

Making Homes Safer

Public Policy Statement

Committed to reducing deaths and injuries through electrical accidents at home and at work

www.esc.org.uk

Although the UK has a fair record of electrical safety, there are still over 30 deaths, nearly 4,000 injuries and 8,000 fires in people's homes every year caused by an electrical fault¹. Vulnerable households in private rented homes tend to be worst affected.

The causes of such incidents include:

- Deterioration of electrical wiring
- Faulty and damaged appliances
- Poor maintenance and repairs

Most landlords are prepared to meet their legal obligations to ensure a home remains electrically safe. But many lack knowledge about their responsibilities and need support to become more professional. And some local authorities could better direct resources to identify and bring enforcement action against the minority of negligent landlords.

What we are doing

Our *Landlords' Guide to Electrical Safety* provides best practice guidance to landlords on complying with relevant regulatory safety standards, encouraging a more professional approach and improved service delivery for tenants. And we are committed to doing more in partnership with the National Landlords' Association and others.

Next year we will be launching a major campaign to encourage landlords to fit an RCD – a residual current device – into the electrical installations of rented homes as part of any major re-wire. An RCD immediately cuts off electricity when a fault is detected, helping to prevent people being electrocuted and fires breaking out.

Moving toward greater parity with gas safety regulations, we are encouraging landlords and others to arrange a formal inspection of the electrical installation and appliances in their properties as the norm before any new residents move in – and at least every five years.

To promote better housing standards, we are stepping up our *Safer Homes Campaign* to help vulnerable tenants know and assert their rights. We actively encourage the use of registered electricians for repairs and improvements. And we provide grants to vulnerable householders who could not otherwise afford to maintain their homes.

We are encouraged by the government's proposed regulation of letting and management agencies in England and Wales, with specific requirements to protect consumers. And we believe this should include legal sanctions for managing or advertising property with any major hazards.

We also support recent moves by government to develop a national register of private landlords, with low barriers to entry, to complement existing tougher licensing regimes directed at rogue operators.

What you can do

- 1 Help to raise electrical safety standards, from local campaigning to supporting us in parliament
- 2 Encourage anyone with cause for concern about their electrics to get a safety check carried out

Know Your Facts

One in four fires in people's homes are caused by electricity and, when it comes to injuries and deaths, electricity is over three times more dangerous than gas¹.

¹ CLG statistics 2002 and 2007

² Requirements for new homes were included in the Wiring Regulations 1992;

³ Housing Survey, CLG, 2006.

A Hidden Problem

There could be far more injuries resulting from electricity than we think because government hasn't provided data since 2002.

Our Ambitions

- A regular electrical safety check for all homes – 41% of consumers don't know if their home has ever been inspected
- Promoting RCD protection to help prevent deaths and fires – we estimate only 5% of homes built before 1992² are currently protected
- No homes with major hazards placed on the market – 30%³ of older private rented properties would currently fail this requirement

Contact us

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