

DEPARTMENT OF
THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND JUSTICE

Electricity Safety Regulator

Annual Report
2016-17

NTWork**Safe**



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Role and Responsibilities of the Electricity Safety Regulator

The role of the Electricity Safety Regulator was established by the introduction of the *Electricity Reform Act*, which came into force on 1 April 2000.

The Electricity Safety Regulator is responsible for monitoring and regulating electrical safety and technical standards from the point of network connection at the premises to the outlet. Following the 2016 Northern Territory General Election, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice was responsible for the *Electricity Reform Act*, in so far as it relates to safety regulation, from the commencement of the Administrative Arrangements Order made on 12 September 2016. The Minister was also responsible for appointing the Electricity Safety Regulator.

Section 8 of the *Electricity Reform Act* provides:

- (1) The Electricity Safety Regulator has the following functions:
 - a. to monitor and regulate safety and technical standards with respect to electrical installations;
 - b. to perform any other functions assigned to the Electricity Safety Regulator under this Act.
- (2) The Electricity Safety Regulator has the power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with or incidental to the performance of his or her functions.

The Electricity Safety Regulator also provides advice and assistance to licenced electrical workers as well as individual home owners, occupiers and persons conducting a business or undertaking.

From time to time, the Electricity Safety Regulator offers a general electrical safety advisory service with respect to:

- national performance standards for appliances and equipment;
- input into training courses involving regulation and standards for electrical work; and
- representation on the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council.

Electricity Reform (Safety and Technical) Regulations

The Electricity Reform (Safety and Technical) Regulations provide for the installation, testing and certification of electrical work carried out. Electrical contractors are required to:

- consult with their customers;
- provide an electrical installation that is fit for purpose;
- test the electrical installation to ensure it is safe to use; and
- provide their customers with a Certificate of Compliance for the work performed.

The Regulations include safe work practices to assist employers and safeguard electrical workers. Additionally, provisions are made for other persons to work or operate safely in proximity to electrical infrastructure.

Work Health and Safety Legislation

On 1 January 2012, the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act* and Regulations commenced in the Northern Territory. Part 4.7 of the Regulations – General electrical safety in workplaces and energised electrical work, addresses electrical safety in the workplace.

The Electricity Safety Regulator has directed that where Inspectors encounter a direct conflict between the two laws, the *Electricity Reform Act* and Regulations will apply to technical non-compliance, and the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act* and Regulations will apply to work practice or process non-compliance.

Public Awareness and Advice

The Electricity Safety Regulator publishes Safety Alerts and Information Bulletins on the NT WorkSafe website as a means of providing information and advice. The following information products were available in 2016-2017.

Safety Alerts

- Electrical power tools on board fishing vessels (re-issued)

Bulletins

- Certificate of Compliance (CoC) Electrical Safety
- Electrical Contractor Information – Connection of New Installations
- Electrical Equipment and Gas Installations at Markets and Shows
- Electrical Hazards Associated with Underground Cables
- Electrical Installation Work on Mine Sites
- Electrical Safety – Notice of Non-compliance
- Electrical Safety in the Construction of Showers and Bathrooms
- Electrical Switchboard Panels and Meter Panels Containing Asbestos
- Equipotential Bonding for Pools and Spas
- Exemptions from the Wiring Rules or Electricity Reform Act and Regulations
- Installation of Thermal Insulation Around Electrical Equipment and Accessories
- Installation of Vertical Earth (Stake) Electrodes in the NT
- Managing Foil Ceiling Insulation Electrical Safety Risks – Householders & Tradespersons
- Pond Aerator – Electrical Installations for Aqua Farming
- Portable Ladder Safety
- Relocatable Dwellings – Electrical Safety
- Replacing Consumer Switchboards in Existing Installations
- Residual Current Devices (Safety Switches)
- Safety Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment on Construction Sites
- Test and Tag of Electrical Equipment
- Union Right of Entry for Work Health and Safety Issues
- Voltmeter Measurements – Testing Foil Insulation in Domestic Dwellings
- Work Health and Safety – Incident Notification
- Worker Representation and Participation Guide
- Workers Right to Cease or Refuse Unsafe Work
- Worker Rights and Responsibilities
- Working Close to Overhead Power Lines
- Working in Heat

Activities of the Electricity Safety Regulator for 2016-2017

Part 5 of the *Electricity Reform Act* outlines the safety responsibilities and technical requirements which are monitored by the Electricity Safety Regulator. Below are some of the activities undertaken by the Electricity Safety Regulator under Part 5.

Regulatory Requirement	No	Description
Certificates of Compliance audited as per sections 67 and 68 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i>	1,353*	Inspections and site visits
Complaints Investigated as per sections 67 and 68 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i>	57	Complaints
Report of accidents involving electric shock as per section 71 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i>	83	Electric Shocks

*30 auditing inspections were carried out by TechSafe, an independent electrical inspection company. These inspections were prescribed inspections carried out in the Northern Territory on new electrical installations, solar inspections, Alice Springs Hospital specialist installation inspections and switchboard upgrades. In 2016-17 inspections and site visits increased due to a rise in the number of solar installations. Two Electrical Safety Officers (commenced in late 2015) were also able to work independently on inspections.

Part 6 of the *Electricity Reform Act* provides for specific enforcement powers. A summary of enforcement powers exercised by the Electricity Safety Regulator and authorised officers in 2016-2017 is provided in the following table.

Regulatory Requirement	No	Description
Exercise of specific powers under section 10 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> – Require Information	0	
Exercise of specific powers under section 11 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> – Disclose Information	0	Fire Investigation Reports
Exercise of specific powers under section 70 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> – Rectification by Direction	21	Owner/Operator Non-compliance
Exercise of specific powers under section 70 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> – Rectification by Direction	21	Contractor Non-compliance

Regulatory Requirement	No	Description
Exercise of specific powers under section 78, 79 and 80 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> - Disconnection	0	Installations disconnected

Part 7 of the *Electricity Reform Act* provides for reviews and appeals. There were no applications for review made in the 2016-2017 financial year.

Regulatory Requirement	No	Description
Review of decisions as per section 83 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> - Review by Regulator	0	
Review of decisions as per section 84 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> - Appeals	0	
Review of decisions as per section 85 of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i> - Ministerial Intervention	0	
Dispensations as per section 87(4) of the <i>Electricity Reform Act</i>	0	

The Electrical Safety Unit of NT WorkSafe continued engagement throughout 2016-17 with Northern Territory electrical contractors regarding implementation of emerging clean and renewable energy technologies.