



# Guide to condition reports for domestic electrical installations

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ELECTRICAL  
  
SAFETY  
COUNCIL



Courtesy of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

## What is an electrical installation?

An electrical installation is a fixed wiring system made up of equipment, such as a consumer unit (fuse box), lighting and power circuits, and switches and sockets.

An electrical installation does not include electrical appliances, such as cookers, heaters and washing machines.

## Why do I need to get the electrical installation in my home (or the home that I am planning to buy) checked?

You cannot see electricity. Cables are usually hidden inside our walls, and consumer units are often hidden in

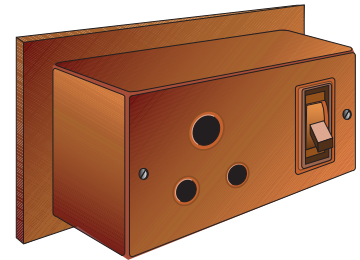
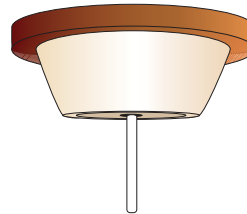
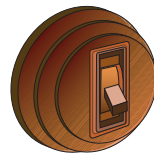
cupboards, so it is not surprising that we forget to check the condition of our electrical installations for damage or wear and tear.

Faulty and old wiring is one of the main causes of electrical fires in the home. You can reduce the risk a fire by checking the condition of your cables, switches, sockets and other accessories regularly.

## How old is my electrical installation?

Clear signs that can help you tell the age of equipment in the electrical installation in your home include the following.

- Fixed cables coated in black rubber (which stopped being used in the 1960s).



- Fixed cables coated in lead or fabric (used before the 1960s).
- A fuse box with a wooden back, cast iron switches, or a mixture of fuse boxes (used before the 1960s).
- Older round pin sockets (or light switches), braided flex hanging from ceiling roses, brown (or black) switches, or sockets mounted in or on skirting boards (used before the 1960s).
- Light switches on the walls in bathrooms (used before the 1960s).

*Examples of equipment often found in electrical installations from before the 1960's.*

If your electrical equipment is similar to those shown on the previous page, it is likely that your installation is over 40 years old and it may need rewiring completely. If not, your home (or the home that you are planning to buy) is probably wired with cables insulated in pvc (usually in installations since the 1960s), so it is unlikely that it will need completely rewiring.

However old your electrical installation is, it may get damaged and will suffer from wear and tear. So you should get an electrician to check its condition at least every 10 years or when you move into a new property.

# Definitions

**Cables** – Wires that carry electricity.

**Condition report** – A report on the condition of an electrical installation. It will explain the condition of the electrical equipment, show whether it is damaged (or worn out) and say whether or not it is safe to use.

**Consumer unit** (often called a fuse box) – Equipment used to supply and control electricity around the home. It usually contains a main switch, fuses or circuit-breakers and one or more residual current devices (see RCD).

**Current** – Flowing electricity.

**Electrical installation** – A fixed wiring system made up of equipment, for example a consumer unit, and lighting and power circuits.

Electrical installation certificate – A certificate given when new electrical installation work is finished.

**IEE Wiring Regulations** – Also called BS 7671 – Requirements for Electrical Installations (which is the UK Standard for electrical installations).

**Periodic inspection report (PIR)** – A condition report, which includes the results from inspecting and testing an electrical installation.

**Residual current devices (RCD)** – A sensitive switching device that cuts off a circuit when it finds a fault to earth that might cause an electric shock or a fire.

**Visual condition report** – A condition report that includes the results from inspecting but not testing an electrical installation.



## What is the aim of a condition report?

You may need a condition report for a number of reasons, such as when selling or buying a property. Or, you may need a report to find out the condition of an installation after a flood or fire, or at the end of the period recommended in a previous electrical certificate or report.



The five main aims of a condition report are to:

- 1** record the results of the inspection and testing to make sure the electrical installation is safe to be used until the next inspection (following any work needed to make it safe);
- 2** find any damage and wear and tear that might affect safety, and report it;
- 3** find any parts of the electrical installation that do not meet the IEE Wiring Regulations;
- 4** help find anything that may cause electric shocks and high temperatures, which can lead to deaths, burns, fires and other injuries; and
- 5** provide an important record of the installation at the time of the inspection, and for inspection and testing in the future.

## Types of condition report

In general, there are two types of domestic electrical installation condition report.

- Visual condition report
- Periodic inspection report

Inspection and testing of electrical appliances, often called portable appliance testing (PAT), is not included in either of these reports.

Details on inspecting and testing electrical appliances are not included in this leaflet. In general, testing certificates are given for each appliance to confirm whether it has passed or failed the tests. You can get more information on inspecting and testing electrical appliances from our website at

**[www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk)**

## Visual condition reports

A visual condition report will include the results of the inspection of the electrical installation.

A visual condition report does not include testing, so the inspection is not likely to find hidden damage to equipment (for example, damage to cables and joints).

Usually, a visual inspection report is only suitable if the installation has been tested in the last couple of years, and the results were reported (on an electrical installation certificate or a periodic inspection report) as being satisfactory (good enough).

