

Safety and business efficiency the core of gas and electrical certification changes

Improved safety outcomes for consumers and better flexibility for industry practitioners to improve business effectiveness and efficiency are the aims behind changes to the certification of gasfitting and **prescribed electrical work (PEW)** in installations, taking effect from 1 July 2013.

The new regime includes the introduction of a Safety Certificate, the formalising of all work into three new risk-based categories, and a new online database for recording gasfitting and installation PEW classified as "high-risk". It also clarifies the roles and accountabilities for design and manufacturer's instructions; recognises both the work and the product of the work (the resulting installation); and provides choice to practitioners to manage certification requirements in line with up-to-date technology and business practices.

The changes are introduced by the Gas (Safety and Measurement) Amendment Regulations 2012 and the Electricity (Safety) Amendment Regulations 2012.

Key changes at a glance

- Existing certification is extended to cover all gasfitting and all installation PEW
- Certification is extended to explicitly certify the completed work as "safe to use" and include connection to energy supply
- Work is classified into three risk-based categories – low-risk, high-risk and general
- A publicly available database for recording work classified as "high-risk" is introduced
- Certification can be integrated with other business processes
- Roles and responsibilities for all those who affect the safety of work are clarified, and
- Better alignment of electricity and gas certification regimes is achieved.

What is changing?

From 1 July 2013 all gasfitting and all installation PEW will require certification. This means there will be a requirement to certify repair and replacement work; and to verify completed work and connection to energy supply as being "safe to use".

The updated certification regimes permit practitioners to design their own certificates or use a format available free from an industry organisation. Certificates will no longer be purchased from worker registration boards. Practitioners can also send and store certification documentation electronically.

Certificates must also always display the appropriate Authentication Mark to signal they are legitimate documents.



Electrical Authentication Mark



Gas Authentication Mark

Consumers, or those commissioning the work, must be given certificates once work is completed to assure them that installation work, and connection to the energy supply, is safe to use and complies with the building code.

Practitioners must keep records of certificates and other relevant information, for seven years, in hard copy or electronically. In addition, if requested, copies of the certificates must be made available to organisations and individuals listed in the regulations – such as regulatory bodies or territorial authorities.

Certifying gasfitters and electrical inspectors will have to record key details of “high-risk” work on a new publicly searchable database. The Electricity and Gas High-risk Database will be administered by Energy Safety and the public will be able to access basic information about high-risk work done at a given location.

How has risk management been integrated into the new regimes?

Good regulatory practice expects risk management principles to be applied to ensure that the level of regulatory intervention or requirement is proportional to the risk.

From 1 July 2013, the existing categories of installation work have been converted into three formalised risk-based categories:

Low-risk - work exempt from certification prior to July 2013, such as the maintenance or replacement of a fitting in an existing installation.

High-risk – work that, generally, is determined as presenting a high-risk, in circumstances where there is an increased likelihood that the means of compliance will not be met, or the work falls outside the means of compliance, or in proximity to other hazards. For PEW, it is work that is subject to inspection. All high-risk work must be recorded on the Electricity and Gas High-risk Database.

General work – is work that does not fall into the high- or low-risk categories.

For the full definition of work for these categories refer to the electricity or gas Amendment Regulations.

What improvements are expected?

The changes will provide for an improved certification process overall, with a new risk-based system that emphasises safety and accountability for all gas and electrical installation work, while providing flexibility to practitioners and businesses.

The new Electricity and Gas High-risk Database will assist Energy Safety and worker registration boards to improve monitoring of high-risk work and focus resources on areas that have the potential for the greatest improvement in safety outcomes. This will help with auditing completed work and evaluating sector-wide professional competency.

Now that certification is required for all installation work, consumers will be in a much stronger position to raise a concern with their practitioner, or the relevant industry authority, and help identify any concerns about poor quality or unsafe work practices.