

INFORMATION BULLETIN

December 2012
#0004

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT SAFETY SYSTEM

This information bulletin is for anyone who intends to sell, import or manufacture electrical equipment in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

Electrical Equipment Safety Laws are changing. New laws will commence from 1 March 2013 in Queensland and shortly after that in other States and Territories. This change will implement an Electrical Equipment Safety System (EESS) that will change the requirements for business who sell, supply or import electrical equipment.

Responsible Supplier

Under the EESS, a Responsible Supplier is a person/company who manufactures in-scope electrical equipment in, or imports in-scope electrical equipment into, Australia (i.e. the entity that first brings the electrical equipment onto the Australian marketplace).

Responsible Suppliers must

- be a legal entity from Australia or New Zealand;
- register as responsible suppliers on the national database; and
- register all types of Level 2 and Level 3 equipment they sell.

Note: Responsible suppliers can also voluntarily register Level 1 equipment they sell.

Responsible Suppliers have obligations for the safety of the equipment they manufacturer or import to ensure their equipment meets relevant standards and is electrically safe.

In-Scope Electrical Equipment

Under the EESS, in-scope electrical equipment is defined as equipment which is low voltage (which includes equipment rated between 50Vac to 1000Vac) and designed or marketed as suitable for household, personal or similar use.

Risk levels of equipment

Under the EESS the old 2 risk levels for electrical equipment (i.e. Prescribed/Declared and Non-Prescribed/Non-Declared) is replaced with a 3 tier risk level system. The risk levels are outlined as follows.

Old system:

Prescribed/Declared

Non Prescribed/Non Declared

New system:

Level 3 (formally prescribed equipment)

Level 2 (new level introduced by EESS)

Level 1 (formally non-prescribed equipment)

Level 3

Level 3 equipment requires a valid Certificate of Conformity that applies to the equipment. Certificates of Conformity are issued by Government Regulators or recognised external certification schemes (private certification bodies). Test reports by an approved testing entity and other associated information showing the equipment meets relevant safety standards are required to obtain a Certificate of Conformity.

Level 2

Level 2 equipment will require a Compliance Folder. The folder must contain information (in English) that proves the electrical safety of that item of equipment. This information would include test reports completed by an approved testing entity or a suitably qualified person,

that confirms that the equipment meets relevant standards. A Compliance Folder may be electronic and can be stored on the National Database.

Level 1

The remainder of equipment which is 'in-scope' but neither level 2 or 3 will be classified as level 1 equipment. Level 1 equipment does not require registration, however the Responsible Supplier must be registered and have evidence that the equipment is electrically safe and meets any relevant electrical safety standards.

Equipment Safety Rules (Scheme Rules)

Under the EESS Equipment Safety Rules have been written to explain the processes of the EESS and how to determine such things as the electrical safety standard for particular in-scope electrical equipment, requirements for certification and Compliance Folders, suitably qualified persons and other matters relating to the operation of the EESS.

The Equipment safety Rules (Scheme Rules) are available at www.erac.gov.au

National Database

Under the EESS, the National Database records the registration details of Responsible Suppliers of electrical equipment in Australia and the details of all Level 2 and Level 3 electrical equipment.

The national database is located at www.erac.gov.au

Electrical Equipment Registration

Under the EESS the term for registration of levels 2 and 3 equipment is 1, 2 or 5 years. The registration term for level 3 cannot exceed the expiry of the Certificate of Conformity.

If you need to register yourself as a Responsible Supplier and register the equipment you sell, visit the ERAC website, <http://www.erac.gov.au>.

Marking of in-scope electrical equipment

All in-scope electrical equipment is required to be marked with its brand or trade name, its model number and the Regulatory Compliance Mark (RCM) as detailed in AS/NZS 4417.1:2012. The RCM symbol is shown below:-



Transition periods

Under the EESS there are transition periods to allow for compliance to be achieved.

Responsible suppliers have a six month timeframe to comply with registration requirements as a responsible supplier and registration of Level 2 and Level 3 equipment.

Use of the RCM as the compliance mark on electrical equipment has a five year phase in period for sellers, and three years for Responsible Suppliers.

Who to contact with questions or concerns

For more information visit the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC) website: www.erac.gov.au.

Notes:

1/ **ERAC** is the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council, the peak body of electrical safety regulators in Australia and New Zealand with membership from all States and Territories and New Zealand. ERAC acts to ensure electrical safety regulatory systems are contemporary and harmonised wherever possible.

2/ For sale of equipment in NSW, the current requirements of NSW will continue to apply separate to the requirements of the EESS in all other jurisdictions.

3/ New Zealand intend to align with the EESS and introduce complimentary laws.