



new rules for electrical safety

UK homes are a minefield of electrical hazards

As the Part P law comes into force, research undertaken by the NICEIC has found that the public are woefully unaware of the electrical dangers lurking in their homes. Every householder questioned had electrical hazards in their homes including exposed bare wires, loose cables, old wiring and overloaded sockets.

The research also shows a considerable level of ignorance about the condition of home electrics. The NICEIC found that 40% of people had no idea about the age of the wiring within their house and 1 in 5 said their wiring was as much as 30 years old. More than half of those questioned did not know how often house wiring should be checked by a qualified electrician.

Under the new law, Part P of the building regulations, which came into force on January 1st 2005, most electrical work in homes will need to be carried out by an electrician who is registered under a government approved scheme, such as the NICEIC. The alternative, for DIYers, is to notify a local building control body before attempting to carry out any electrical work and pay an appropriate fee.

Despite this tough new law, over 70% of householders questioned still felt confident to tackle DIY electrical tasks:

- 17% of DIYers would tackle wiring in new plug sockets
- 10% would wire in an electric shower
- 3% said they would even be happy re-wiring the whole house

Jim Speirs, director general of the NICEIC, said: "We feel this law is long overdue. Under the new law, homeowners will be protected as long as their electrician gives them a certificate once they've completed the work. So, if you don't get a certificate or you do DIY electrics yourself and don't get it checked, you may not only be sitting on an electrical time bomb, you'll also be breaking the law."

Amazingly, electricians have never been regulated despite faulty electrics causing an average of 12,500 house fires, 750 serious injuries and 10 deaths each year.

The NICEIC welcomes the government's decision to finally clamp down on the cowboys who cause these deaths and is advising homeowners to make sure they only employ government-approved electricians.

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