

RECI

NEWS

July 2005

JOURNAL OF THE REGISTER OF ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS OF IRELAND

New Director



M.A. Ryan

Mr. M. A. (Mattie) Ryan has been nominated by AECI as a director of RECI. He has been actively involved in the AECI for twenty-five years and was President from

1998 to 2001. He has served in various other capacities and is currently honorary treasurer. Mattie has also been actively involved in other electrical industry committees in the ETCI and the EIFI.

He has been a well known electrical contractor in Limerick for thirty years carrying out a wide range of commercial and industrial contracts and other specialist work. Mattie replaces Mr. Michael Moran who has retired from the board after many years service (see Chairman's address).

COMPLETION CERTIFICATES IN TIPPERARY

We have been asked by ESB Networks to advise registered contractors that all completion certificates should be sent to ESB Networks, Link Road, Tipperary, Co. Tipperary. The telephone number for this ESB office is 062-82211. The customer services supervisor is Jim O'Sullivan and the clerical officer is Geraldine Fitzgerald. Certificates which are posted to ESB Thurles or left in the "ESB Networks" post box in Thurles shop have to be re-routed to Tipperary for registration and processing which introduces delays.

REGISTER OF ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS OF IRELAND

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Annual General Meeting 2005

The thirteenth Annual General Meeting of RECI was held on Saturday, 25th June, 2005 at K.C.R. Industrial Estate.

ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN

The Chairman in his address to the meeting stated that RECI continues to develop to meet the challenges of the changing environment in which it operates. The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) has assumed the role of supervisory regulator of the Electrical Contracting Industry and we are participating on a voluntary basis in the new arrangement. It is expected that the CER's role will be given statutory backing in forthcoming legislation in the near future. When this happens we believe it will be possible to ensure that all electrical installation work is carried out to satisfactory standards which will benefit both registered electrical contractors and consumers.

The Chairman referred to the new Electronic Completion Certificate System which is now well established and is being used by many contractors who find it of great benefit. There are numerous advantages to the system such as: Certificates cannot get lost or delayed in the post – books of certificates cannot get lost or stolen – easy reference to certificates at any time – and the electronic certificate gives a professional image to the customer.

The Chairman reported that a certification scheme for Emergency Lighting Contractors similar to the ETCI/RECI arrangement was being considered by NSAI. Also, NSAI are establishing a certification scheme for commissioning of Fire Alarm Systems. The Chairman noted also that the Health and Safety Authority are strictly enforcing safety requirements on construction sites and electrical contractors must comply with all aspects of safety legislation.

The Chairman said that the Joint

Secretaries, Des Flood of the AECI and Terry McEvoy of the ECA, resigned at the end of the year. Both Des and Terry were involved in the formation of RECI and their administrative experience was of great benefit in establishing the organisation. He expressed his thanks to them both for their tireless work over the years.



RECI Chairman, Ivan Hammond

The Chairman informed the meeting that Michael Moran was retiring from the board of directors. He has been involved in the electrical industry at every level and his vast experience and knowledge has been of great benefit to RECI. The Chairman thanked him for his commitment to RECI over many years and wished him well in the future on behalf of RECI members.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The financial statements for the year-ended 31st December, 2004 were presented to the meeting and considered satisfactory. Grant Thornton & Associates, the company auditors, were reappointed for the year 2005.

ORDINARY RESOLUTION

An ordinary resolution that the annual subscription fee be increased by approximately 3% in line with inflation was approved by the meeting.

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Annual General Meeting 2005 (cont.)

OTHER BUSINESS

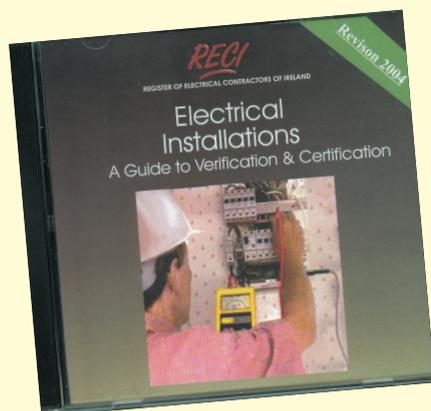
Concern was expressed that completion certificates were still being illegally sold by registered contractors to other electricians who are not members of a licensed regulatory body. It was pointed out that RECI have a complaints procedure and contractors are urged to lodge complaints when they become aware of abuse of the certification procedure or other safety matters. It was also stated that some industrial contractors were giving completion certificates to electrician members of their staff to enable them to certify their own private installation work. RECI was urged to be more vigilant and to check on these incidents more thoroughly.

