the safety of users is not put at risk, and that the installation continues to be in a safe and serviceable condition.

Q3. When is an EICR needed?

A. It is recommended that EICR is carried out at least every:

- 10 years for a domestic installation
- 5 years for a commercial installation
- 3 years for industrial premises
- 3 years for caravans 1 year for swimming pools

Other instances when a periodic inspection should be carried out are:

- When a property is being prepared to be let
- Prior to selling a property or when buying a previously occupied property
- Where there is reason to believe that damage has been caused to the building such as flooding or fire.

Q4. Who should undertake an EICR?

A. EICR's are best left to an experienced electrician or electrical engineer who holds a City and Guilds 2391 – Inspection, Testing and Verification of electrical installations with relevant experience in the installation types being tested. Insurers tend to ask for relevant accreditations such as NICEIC

Q5. What happens during an EICR?

A. The approved contractor will check the electrical installation against the requirements of BS7671 – Requirements for Electrical Installations (IEE Wiring Regulations) – as amended, which is the national safety standard for electrical installations, and contains around 850 Regulations.

The EICR will take into account all relevant circumstances including the following factors:

- Adequacy of earthing and bonding

- Suitability of the switchgear and control gear e.g. consumer unit e.g. an old fuse box with a wooden back, cast iron switches, a haphazard mixture of such equipment is likely to need replacing
- Serviceability of equipment e.g. switches, socket-outlets and light fittings e.g. older round pin sockets, round light switches and braided flex hanging from ceiling roses to light fittings, black switches, sockets mounted in skirting boards may require replacing.
- Type of wiring system and its condition e.g. cables coated in black- rubber, black-rubber was phased out in the 1960s or cables coated in lead or fabric are even older and may need replacing (modern cables use pvc insulation)
- Provision of residual current devices for socket-outlets that may be used to plug in electrical equipment used outdoors
- Presence of adequate identification and notices
- Extent of any wear and tear, damage or other deterioration
- Changes in use of the premises which have led to, or might lead to, deficiencies in the installation.

The Approved Contractor will provide an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) which you should retain.

Q6. Will testing cause a lot of disruption to the power?

A. A short power outage can be expected on each circuit within the system. However where a circuit is crucial and cannot be powered down an exception may be made and recorded on the EICR certificate.

Q7. What is an EICR report?

A. An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is a formal method of recording the findings of the periodic inspection, on at least seven pages.

The main purpose of a EICR is to report on the safety condition of an existing installation. Box E on page 1 should describe the overall condition as either 'satisfactory', in which case no immediate remedial work is required, or 'unsatisfactory' which means remedial work is required to make the installation safe to use.

The following example is for a satisfactory installation:

Installation (as indicated by my/our signatures below), hereby declare that the information in this report is true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge and belief, taking into account the stated extent of the inspection.

in condition

Where a EICR describes the installation as 'unsatisfactory', the next thing to look at is Box F on page 1 'Observations and Recommendations for Actions to be Taken'.

The following example shows Box E for an 'unsatisfactory' electrical installation:

installation (as indicated by my/our signatures below), hereby declare that the information in this installation taking into account the stated extent

in an unsatisfactory condition

This is where any departures from BS 7671 are recorded, and a code to indicate the urgency of the action needed is given.

Code 1 'Danger present'. Risk of injury. Immediate remedial action required.

Code 2 'Potentially dangerous'. Urgent remedial action required

Code 3 'Improvement recommended'.

Code 1 & 2 indicates a dangerous, or potentially dangerous, condition that requires urgent attention to make the installation safe. Once the necessary remedial work has been completed, an appropriate certificate should be issued to confirm that the remedial work has been carried out in accordance with BS 7671.

The approved contractor will give a summary of the inspection in the report, which will give a clear indication of the condition of the electrical installation, taking into account all relevant circumstances.

Q8. What happens after an EICR?

A. If the inspection recommends improvements to the installation, we will provide a fixed price quotation for the remedial work to be carried out.

Q9. Is electrical testing a requirement of my insurance company?

A. Increasingly, insurers are insisting that inspection and testing be carried out on a regular basis. If an avoidable accident or a fire occurs where electricity is suspected to have been the cause, then under law if found guilty you will be deemed to have committed a criminal offence. Insurers will not pay fines or compensation suffered resulting from a criminal offence.

Q10. My insurers have recently carried out a site survey and they didn't ask me to have electrical testing carried out?

A. A visiting inspector will not necessarily identify the need to maintain electrical safety at every inspection he makes, especially if there are other issues to be addressed. Because testing has not been specifically demanded does not mean that the legal requirements to comply with electrical safety do not apply.

Q11. Why have I not needed to have testing carried out before?

A. There has always been a requirement to satisfy Health & Safety legislation. In 1989 The Electricity at Work Regulations came into force, which clarifies the need to maintain electrical systems safely. So there has always been the need and test data results will form a major part of your defence should an accident occur which leads to prosecution.

Q12. What does it cost to have my portable appliances and/or electrical installation tested?

A. Costs are based on a cost per circuit or appliance tested multiplied by the numbers involved. This, together with the existing condition of and accessibility to the system will determine the overall cost. Please contact us on 0800 6445400 to assess your portable appliance testing or electrical testing needs further or visit www.ptscpliance.co.uk to get an instant online price.

Q13. I rent my business premises, is testing my landlord's responsibility or mine?

A. You are responsible to make sure that you and your staff complies with Health & Safety legislation. However, it is usually dependant on the terms of your lease as to whether you or your landlord pays for testing to be carried out on the electrical installation. Usually, if you are on a full repairing lease then the cost will fall to you. Portable Appliance testing will always be at your expense.

Q14. I have been told that I only need to have a percentage of the system tested in order to comply.

A. As per the IEE Regulations, you can only rely on sample testing if you hold previous full system records, the installation is considered to be in excellent condition, no faults are found during sample testing and no undocumented alterations have been carried out since the system was new or last tested. This does not hold true for the vast majority, for which full inspection and testing should be undertaken.

Q15. What will happen if I don't have testing carried out?

A. Until you suffer an accident then probably nothing will happen. However, remember that maintenance of a safe electrical system is a legal requirement. Therefore, a preventable accident could lead to prosecution, for which there will be no insurance cover. You may also find that an insurance loss adjuster could make much of the fact that you may

not have maintained the system adequately which could have led to the claim. Again, this could lead to an unsuccessful claim and a costly experience.

Q16. I run a small business; do I need to have my portable appliances tested?

A. The Electricity at Work Regulations applies to all businesses from multi-nationals to sole traders. So you still need to comply.

Q17. I am afraid that my electrical installation is quite old; won't testing open a can of worms in terms of remedial work costs?

A. Because we accurately identify any faults found, the cost of remedy in most cases is not too great. The majority of problems found involve earthing deficiencies, which although potentially very dangerous are not usually hugely expensive to remedy.

Q18. How will I know when my next inspection and test is due?

A. An EICR notice sticker will be applied to your mains board indicating the next due test date. We hold records of all clients, together with re-test dates on our database and remind clients when re-tests are due.

