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QUEENSLAND ELECTRICAL SAFETY REGULATION 2013

INCORPORATING THE

ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT REGULATION 2024

(EFFECTIVE FROM 1 JANUARY 2025)

BACKGROUND

As of 1 January 2025, a new Electrical Safety Requirement has been introduced into the Electrical Safety Regulation 2013. This new provision imposes obligations on both persons conducting a business or undertaking ("PCBU") and workers.

PCBUs must ensure that a worker does not carry out work in the **roof space** of a **building**, or **enter** the roof space to perform work in another part of the building, unless the building's **relevant electrical installation** has been de-energised. Similarly, workers are required to comply by not undertaking such work unless the electrical installation has been de-energised.

The new requirements apply to both PCBU's and Workers across all industries – including Pest Management Technicians. These obligations cover domestic buildings such as houses, apartments, town houses, sheds, guest houses, small hostels and boarding houses.

THE LEGISLATION

Electrical Safety Regulation 2013

PART 6 Division 7 Roof space work

Section 120A of the defines the following terms to be read in conjunction to the new requirements;

enter, in relation to a roof space, includes placing any part of a person's body in the roof space

roof space, means;

(a) the space in a building immediately under the roof of the building; or
(b) if there is a ceiling under any part of the roof – the space between the roof and the ceiling, including the ceiling structure; but
(c) does not include habitable areas of a space mentioned above.

building means a building classified under the Building Code of Australia as-

(a) a class 1 building; or
(b) a class 2 building; or
(c) a clause 10a building.

relevant electrical installation means –

(a) an electrical installation for a building that includes a switchboard for energising or de-energising the electrical installation or part of the electrical installation for the building; or
(b) if there is more than 1 electrical installation as mentioned in paragraph (a) for the building—all of the electrical installations for the building.

EXCEPTIONS Section 120C (2) / 120D

A PCBU or Worker need not comply with the Regulation if either of the following circumstances apply:

1. It is not reasonably practicable to carry out the work or enter the roof while the relevant electrical installation is de-energised; or
2. It is necessary to test, service or commission a thing, other than electrical equipment, that is energised and located in, or accessible by the roof space.

(eg trades working on electrical installations such as air conditioners and solar in the roof space)

RISK ASSESSMENT Section 120C (3) / 120D

If either of the circumstances in subsection (2) apply, the PCBU and/or Worker, must ensure that:

(a) A risk assessment is conducted for the work or entry; and
(b) The person is satisfied-
    (i) The risks identified by the risk assessment are, or can be reduced to, as low as reasonably practicable; and
    (ii) The work can be carried out, or the entry can be made, safely; and
(c) A statement for the work or entry is prepared that –
    (i) identifies the work or entry; and
    (ii) specifies the hazards associated with the work or entry and risks associated with those hazards; and
    (iii) describes the measures to be implemented to control the risks; and
    (iv) describes how the measures are to be implemented, monitored and reviewed; and
(d) the work is carried out or the entry is made in accordance with the statement.

RECORD KEEPING Section 120F

If a PCBU is responsible for ensuring a Risk Assessment is undertaken, the PCBU must keep:

(2) (a) a copy of the Risk Assessment until at least 28 days after the work or entry to which it relates is completed or made; and
    (b) a copy of the statement until the work or entry to which it relates is completed or made; and
(3) If a serious electrical incident or dangerous electrical event occurs in connection with any work or entry to which the risk assessment or statement relates, the person must keep the risk assessment or statement for at least 2 years after the incident occurs.

ACTIONS FOR PEST MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

Commonly, Pest Management Technicians enter roof spaces:

- to undertake a pre-purchase pest inspection or other inspection for timber pests; or
- as part of a pest management inspection and/or treatment for timber pests and other pests.

If the building is serviced by underground power and has no solar panels, de-energising the roof space simply requires switching off all main switch(es) in the meter/fuse box. This may include the main switch, a hot water switch and possibly others. No Risk Assessment for the entry is required if the electrical installation can be de-energised prior to entry.

A Risk Assessment **MUST** be completed if the building is serviced by overhead power or has solar panels. Turning the power off at the meter/fuse box leaves the incoming power to the meter/fuse box and solar DC cables from the array on the roof active/energised. It must also be determined if there is a battery system as some of the cables associated with that system may remain energised even with all main switches turned off.

Before entering any roof space, it is recommended undertaking the following steps:

1. Ask the customer if any essential medical equipment (eg dialysis machine) is in use and inform them that some devices may need to be reset. Some 'smart devices' (eg house key) may require a reset after power is restored before they can be used.
2. Check whether the electricity to the building is from an overhead cable or underground service. Note where it enters the building.
3. Turn on a light switch and check a powered appliance (TV, fridge etc) for sign of power in the building. If there is power on, and permission has been obtained to turn the power to the building off, go to the meter/fuse box and turn the main switches 'off'. Check that the light and appliance are now off.
4. Complete the Risk Assessment (if there is overhead power source and/or solar panels).
5. If the customer will not allow the power to be switched off, the work in the roof space cannot proceed (even if a Risk Assessment is written) and another suitable time should be negotiated.

