

A Beginners Guide to Part P

If you are thinking about getting into the electrical industry you have probably heard about Part P and Part P schemes. But what does all this mean and how does it affect you if you are looking to work in the industry? The following is a clear and simple guide for you to understand what it's all about.

What is Part P?

Part P is simply a section of the building regulations that relates to electrical safety in the home. As such it is purely based on Domestic Electrical work and is not relevant to commercial electrical work. All electrical work in the home must comply with Part P (As well as a range of other building regulations). Part P also states that certain types of work must be notified to building control. Building control will then issue the home owner with a Part P certificate for the work.



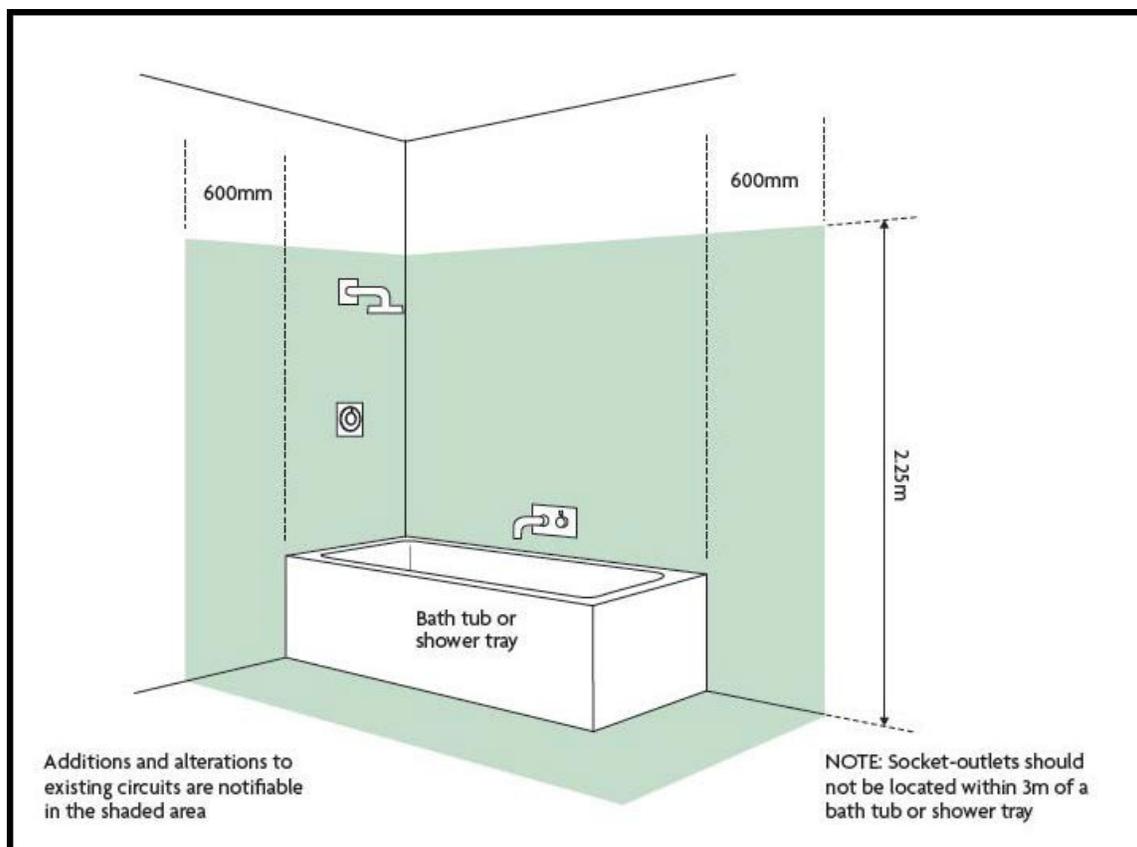
What types of work will be notifiable and require a Part P certificate?

There are three types of jobs that you can do that require a Part P certificate;

- New circuits – Any new circuits that are installed anywhere in a property must be notified to building control.
- Replacement Consumer units – If a consumer unit is replaced this must be notified
- Minor works in a special location - Minor works are generally extensions, modifications and repairs to existing circuits. If the minor work takes place in a special location then it must be notified to building control.

What is a special location?

Generally speaking all work in a room containing a swimming pool or sauna is classed as a special location. Also certain areas within a room containing a shower or bath are classed as special locations. Any work within set distances of the bath tap or shower head in one of these locations must be notified. It is simplest to see the diagram below:



What are Minor Works?

