STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2012 No. 381

ELECTRICITY

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

Made - - - -	*18th October 2012*
Coming into operation	*31st December 2012*

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment(**1**) makes the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 32, 33(3) and 64 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992(**2**).

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—

(**1**) Formerly the Department of Economic Development; see S.I 1999 No.238(N.I.1)
(**2**) S.I. 1992 No.231(NI.1)

"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.

Application of Regulations

2.—(1) Except as provided for in paragraph (2), in so far as these Regulations apply to any generator, distributor, supplier or meter operator, they shall also apply to any agent, contractor or sub-contractor of theirs acting on their behalf in relation to a matter which is the subject of these Regulations.

(2) Regulations 4, 15, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32 and 33 shall not apply to any agent, contractor or sub-contractor.

(3) Regulation 3(2) shall not apply until, in the case of overhead lines, 5 years, and, in the case of substations, 2 years after the coming into operation of these Regulations.

(4) Regulation 7(2) shall not apply to any distributor's fusible cut-out brought into use on or before 31 December 1936, until 5 years after the coming into operation of these Regulations.

(5) Regulation 11(c) shall not apply until 2 years after the coming into operation of these Regulations.

(6) Paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 14 shall not apply to any low voltage underground cable installed on or before the day before the day on which these Regulations come into operation.

(7) Regulations 19(2) and 20 shall not apply until 10 years after the coming into operation of these Regulations.

(8) Regulation 21 shall not apply until 5 years after the coming into operation of these Regulations.

(9) Where a material alteration is made to any part of a network, the provisions in paragraphs (4) to (7) shall cease to apply to that part of the network from the date of that alteration.

(10) Where any provision of these Regulations does not apply to any network, or part of a network, by virtue of any of the provisions of paragraphs (4) to (7), any equivalent provision which applied to the network, or part of it, immediately before the coming into operation of these Regulations by virtue of the Electricity Supply Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991(**3**) including any approval, authority or exemption granted or given under or pursuant to that provision shall apply as if that equivalent provision had been contained in these Regulations.

(11) Where any provision of these Regulations is equivalent to a provision which applied to any network, or part of a network, immediately before the coming into operation of these Regulations by virtue of the Electricity Supply Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991, any approval, authority or exemption granted or given under or pursuant to the latter provision which was in operation immediately before the coming into operation of these Regulations shall continue in operation and shall have effect as if granted or given under or pursuant to the former provision but shall cease to have effect one year after the coming into operation of these Regulations.

(12) Subject to paragraph (13), these Regulations shall apply in relation to activities carried on in the territorial sea adjacent to Northern Ireland.

(13) The following regulations shall not apply in relation to such activities—

(a) 9 (protective multiple earthing);

(**3**) S.R. 1991 No. 536 as amended by S.R. 1993 No.21

(b) 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and Schedule 2 (overhead lines);

(c) 22 (switched alternative sources of energy);

(d) 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 (supplies to installations and to other networks); and

(e) 33 and Schedule 4 (notifications of certain interruptions in supply).

General adequacy of electrical equipment

3.—(1) Generators, distributors and meter operators shall ensure that their equipment is—

(a) sufficient for the purposes for and the circumstances in which it is used; and

(b) so constructed, installed, protected (both electrically and mechanically), used and maintained as to prevent danger, interference with or interruption of supply, so far as is reasonably practicable.

(2) Generators and distributors shall—

(a) for each of their overhead lines or part thereof and for each of their substations, assess the foreseeable risk of danger from interference, vandalism or unauthorised access, having regard to both the nature of the equipment and use of the surrounding land, and classify the degree of the risk;

(b) enter details of the result of the classification of risk in a register or other permanent record kept updated for the purpose; and

(c) take measures to safeguard the equipment commensurate with the nature and class of risk to which it gives rise.

(3) Generators and distributors shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the public are made aware of dangers which may arise from activities carried out in proximity to overhead lines, and to indicate the means by which those dangers may be avoided.

(4) Generators and distributors shall take precautions to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, danger due to the influx of water, or any noxious or explosive liquid or gas, into any enclosed space, arising from the installation or operation of their equipment.

Duty of co-operation

4. Generators, distributors, suppliers and meter operators shall—

(a) disclose such information to each other as might reasonably be required in order to ensure compliance with these Regulations; and

(b) otherwise co-operate amongst themselves so far as is necessary in order to ensure compliance with these Regulations.

Inspection of networks

5. A generator or distributor shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, inspect their network with sufficient frequency so that they are aware of what action they need to take so as to ensure compliance with these Regulations and, in the case of their substations and overhead lines, shall maintain for a period of not less than 10 years a record of such an inspection including any recommendations arising therefrom.