

24 MAY 2007

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To: Lighting Retailers, Suppliers and Manufacturers

SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET: HOMEOWNER INSTALLATION OF LIGHT FITTINGS

1 Background

A fatal electrical accident recently occurred, when a home-owner had wired up a light fitting so that the metal case was live. Energy Safety, the regulator for electricity and gas safety, considers there is a need for information for home-owners that alerts them to the safety issues around the installation or replacement of light fittings.

This information should reinforce the requirements of the existing electrical codes of practice by reminding home-owners of their rights and obligations in respect of home-owner wiring, the applicable codes, and principles of electrical safety.

2 Electricity Regulations and Electrical Codes of Practice (ECP)

The Electricity Regulations state that home-owners may undertake prescribed electrical work under certain conditions. The conditions include the requirement for the work to be carried out in accordance with NZECP 51 - *Homeowner/Occupier's Electrical Wiring Work in Domestic Installations*¹. NZECP 51 provides the instructions for doing electrical wiring work in domestic installations by home-owners.

NOTE: Section 7 of NZECP 51 includes the relevant text of NZECP 54, the code of practice applying to the installation of recessed luminaires and auxiliary equipment.

The ready availability of light fittings and their use in home decoration has resulted in a do-it-yourself culture, where home-owners undertake electrical wiring work themselves. Unfortunately the associated risks are often not recognised, as they might be with other wiring work.

The use of internationally-based standards for light fittings creates potential for mismatches between the colour coding of domestic installation wiring and the wiring and labelling used in light fittings. While this is addressed in NZECP 51, home-owners who do not follow the code are more likely to create safety risks for themselves and other occupiers.

It is therefore important that home-owners are reminded of the particular safety risks associated with doing their own light fitting installation and replacement, and the legal requirement to follow NZECP 51.

¹ [Copies of NZECPs are available on the Energy Safety website at www.energysafety.govt.nz/electricity/legislation](http://www.energysafety.govt.nz/electricity/legislation)

Energy Safety considers that some simple point-of-sale guidance information targeted to home-owners, with a specific accent on safety is the best way of conveying this message.

Energy Safety recommends that if home-owners are in any doubt about the type of electrical wiring work they can legally do in their homes, and their ability to do such work, then they should get a licensed electrical worker to do the wiring work.

3 Safety Notice

Energy Safety is seeking the help of the lighting supply and retail market and advisory bodies, such as the Lighting Council, to use and further develop the attached safety message and provide it to home-owners when they are buying light fittings.

We recommend that this message is copied and made available to members of the public purchasing light fittings at locations where this product is sold or included in the packaging for such product.

We consider that at the point of sale anything bigger than a single A4 or A5 sheet is unlikely to be read, and that any information and safety messages need to be clear and simple.

While Energy Safety has a role in assessing the need for a safety notice and shaping the safety messages along with industry partners, it is not necessary or desirable for the regulator to issue or control this information. Rather, this is an instance where responsibility can and should lie with the industry parties involved.

4 Feedback

Your specific feedback and proposed actions with respect to this safety initiative is requested to help us gauge the success of this programme.

Please provide feedback by emailing, or writing to us - the contact details are provided below.

The Energy Safety staff member coordinating the feedback will be:

Veerendra Bhim and can be directly emailed at: Veerendra.Bhim@med.govt.nz

Please contact Energy Safety if you have any questions or require further information on phone: 0508 377 4636, fax: 0508 723 336, email: info@energysafety.govt.nz or visit our website at www.energysafety.govt.nz.

Thank you for your help in getting these important safety messages to home-owners.



M S Wogan
Acting Operations Manager
Energy Safety

ELECTRICAL SAFETY INFORMATION

⚡ ELECTRIC SHOCK HAZARD ⚡ **HOMEOWNER INSTALLATION OF LIGHT FITTINGS**

A fatal electrical accident recently occurred where a homeowner incorrectly wired up some light fittings that they had purchased.

Although as a home-owner you may undertake a limited range of electrical wiring work, for your own safety, and the safety of others, this work must be undertaken in accordance with established electrical codes of practice.

All home-owner wiring must be carried out in accordance with the *New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Homeowners/Occupiers Electrical Wiring Work in Domestic Installations (NZECP 51)*. Copies of this Code can be obtained from the Energy Safety website at www.energysafety.govt.nz, or call 0508 377 4636.

If you have any doubts about your ability to conduct the wiring work safely or about the method of installing light fittings, please employ a licensed electrical worker to carry out the installation for you.

Always follow the manufacturer's installation instructions. It should be noted that the surface temperatures of some high wattage light fittings may not be suitable for mounting directly on to walls, ceilings, plaster-board, timber or MDF board and special precautions may be required.

Don't rely only on colour to identify the wiring in the fitting. Take care to correctly identify the wiring of the light fitting by reading installation instructions and identifying marks on the fitting.

Note that the colour coding of the fixed wiring within your home and colour coding of wiring in the light fittings may not match.

If you are unable to verify the connections consult with a licensed electrical worker, or get them to carry out the installation.

If there is an earth terminal on the fitting and no earth with the fixed house wiring, consult with a licensed electrical worker or get them, or an electrical contractor, to install the fitting if it is safe to do so.

Failure to follow this information may result in electric shock injury or a fatality to yourself or a member of your family. An electrically initiated fire is another risk that could result in injury, loss of life or property damage.

Please visit the Energy Safety website for supporting information at www.energysafety.govt.nz.

For further assistance contact a licensed electrical worker or Energy Safety if you have any questions or require further information.

Energy Safety free-phone: 0508 377 4636, free-fax: 0508 723 336, email: info@energysafety.govt.nz

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