

CODE OF PRACTICE

FOR THE SALE OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION PRODUCTS TO THE PUBLIC



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE SALE OF ELECT

Preface

WHY DO WE NEED A CODE OF PRACTICE?

Electricity has become an essential commodity in our community. We rely on it in nearly all aspects of our daily living. But as well as being a benevolent saviour, it can also be a malevolent killer.

Each year people get killed when they attempt to do their own electrical work.

In many cases, they buy electrical installation materials, accessories and products, then attempt to install them themselves instead of using a licensed electrical contractor.

People give many reasons for doing their own electrical work:

- didn't realise it was dangerous;
- didn't realise it was illegal;
- enjoy DIY work;
- persuaded by others to do it;
- too expensive to employ an electrician (in some cases, the cost to install the product by a licensed electrical contractor may be more than the purchase price of the product.)

But the fact remains that it is dangerous and illegal for electrical installation work to be carried out by other than licensed electrical contractors.

The public must be informed about the danger and illegality of doing their own electrical work. Electrical Regulatory Authorities have conducted various awareness campaigns to promote electrical safety and these have included information about the dangers and illegality of unlicensed people doing their own electrical work.

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to help sellers play their part in informing the buying public of the need to use only licensed electrical contractors to fit the electrical installation materials, accessories and products they buy.

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WHAT IS A CODE OF PRACTICE?

A code of practice is a document which specifies the agreed manner in which an activity or process should be conducted.

This Code of Practice specifies various guidelines which should be adopted when selling certain electrical installation materials, accessories and products.

Various electrical safety regulations in all Australian States and Territories specify that only licensed electrical contractors may carry out electrical work. The reasoning behind this law is that for untrained persons, the act of carrying out electrical work can in itself be dangerous. In addition, electrical work which is performed incorrectly can present a life threatening risk to both the worker and the subsequent user of the installation.

This Code of Practice is not law. To become law it would have to be mandated in legislation. As it is not mandatory, the Code merely represents a set of conditions which have been accepted with consensus of industry members and should be adopted voluntarily.

Following this Code will enable sellers to be seen to be acting responsibly when selling electrical installation materials, accessories and products which can present a danger to the purchaser if installed illegally.

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WHO PREPARED THIS CODE OF PRACTICE?

This Code of Practice was jointly prepared by the Retail Traders Association of WA and the Hardware Association of WA in consultation with retailers, and the Office of Energy WA in consultation with electrical regulatory authorities.



The Code

WHICH ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS CAN ONLY BE INSTALLED BY LICENSED ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS?

Electrical safety regulations in Australian States and Territories prohibit electrical installing work being carried out by other than licensed electrical contractors. So although it is legal to buy products like **electrical cable, switches and power points**, it is illegal and dangerous for unlicensed persons to install the items.

The Regulations DO permit unlicensed persons to connect plugs to their own electrical cords. However, the use of ready made extension cords is encouraged as they may be safer than home wired ones. An incorrectly wired plug can be fatal.



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■ LABELLING

The packaging of electrical installation materials, accessories and products which require connection to electrical wiring should include a prominent warning which advises that the product must only be installed by a licensed electrical contractor. The sorts of products which require a warning label on their packaging are switches, power points, cables etc.

Most Australian manufacturers already display the warning label on the blister pack packaging for these types of products, but a check should be made to make sure the label is present.

■ NOTICES

Many electrical installation materials, accessories and products are sold in bulk without specific packaging - things like switches, electrical cable etc. In these cases, a prominent warning poster should be located on the display shelf near the product. The poster should carry the message that only licensed electrical contractors must be used to fit the electrical installation materials, accessories and products. Such posters are available free of charge from Electrical Regulatory Authorities.

A good indication that a customer is not a licensed electrical contractor is when he or she asks the seller for advice on how to connect an electrical product to installed wiring

■ ADVERTISING

When electrical installation materials, accessories and products which require connection to electrical wiring are advertised for sale, both in the written and audio/visual media, words to the effect “**must only be installed by a licensed electrical contractor**” should be included in the advertisement. The warning should be displayed prominently and in the immediate vicinity of any graphical representation of the product.

■ CUSTOMER ADVICE

A good indication that a customer is not a licensed electrical contractor is when he or she asks the seller for advice on how to connect an electrical product to installed wiring.

In such cases, it is more prudent for sales staff to advise the customer that the electrical installation materials, accessories and products must only be installed by a licensed electrical contractor.





MORE INFORMATION

If you want more information about warning labels for electrical products, contact the product manufacturer. Alternatively, you may contact your local electrical regulator at the number shown below:



Office of Energy Western Australia
20 Southport Street LEEDERVILLE WA 6007
Phone: (08) 9422 5200
Fax: (08) 9422 5244

ACT Building, Electrical & Plumbing Control (BEPCON)
16 Challis Street DICKSON ACT 2602
Phone: (02) 6207 6400
Fax: (02) 6207 7750

Department of Fair Trading New South Wales
1 Fitzwilliam Street PARRAMATTA NSW 2150
Phone: (02) 9895 0702
Fax: (02) 9689 2751

Department of Mines & Energy Queensland
55 Little Edward Street SPRING HILL QLD 4000
Phone: (07) 3237 0220
Fax: (07) 3237 0229

The Electricity Regulator Tasmania
GPO Box 369 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone: (03) 6233 7718
Fax: (03) 6224 3476

Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector Victoria
Level 3, 4 Riverside Quay SOUTHBANK VIC 3006
Phone: (03) 9203 9700
Fax: (03) 9686 2197

Office of Energy Policy South Australia
Level 19 Wakefield House
30 Wakefield Street ADELAIDE SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8226 5500
Fax: (08) 8226 5531

Power and Water Authority Northern Territory
5378 Iliffe Street PARAP NT 0820
Phone: (08) 8924 5012
Fax: (08) 8924 5678



HARDWARE
ASSOCIATION OF W.A.



RETAIL TRADERS
ASSOCIATION OF W.A.



Office of Energy