

Electricity Regulations 1947
Premises used for temporary or intermittent accommodation
Installation of residual current devices

Background

EnergySafety has received a legal opinion about the meaning of the term **residential premises** as it applies to the installation of residual current devices (RCD) under Part IV of the Electricity Regulations 1947 (ER).

The intent of Part IV is to provide the occupants of residential premises with protection against electric shock by having at least two RCDs installed in the electrical installation of the premises. There should be no difference between the level of protection experienced by permanent occupants of a premises compared to that for occupants of buildings that provide short term accommodation facilities such as motels, hotels, boarding houses, chalets, dormitories, single person's quarters and similar premises.

While there is no doubt that the existing regulations apply to premises that are used for permanent occupation by individuals or groups of individuals, the legal opinion raises significant doubt concerning the successful enforcement of the regulations to premises used for temporary or intermittent occupancy.

Proposed amendment

It is proposed to make amendments to Part IV of the ER to ensure the regulations can be applied to –

- Premises that are used, in whole or part, to provide domestic accommodation to one, or more than one, individual on a temporary or intermittent basis; and
- Transportable structures and vehicles (premises) in accordance with AS/NZS 3001 – “Transportable structures and vehicles”, acknowledging that this standard allows the installation of a single RCD under the conditions specified¹ in the Standard. Lighting points in the structure may be protected by the same RCD.

These rules are to apply to accommodation provided by way of lease, rental or hire agreements or by an employer to an employee as part of the terms and conditions of employment.

Commencement: The amendment regulations are to commence 6 months after they are published in the Government Gazette. Regulation 14 (modified to allow for a single RCD where permissible) is to apply to this type of accommodation.

¹ Excerpt from AS/NZS 3001:2008 – Cl 2.2.7.5 (a) Each socket-outlet shall be protected by a residual current device (RCD) with a rated operating current not exceeding 30mA, that operates in all live (active and neutral) conductors. NOTE: This does not preclude protection of more than one socket-outlet by a single RCD; however, it is recommended that one RCD be provided for each socket-outlet to reduce both the likelihood and consequences of unwanted tripping.