
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations replace the Electricity Supply Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991 ([S.R. 1991 No. 536](#)) and the subsequent amendment ([S.R. 1993/21](#)).

These Regulations impose requirements regarding the installation and use of electrical networks and equipment owned or operated by generators, distributors (which include, in these Regulations, transmitters), and meter operators, and the participation of suppliers in providing electricity to consumers (all such persons are collectively referred to as “duty holders” in this note). Agents, contractors and sub-contractors of duty holders also have duties under these Regulations. Although Council Directive [98/34/EC](#) (O.J. No. L 204, 21.7.1998, p37) as amended by Council Directive [98/48/EC](#) (O.J. No. L 217, 5.8.1998, p18.) applies, the Commission have already been notified in relation to The Electricity, Safety and Continuity Regulations 2002.

A regulatory impact assessment is available and can be obtained from the Energy Division, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Netherleigh, Massey Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2JP.

The British Standard Requirements referred to in regulation 1(5) is a joint publication by the British Standards Institution and The Institution of Engineering and Technology. Copies can be obtained from the Institution of Engineering and Technology, Michael Faraday House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2AY.

Part 1 (regulations 1-5) contains introductory provisions. Regulation 1 contains defined terms. Regulation 2 contains time limited exemptions for continued use of old equipment not complying with the requirements of the Regulations (e.g. pre-1937 cut-outs) and for the phased introduction of several new requirements (e.g. risk assessment of substations). Regulation 3 contains general duties relating to the safe use and operation of equipment, and requires risk registers to be maintained for substations and overhead lines. Regulation 4 requires duty holders to co-operate as necessary in order that they may each comply with the Regulations. Regulation 5 imposes requirements on duty holders to inspect their equipment and to maintain certain records for at least 10 years.

Part 2 (regulations 6-10) contains provisions relating to electrical protection and earthing. Regulation 6 imposes a requirement for generators and distributors to install adequate protective devices in their networks. Regulation 7 requires generators and distributors to ensure continuity of the supply neutral conductor. Regulation 8 imposes certain requirements for connections with earth for all systems, and in particular for high and low voltage networks. Regulation 9 contains requirements for distributors operating protective multiple earthing systems, including the circumstances in which earthing terminals of consumers’ installations should not be connected to the distributor’s combined neutral and protective conductor. Regulation 10 contains requirements for earthing of metalwork.

Part 3 (regulation 11) contains provisions relating to substations, specifically requirements for enclosures, safety and other signs (see Schedule 1), and fire precautions.

Part 4 (regulation 12-15) contains provisions relating to underground cables and associated equipment. Regulation 12 imposes restrictions on the use of underground cables. Regulation 13 imposes requirements for mechanical protection of such equipment and regulation 14 contains requirements regarding the depth and manner of installation. Regulation 15 requires generators and distributors to maintain maps of underground cables and equipment and to permit inspection by, and to provide copies to, specified persons.

Part 5 (regulations 16-21) contains provisions relating to overhead lines. Regulation 16 specifies the equipment affected by this Part and imposes a limit on nominal voltage. Regulation 17

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imposes minimum heights for overhead electric lines and other cables (with further requirements in Schedule 2). Regulation 18 contains requirements relating to insulation and protection of such lines. Regulation 19 imposes requirements to prevent access to high voltage overhead conductors and to fix safety signs to supports for overhead lines (see Schedule 1). Regulation 20 relates to stay wires for supports carrying overhead lines. Regulation 21 relates to avoidance of interference with or interputation of supply caused by trees.

Part 6 (regulations 22 and 23) contains provisions relating to generation. Regulation 22 requires persons to ensure switched alternative sources of energy remain isolated from a distributor's network. Regulation 23 imposes requirements on persons intending to operate a source of energy in parallel with a distributors network.

Part 7 (regulation 24-30) contains general requirements relating to the provision of electricity to consumers' installations and other networks. Regulation 24 requires distributors to take precautions against supply failure. Regulation 25 contains provisions relating to distributors' and meter operators' equipment on consumers' premises, including electrical protection, security and connections to consumers' earthing terminals. Regulation 26 specifies requirements for persons connecting new installations or new networks to a distributor's network, with provision for settling disputes arising from a distributor's delay in giving or refusal to give consent for connections. Regulation 27 specifies the procedure if a distributor considers that an installation is unsafe or is causing interference and the procedure to challenge the distributor's refusal to give or continue a supply. Regulation 28 imposes requirements to give information relating to a supply and to maintain the quality of supply within certain tolerance limits. Regulation 29 requires other information affecting a consumer to be provided on request. Regulation 30 permits distributors to discontinue a supply for such period as may be necessary under certain circumstances.

Part 8 (regulations 31 – 37) contains miscellaneous provisions. Regulation 31 entitles inspectors appointed by the Department to the provision of facilities and information where an inspection of a generator's or distributor's network or equipment is being carried out. Regulation 32 and Schedule 3 contain a requirement on generators, distributors and meter operators to give particulars to the Department relating to accidents and other events involving their networks and equipment and domestic consumers' installations. Regulation 33 and Schedule 4 contain a requirement on a distributor to give notice to the Department of specified interruptions of supply to consumers. Regulation 34 permits the Department to grant exemptions from the Regulations. Regulation 35 enables the Department to prohibit the use of networks or equipment owned or operated by duty holders or of a consumer's installation in specified circumstances, with provision for settling disputes. Regulation 36 provides that specified persons who fail to comply with specified provisions of the Regulations commit an offence under Article 32 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. Regulations 37 and Schedule 5 specify Regulations (the Electricity Supply Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991 and the subsequent amendment) which are revoked by these Regulations.