Some concern was expressed regarding the slow progress of the full implementation of the CER criteria and the necessary legislation to give statutory backing to the CER and the regulatory scheme. It was explained that review meetings will take place to deal with problems which have arisen and that it was expected that the legislation would be passed in the autumn.

The Chairman confirmed that the board would give careful consideration to all the matters raised and he thanked contractors for their attendance at the meeting.

Verification & Certification on CD

The RECI video which shows how to carry out the pre-connection and post-connection tests required by the Wiring Rules is now also available on CD, price €32.25 including postage and packing.



Wiring Rules, Amendment No. 2

The date for implementation set by ETCI for this amendment is 1st September, 2005. As the amendment is part of the Wiring Rules registered contractors are obliged to have a copy of this document. The amendment can be purchased from RECI @ €8.80 including postage & packing.

Protection Against Overvoltage

The amendment includes a section on protection against overvoltages of atmospheric origin or due to switching. This measure is included in the Rules for the first time, and, in order to introduce users to the subject much of the text consists of explanatory and guidance matters rather than rules.

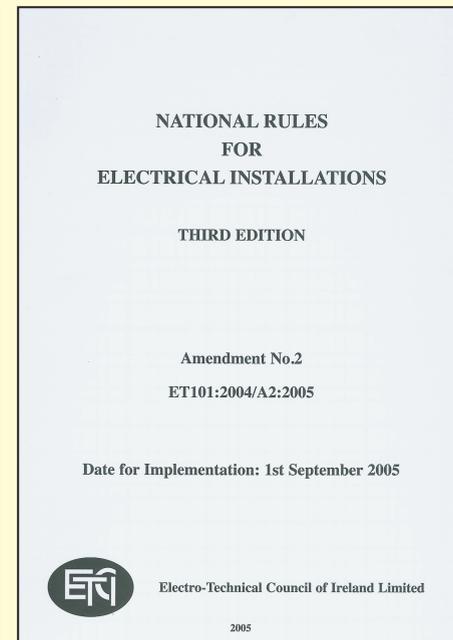
Voltage surges may be caused by atmospheric phenomena such as ceramic activity, i.e. lightning strikes direct and indirect, or switching surges generated within the installation or imported from the supply network. The application of this section will normally require risk assessment and a knowledge of the equipment used in the installation. For further information on protection of electrical equipment and installations you can refer to an article in the September 2003 RECI Newsletter by ESB Networks. The Newsletter can be viewed on our website www.reci.ie.

Chapter 46, Isolation & Switching

Clause 462.5 now reads "a main electricity isolator shall be provided at, or as close as practicable to, the main supply point of an installation. Where there is more than one electricity supply to a premises, the installation shall comply with 539". The new section 539, Isolation of Premises in an Emergency, deals with the switching facilities required for isolating a premises in the event of a fire or other emergency. In particular, it deals with situations where more than one electricity supply is laid on to a premises.

Wiring Embedded in Solid Walls

Wiring embedded in solid walls or in unbattened dry-lined walls shall be protected by an earthed metal screen, armouring, metal conduit or trunking,



against damage by impact or penetration by nails or drills except where the following two conditions apply:

1. The distance measured horizontally between the wiring and the reverse surface of the wall is not less than 50 mm;
2. The wiring is installed:—
 - in a straight vertical or horizontal run directly to a point, accessory or switchgear mounted on a wall, or;
 - within a vertical distance of 150 mm from the ceiling, or;
 - within a horizontal distance of 150 mm from a corner formed by two adjoining walls.

Other Items

Other sections of the amendment deal with:—

- The new harmonised cable core European system due for introduction in April 2006;
- Supplementary colour identification for cable cores;
- Outdoor and non-standard sockets in domestic premises;
- Isolation of extraction fans;
- Insulation tests between phases.

We intend to give further information on this amendment in future newsletters. However contractors must also obtain and read the amendment in its entirety themselves.