*An example of the front cover of a visual condition report*

This safety report is an important and valuable document which should be retained for future reference.		DOMESTIC VISUAL CONDITION REPORT	
<b>DETAILS OF THE CLIENT AND INSTALLATION</b>		<b>SUMMARY OF THE CONDITION OF THE INSTALLATION</b>	
Client: Type of dwelling:	Address: Postcode:	General condition of the installation: Approximate age of the installation: Evidence of alterations or additions:	Signature: Date:
<b>PARTICULARS OF CONTRACTOR</b>		<b>DECLARATION</b>	
Company Name: Address: Telephone No.:	Postcode:	I being the person responsible for the visual inspection of the electrical installation (as indicated by my signature below), particulars of which are described above, having exercised reasonable skill and care when carrying out the inspection, hereby declare that the information in this report, including the observations and the electrical installation, provides an accurate statement of the condition of the electrical installation taking into account the limitations of a visual-only inspection.	
I further declare that in my judgement the condition of the said installation is: <input type="checkbox"/> visually not satisfactory, or <input type="checkbox"/> visually satisfactory (subject to any recommendations specified herein). <input type="checkbox"/> This is appropriate where the installation is not satisfactory, or <input type="checkbox"/> where the installation is satisfactory (subject to any recommendations specified herein).		Name (PRINTED): Date:	
<b>OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO BE TAKEN</b>		<b>NEXT INSPECTION</b>	
Referring to the attached schedule of inspection results: Item No. <b>1</b>		I advise renewal in terms of years months or weeks or as appropriate. I recommend that this installation is further inspected after an interval of not more than: Full periodic: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Visual condition: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
There are no visually-evident items affecting electrical safety. <input type="checkbox"/> or The following observations and recommendations are made. <input type="checkbox"/>		Please see the 'Notes for Recipients' on the reverse of this page.	
Signet electrical action recommended for items: <input type="checkbox"/>		Corrective electrical recommended for items: <input type="checkbox"/>	

## Periodic inspection reports

In general, we recommend a periodic inspection report rather than a visual condition report. This is because testing will give you more information about the condition of the electrical installation, particularly the presence of hidden damage to equipment, such as cables and joints.

*An example of the front cover of a periodic inspection report.*

**Always make sure that you agree the type of your condition report with your electrician, before the inspection (and testing) starts.**

DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION PERIODIC INSPECTION REPORT (FOR A SINGLE DWELLING)					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>A. DETAILS OF THE CLIENT</b></td> <td><b>B. ADDRESS AND DETAILS OF THE INSTALLATION</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Client: Address:</td> <td>Address: Postcode: Estimated age of the electrical installation: <input type="checkbox"/> years <input type="checkbox"/> years Evidence of alterations or additions: <input type="checkbox"/> if yes, estimated age: <input type="checkbox"/> years</td> </tr> </table>		<b>A. DETAILS OF THE CLIENT</b>	<b>B. ADDRESS AND DETAILS OF THE INSTALLATION</b>	Client: Address:	Address: Postcode: Estimated age of the electrical installation: <input type="checkbox"/> years <input type="checkbox"/> years Evidence of alterations or additions: <input type="checkbox"/> if yes, estimated age: <input type="checkbox"/> years
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## Who should produce your condition report?

There are no government-approved schemes in the UK that register electricians to carry out periodic inspection and testing of existing electrical installations.

However, the following organisations do register electricians that may be able to carry out this work, although their schemes may not cover the whole of the UK.

Before hiring an electrician to carry out any work, check with the organisation who has registered them, to make sure they are approved to carry out this type of work.

By using an electrician registered with one of these organisations to carry out the periodic inspection and testing of the electrical installation, you should receive a detailed condition report of the electrical installation.

If you decide to use an electrician who is not registered with one of the schemes mentioned above, it is your responsibility to make sure that the electrician has the necessary skills and experience to carry out the work. Information about the electrician's technical qualifications can help you to decide whether an electrician is able to do the work, but you need to take great care if this is all that you are basing your decision on.



**British Standards Institution**  
**Phone: 0845 076 5600**  
**Website: [www.kitemarktoday.com](http://www.kitemarktoday.com)**



**Electrical Contractors' Association**  
**Phone: 0207 313 4800**  
**Website: [www.eca.co.uk](http://www.eca.co.uk)**



**ELECSA Ltd**  
**Phone: 0845 634 9043**  
**Website: [www.elecsa.org.uk](http://www.elecsa.org.uk)**



**NAPIT Registration Ltd**  
**Phone: 0870 444 1392**  
**Website: [www.napit.org.uk](http://www.napit.org.uk)**



**NICEIC Group Ltd**  
**Phone: 0870 013 0382**  
**Website: [www.niceic.com](http://www.niceic.com)**



**SELECT**  
**Phone: 0131 445 5577**  
**Website: [www.select.org.uk](http://www.select.org.uk)**



## More advice

For more advice on any electrical safety issues contact:

### **The Electrical Safety Council**

18 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6LB Phone: 0870 040 0561 Fax: 0870 040 0560  
Email: [enquiries@esc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@esc.org.uk) Web: [www.esc.org.uk](http://www.esc.org.uk)

*Registered Charity No. 257376*

**The Electrical Safety Council** is an independent charity committed to reducing deaths and injuries through electrical accidents at home and at work.