Minor works are anything where you are not installing a new circuit such as adding a socket to an existing circuit, adding spurs, adding lights to an existing lighting circuit and so on. Minor works that are carried out outside of special locations do not need to be notified to building control. This means these works do not require a Part P Certificate, however the installer must still complete an electrical installation certificate.

Electrical Installation Certificates



Part P stipulates that any installation even minor works must be carried out in accordance with the 17th Edition Wiring Regulations BS7671. This means they must be designed installed in accordance with BS7671 and then the appropriate electrical installation certificate must be completed. Installers can purchase blank certificates from electrical wholesalers or even download and print a number of copies. Whenever they complete a minor job the home owner should be given a copy of the certificate. For any new circuits, jobs in special locations or replacement consumer units the installer must provide copies of the certificates to building control, their scheme provider or a third party certifier (See Certifying your work below).

What does this mean for those entering the industry?

Simply put you need to know what you are doing before you undertake any electrical work. Not only is it dangerous if you don't it also means you could be prosecuted if the electrical installation is shown to be unsafe and not installed in accordance with the latest regulations. Generally speaking you need to know how to install all of these circuits, you need to know the 17th edition wiring regulations, you should also know how to inspect and test your work plus have a good grasp of the Part P building regulations too. This would make you competent to install electrics in a domestic setting, however your ability to generate a Part P certificate for new circuits and the like will depend on which method you choose to certify your work. There are a few options available.



Certifying your work

There are 3 key routes to certifying new circuits, replacement consumer units and work in special locations:

1. **Via Building Control** – You supply building control with the completed electrical installation certificates and evidence of your qualifications. If no inspection and testing is required they will then supply the Part P certificate to the home owner.
2. **Via a Registered Third Party** – You can have your work certified by electricians and domestic installers who are registered to certify the work of others. The third party certifier will then provide a copy of the Part P certificate to the home owner and the original to Building control.
3. **Self-Certification by a Registered Competent Person** – Many installers find that as work picks up and they are regularly carrying out the type of work that requires a Part P certificate they can save time and money by joining a scheme such as NICEIC, NAPIT or ELECSA. Installers pay an annual fee to the scheme providers and then notify the scheme provider of any jobs that require certification. The scheme provider will then provide a copy of the Part P certificate to the home owner and the original to Building control.

Joining a Part P Scheme



So once you have decided you want to join a Part P scheme. Before you do you should ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the level of work justify joining scheme?
2. What qualifications and how much will it cost to join a scheme vs. how much do you currently spend certifying work?
3. Do you work under supervision already?

After considering these questions should you decide to join a scheme you will go through the following process:

1. Complete an application form
2. Book 1 or 2 assessment dates (Depending on the scheme provider)
3. On your assessment dates show the scheme provider examples of your work plus they will ask you to prove you can inspect and test your installation

Passing Your Assessment

In order to pass your assessment you will need to hold copies of the following documents:

- Current edition of BS7671 (IEE Wiring Regulations)
- Memorandum of Guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations
- Approved Document P
- IEE On-Site Guide

The assessor will check you have the correct measuring equipment, it is calibrated and that you have the required knowledge to use it correctly. They will check you can test for:

- Voltage
- Continuity (R1 R2)
- Insulation Resistance
- Phase/Earth Loop Impedance (Zs)
- External Earth/Loop Impedance (Ze)
- RCD Testing

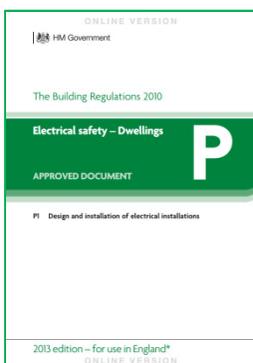
You will also need to ensure you have a complaints procedure in place and prove that you can deal with complaints in a professional and effective manner. You should also have a system for recording any complaints that your clients raise.

You must have the appropriate insurance in place and be able to offer an insurance backed warranty to every client. You will also need to ensure you have proper risk assessment and health and safety policies in place.

Work to be assessed will vary. Some scheme providers will ask to see a minor works and a new circuit whereas others will want to see a large installation only that demonstrates a variety of skills. During the assessment the assessor is likely to ask you numerous questions to ensure you fully understand what you are doing. They will also ask you to demonstrate you have a full understanding of the latest 17th edition wiring regulations. You should also be capable of inspecting and testing your installation as well as complete the relevant test sheets.

When you pass your assessment you will be able to simply notify your scheme provider of any notifiable work and they will issue the relevant certificates to the home owner and building control on your behalf.

The Part P Document can be downloaded by clicking the link below:



http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/br/BR_PDF_AD_P_2013.pdf