

INSIDE: New Safety Switch Legislation & Are You Looking After Your Gas Bottles?
HUMOUR: Werigley's Chewing Gum

New Safety Switch (RCD) Legislation

1st June 2008 compliance

In late 2007 changes were made to the Australian Residual Current Device (RCD) wiring rules (AS/NZS: 3000: 2007) which will affect electrical work made to both residential and commercial buildings after 1 June 2008.

NOTE: For those of you that aren't quite up with your electrical lingo – an RCD is more commonly referred to as a “safety switch”.

The new rules will affect every type of building and electrical installations including:-

- Residential electrical installations - including hotels, motels, hostels, boarding houses, hospitals and the like;
- Multiple residential electrical installations that are provided for common use;
- External lighting installations in common areas of multiple residential electrical installations; and,
- Individual domestic electrical installations.

Continued on page 2

How to have an explosion free ANZAC Day BBQ

Some information to share with unit owners, committees and onsite managers to ensure that Anzac Day BBQ's are held without fear of incident.

They are an item you don't give a second thought to but LP Gas Bottles have the potential to start fires or small explosions. As barbeques are often located in common property areas of buildings it is essential that proper care is given to these highly flammable items.

According to the New South Wales Fire Brigades website, a large percentage of fires involving barbeques are due to leaking gas bottles. You need to be sure that a garden hose or other continuous supply of water is nearby at all times when barbequing and that the barbeque is located within 20 metres of a permanent private dwelling.

Continued on page 3

New Safety Switch (RCD) Legislation Continued from Page 1

What types of electrical items are included?

Items that will need to be connected to the buildings RCD include anything in a communal area that can be switched on or off. Therefore this includes all power socket-outlets, lighting points and directly connected hand-held electrical equipment.



As an owners corporation manager you are looking at items such as communal combination fans, heater units, external lighting installations including illuminated signs, in-ground lighting and ground-mounted lighting for the

illumination of public features and things like power tools or communal hair dryers.

When do these rules fall into place?

If electrical work commenced, was quoted on or designed before 1 June 2008 then work may continue to be performed under the prior rules. Yet the new wiring rules may be applied to these circumstances where it does not cause heavy changes or costs.

From 1 June 2008 the new legislation will fall into place.

What has changed from previous requirements?

Previously it was a requirement that all community power circuits needed RCDs this change to the legislation has the effect of extending this requirement to lighting circuits.

The new requirement applies to new installations and to existing where the installation of RCDs is not an onerous cost. Due to the duty of care owed to workers on the common property the small cost of an RCD (about \$150 plus labour) it will be hard to argue that one should not be installed on lighting circuits from now on.

What does this mean for you as an Owners Corporation Manager?

We have spoken to the electrical safety authority in NSW and they have said that they have been recommending for many years that lighting circuits have RCDs. The new legislation has the raises the bar to where they believe it should be.

From an Occupational Health & Safety perspective there is no doubt that RCDs on both power and lighting circuits are a must to meet a

“Changes made to the RCD wiring rules will affect electrical changes made to residential and commercial buildings after 1 June 2008.”

Strata Schemes obligations.

The crux of the matter

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How to have an explosion free ANZAC Day BBQ

Continued from Page 1

Some other handy tips for Small Gas Cylinders include...

1. Store the cylinder in an upright position so that the safety relief device is able to vent.
2. When storing, secure the Cylinder as low to the ground as practical.
3. Dispose of empty Cylinders on a regular basis.
4. Cylinders must be handled carefully and not allowed to fall upon one another, or be subjected to unnecessary shock.
5. Cylinders can only be recycled when they have been degassed, devalued or punctured to indicate their 'gas free' status.

Options for safe disposal of small gas cylinders that have not been de-gassed include;

- Gas cylinder exchange facilities in selected service stations and hardware stores
- Cylinder refilling depots that are usually owned by major gas suppliers
- Local dealers of the gas cylinders
- DEEC clean outs - Sydney, Hunter and Illawarra regions can dispose of the cylinders for free by attending Clean Out collection days (similar schemes are run by local councils in regional NSW also)



Gas bottles should never be stacked on top of each other in this manner



Cylinders should be stored in an upright position so the pressure relief valve is able to vent

Some handy tips for Large Gas Cylinders (sometimes stored on common property)...

Generally;

- LPG piping must be installed and/or removed by a licensed gas worker.

In regards to refilling they can either be;

- Refilled where they stand by a delivery truck, or;
- The gas supplier collects the empty cylinder and exchanges it with a filled cylinder.

Be sure to keep these cylinders clear of obstruction and try to limit contact with them, particularly with fire.

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