Solar panels

- when the main switch(es) at the meter box is turned off, the inverter detects loss of supply to the grid and stops the inverter from generating power. The DC cable(s) from the solar panels on the roof to the inverter will still be energised.
- Check for any solar battery installation.
- Date of installation of solar panels will help identify the cable to look for in the roof space.
    - Pre- 2012 a light/power cable
    - 2012 – 2017 a specific labelled
    - 2017 onward within conduit

Entering the roof space

- check if there is foil insulation. (Company policy on inspection of roof spaces with foil insulation?)
- identify the areas where the cables for the power to the meter and solar cables are located.
- avoid the immediate area of these cables during the inspection / treatment.

Foil insulation

- the PBCU (Company) needs to make a policy on entering roof spaces with foil insulation. If there is contact between an active wire (eg by stapling the foil into a live wire), the foil may be energised. Turning off the power should de-energise the 'foil'. Foil insulation also restricts inspection of bearers and joists and any treatments that may be required.

After finishing in the roof space

- turn the power back on, ensuring lights and power work.
- return the completed Risk Assessment to the office with other paperwork for the inspection/treatment.

Risk of fire is minimal – recommend a disclaimer – check with your insurer. (Any spark would be caused by a pre-existing fault.) Electronic timers not connected to the internet will need to be reset.

(NOTE: Garrards have taken every effort to ensure the information is correct and meets the requirements of the Regulation. Please ensure your insurer and any others approve the actions and the Risk Assessment.)

COMMUNICATION TO CLIENT BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

The next page contains possible wording – explanation and their requirements – to be returned by client prior to the appointment.

QUEENSLAND ELECTRICAL SAFETY REGULATION 2013

From 1 January 2025, persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) and workers are required to de-energise relevant electrical installations or otherwise comply with additional safety measures, in order to carry out work in or when entering the roof space of a domestic building. The new requirements apply to PCBUs and workers across all industries – including pest management services. The requirements apply to domestic buildings including houses, apartments, town houses, sheds, guest houses, small hostels and boarding houses.

Pest Management Technicians (PMTs) require access to roof spaces when undertaking pre-purchase timber pest inspections (for sale of property) and for inspection and treatment of timber and other pests.

'De-energising' the roof space is commonly achieved by simply flicking the main power switch in the meter/fuse box to 'off'. This has a similar effect on electricals in the building as having a black-out – all power and lighting are turned off. The reason for turning power off is to protect workers from the potential of electrocution while in the roof space. If the roof space is not de-energised, the PMT may not enter the roof space. Also, the PMT may not enter the roof space if there is foil insulation.

The time taken to inspect a roof space varies depending on accessibility in the space, whether there is insulation, if there are conducive conditions for pests and any evidence of activity elsewhere. The power can be restored once the inspection / treatment is completed.

The building occupier/agent is required to indicate if:	Yes	No
• the building has solar panels	☐	☐
• the building has solar powered batteries	☐	☐

The building occupier is required to indicate one of the following options:
Turning the main power switch off in the meter/fuse box -

- the power switch will be off prior to the appointment time ☐ ☐
- someone will be present to turn the power switch off ☐ ☐
- permission for the PMT to turn off the power switch ☐ ☐
- the power switch is not to be turned off (the PMT will not enter the roof space). ☐

Restoring the power to the property –	Yes	No
• someone at the property will turn the main power switch on at the meter/fuse box	☐	☐
• the PMT can turn the main power switch on at the meter/fuse box (Note – the PMT will make every effort to remember to do this if requested.)	☐	☐

As the person responsible for the property, I understand that there is minimum possibility of risk to the property by turning off and restoring power to the property and that any damage resulting from restoring power would be due to a pre-existing fault and not caused by any actions of the Pest Management Technician.

Property Address

Person responsible for the property
Name Signature Date

Appointment Date Time

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR ENTRY INTO ROOF SPACES FOR PEST MANAGEMENT TECHNICIANS

To be filled out by the Pest Management Technician

Property address

Client Phone

Email Date Appointment time

Time electricity switched off Time electricity restored
(If YOU are responsible for turning power off/on place a reminder on your steering wheel.)

Has customer been notified the power needs to be switched off (for up to an hour?)

- Has the paperwork been returned? Have arrangements to turn off power been confirmed?
- is there anything in the building that cannot be turned off or requires notification sent prior to being turned off (perhaps some electronics, back to base alarms etc)

Who is responsible for turning off the power?

- customer has already turned off the power or customer (or delegate) present
- customer has given signed consent for PMT to turn off the power
- the power is on, the customer has not confirmed acceptance for power off (Refer PCBU Policy)

Is power delivered to premises

- overhead – there is an energised cable between connection to premises and meter box
- underground – no energised cable coming into premises in roof space

Are there solar panels

- no
- yes – date of installation from case of inverter or meter box
  - pre 2012 power/light cable
  - 2012 – 2017 labelled cable
  - post 2017 in conduit
- if yes, is there a solar powered battery

Check power on/off prior to entering the roof space

- before switching off power, check a light and an appliance power on
- switch off power at meter/fuse box (place lock or sign on box?)
- check light and appliance are power off

Enter roof space and identify (use a torch at access and when in roof space)
DO NOT ENTER ROOF SPACE UNLESS IT IS DE-ENERGISED AS FAR AS REASONABLY PRACTICAL

- check for energised cables to meter box:
  if overhead power source – energised cable between connection to house and meter box
- cabling for solar panels
- if foil insulation present – (refer to PCBU policy)

Avoid area of cables from overhead power and solar where possible.

After exiting the roof space

- restore power to the building – check a light and an appliance are working
- send risk assessment with other paperwork to office for filing