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STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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**2012 No. 381**

**THE ELECTRICITY SAFETY, QUALITY  
AND CONTINUITY REGULATIONS  
(NORTHERN IRELAND) 2012**

**PART 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Citation, commencement and interpretation**

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 and shall come into operation on 31st December 2012.

(2) Any requirement in these Regulations for goods or materials to comply with a specified standard shall be satisfied by compliance with an equivalent standard or code of practice of a national standards or equivalent body of any EEA State, in so far as the standard or code of practice in question enables electricity safety, quality or continuity considerations to be met in an equivalent manner.

(3) In paragraph (2) “EEA State” means a State which is a Contracting Party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area signed at Oporto on 2nd May 1992, as adjusted by the Protocol signed at Brussels on 17th March 1993.

(4) Unless the context otherwise requires, any reference in these Regulations to the provision of information “in writing” shall include the provision of such information by electronic mail, facsimile or similar means which are capable of producing a document containing the text of any communication.

(5) In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires—

“British Standard Requirements” means the British Standard Requirements for Electrical Installations BS 7671 : 2008 IEE Wiring Regulations 17th Edition (ISBN 978-0-86341 844-0);

“conductor” means an electrical conductor arranged to be electrically connected to a network but does not include conductors used or intended to be used solely for the purposes of control, protection or regulation of supply or for communication;

“connected with earth” means connected with earth in such manner as will at all times provide a rapid and safe discharge of energy, and cognate expressions shall be construed accordingly;

“consumer” means any person supplied or entitled to be supplied by a supplier;

“consumer’s installation” means the electric lines situated upon the consumer’s side of the supply terminals together with any equipment permanently connected or intended to be permanently connected on that side;

“danger” includes danger to health or danger to life or limb from electric shock, burn, injury or mechanical movement to persons, livestock or domestic animals, or from fire or explosion, attendant upon the generation, transmission, transformation, distribution or use of energy;

“Department” means The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment;

“distributing main” means a low voltage electric line which connects a distributor’s source of voltage to one or more service lines or directly to a single consumer’s installation;

“distributor” means a person who owns or operates a network;

“earth” means the general mass of the earth;

“earth electrode” means a conductor or group of conductors in intimate contact with and providing a connection with earth;

“electric line” means any line which is used or intended to be used for carrying electricity for any purpose and includes, unless the context otherwise requires—

- (a) any equipment connected to any such line for the purpose of carrying electricity; and
- (b) any wire, cable, tube, pipe, insulator or other similar thing (including its casing or coating) which surrounds or supports, or is associated with, any such line;

“energy” means electrical energy;

“equipment” includes plant, meters, lines, supports, appliance and associated items used or intended to be used for carrying electricity for the purposes of generating, transmitting or distributing energy, or for using or measuring energy;

“generating station” means those parts of any premises which are principally used for the purpose of generating energy;

“generator” means a person who generates electricity at high voltage for the purpose of supplying consumer’s installations via a network;

“high voltage” means any voltage exceeding low voltage;

“insulation” means non-conducting material enclosing or surrounding a conductor or any part thereof and of such quality and thickness as to withstand the operating voltage of the equipment;

“insulator” means a device which supports a live conductor or which electrically separates the upper and lower parts of a stay wire;

“low voltage” means—

- (a) in relation to alternating current, a voltage exceeding 50 volts measured between phase conductors (or between phase conductors and earth), but not exceeding 1000 volts measured between phase conductors (or 600 volts if measured between phase conductors and earth), calculated by taking the square root of the mean of the squares of the instantaneous values of a voltage during a complete cycle; and
- (b) in relation to direct current, a voltage exceeding 120 volts measured between live conductors (or between live conductors and earth), but not exceeding 1500 volts measured between live conductors (or 900 volts if measured between live conductors and earth),

with any variations of voltage allowed by these Regulations;

“metalwork” does not include any electric line or conductor used for earthing purposes;

“meter operator” means a person who installs, maintains or removes metering equipment used for measuring the flow of energy to or from a network at or near the supply terminals;

“network” means an electrical system supplied by one or more sources of voltage and comprising all the conductors and other equipment used to conduct electricity for the purposes of conveying energy from the source or sources of voltage to one or more consumer’s installations, street electrical fixtures, or other networks, but does not include an electrical system which is situated entirely on an offshore installation;

“neutral conductor” means a conductor which is, or is intended to be, connected to the neutral point of an electrical system and intended to contribute to the carrying of energy;

“overhead line” means any electric line which is placed above ground and in the open air;

“phase conductor” means a conductor for the carrying of energy other than a neutral conductor or a protective conductor or a conductor used for earthing purposes;

“protective conductor” means a conductor which is used for protection against electric shock and which connects the exposed conductive parts of equipment with earth;

“service line” means an electric line which connects either a street electrical fixture, or no more than four consumer’s installations in adjacent buildings, to a distributing main;

“street electrical fixture” means a permanent fixture which is or is intended to be connected to a supply of electricity and which is in, on, or is associated with a road;

“substation” means any premises or part thereof which contain equipment for either transforming or converting energy to or from high voltage (other than transforming or converting solely for the operation of switching devices or instruments) or for switching, controlling or regulating energy at high voltage, but does not include equipment mounted on a support to any overhead line;

“supplier” means a person who is authorised by licence or exemption to supply electricity to consumers;

“supply” means the supply of electricity;

“supply neutral conductor” means the neutral conductor of a low voltage network which is or is intended to be connected with earth, but does not include any part of the neutral conductor on the consumer’s side of the supply terminals;

“supply terminals” means the ends of the electric lines at which the supply is delivered to a consumer’s installation;

“support” means any structure, pole or other device, in, on, by or from which any electric line is or may be supported, carried or suspended and includes stays and struts, but does not include insulators, their fittings or any building or structure the principal purpose of which is not the support of electric lines or equipment;

“switching device” includes any device which can either make or break a current, or both; and

“underground cable” means any conductor surrounded by insulation which is placed below ground.

(6) In relation to a distributor, generator or meter operator a reference in these Regulations to their network, their overhead line, their substation or their equipment is a reference to a network, an overhead line, a substation or equipment owned or operated by them.

(7) Words and expressions to which meanings are assigned by these Regulations shall (unless the contrary intention appears) have the same meanings in any document issued by the Department under these Regulations.