Completion Certificate Pilot Scheme For Kerry & Wexford

Contractors have been sending completion certificates for electrical installations in counties Kerry and Wexford direct to RECI and not to ESB Networks since the second half of last year. Provided that a certificate is filled out correctly, RECI will transmit the details to ESB Networks on the same day that the certificate is received. Contractors often report that they have been told by ESB Networks that the details of their certificate have not yet been received. We would like to assure contractors that we always transmit the certificate details on the same day that we receive it from them.

However, in general the scheme appears to be working well. It is the intention that all certificates would be returned directly to RECI in the future. Full commitment by everyone concerned, Consumers, Contractors, RECI and ESB Networks will be required to ensure that this further step is successful.

Near-Miss on Multi-Metering Installation

We have been advised by ESB Networks that there was a recent near-miss in a multi-metering installation in the Drogheda/Navan area. The landlord supply and multi-metering panel were made live a few weeks earlier. ESB Networks received a completion

certificate for unit 5 which they metered and made live to the outgoing fuse on the panel.

The contracting electrician closed this sw fuse and went to what he understood to be unit 5 and found that he had no supply. On further investigation he discovered he was actually working on unit 1 and not on unit 5, and the unit number on the completion certificate was incorrect. This error was caused by misinformation supplied to him by the builder/workmen on site.

Fortunately, when the tails to unit 5 were energised they were already terminated into a sw fuse. They could have been loose or someone may have been working on them which could have led to serious injury.

As this was not a one-off incident, registered contractors should realise that it is vital that continuity tests on rising tails to units/apartments in multi-metering installations are carried out before completion certificates are issued.

Progress of CER Criteria

Part of the audit of RECI's Quality System and Procedures has been carried out by the Irish National Accreditation Board on behalf of E.A. Technology. A further visit, which will include a site visit, is scheduled for September. A meeting of a review committee will take place in early August to address problems which have arisen in the operation of the criteria to-date. It is expected that legislation to give statutory backing to the CER's role will be passed in the Autumn. Progress is very slow but at least seems to be moving in the right direction.

TECHNICAL NEWS

Sub System Certification of Lift Installations

Some lift companies are not willing to provide sub-system completion certificates for their lift installations. This matter is frequently brought to our attention by registered contractors. We have asked ETCI for their view on this matter and we quote from their response.

“In building construction the electrical contractor will generally be providing the lift shaft lighting and perhaps a small distribution board looped off the live side of the power isolator in the lift control panel.

It is sometimes argued that the lift may be viewed as a machine, but this is misleading as it is without doubt a part of construction.

Construction is governed by Building Regulations, Health and Safety Legislation, Contract Law and ETCI Wiring Rules. Health and Safety legislation in this country requires designers “to take into account”. This expression can mean anything particularly an event that has occurred. Designers are not just the Architects and Engineers. In Health and Safety law there are many, many designers and the electrician that applies the Wiring Rules is a designer.

The quite complex position will really only be clarified when a serious accident occurs wherein all issues of compliance, testing and certification would be examined.

It is the ETCI position that the lift installation is an electrical sub-

system and the electrical sub-contractor will be held responsible for the entire installation and would be deemed to have satisfied himself (or should have) as to the electrical safety of the LV parts of the lift installation in the absence of a sub-system certificate.

For his own protection and subject to insurance clarification he should always obtain a sub-system certificate for all such sub-systems”.

Wiring Rules Clarifications

ETCI Technical Committee No. 2 at its meeting on 9th June 2005 made the following decisions, clarifying items in the National Rules ET 101 Third Edition including Amendments No. 1 and No. 2.

TC/2 DECISION 1/2005

Item: Isolation of Safety Transformer

In the matter of a safety transformer supplying a fan or other equipment at SELV, it is hereby clarified that the Rules do not require a local isolating device on the primary or supply side of the transformer. Nevertheless, it is considered good practice to provide such a device where maintenance might be required afterwards.

TC/2 DECISION 2/2005

Item: Switchgear Enclosures for Construction and Demolition Site Installations

It is hereby clarified that Rule 704.538.01 applies only to a single enclosure that contains both the supply authority/DOS equipment and the proprietor's switchgear and controlgear. It does not apply to other switchgear enclosures on a construction or demolition site.