

# Electricity at Work Regulations 1989



## Purpose of the Regulations

**The Electricity at Work Regulations (EAWR)** purpose is to require precautions to be taken against the risk of death or injury to persons to work activities associated with electricity.

This covers all types of work activities, from commercial to domestic electrical installations.

HAZARD

Whilst these regulations apply to mines and quarries, additional regulations created in 2014 apply to these areas.

### The EAWR were:

made .....7th April 1989  
laid before Parliament .....25th April 1989  
came into force ..... 1st April 1990



## Regulations Overview

**The Health and Safety at Work (HSW) Act** enforces the requirements of the **Electricity at Work Regulations 1989** and interpretation of the requirements has been provided by the Health and Safety Executives publication, entitled **Guidance on Regulations (HSR25)**.

**The EAWR are in addition to the requirements of the HSW Act.**



When the EAWR were introduced, they did not include requirements for a risk assessment process. Requirements for a risk assessment process were introduced in the 1992 version of the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations**.

**To meet the requirements of the EAWR, compliance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations is also needed.**

Therefore a risk assessment process has to be undertaken when managing and monitoring electrical installations, systems and appliances, for those Regulations that are considered reasonably practicable.





There are two types of regulations within the EAWR and these are described as:

**1**

**“Reasonably Practical”**

Assess the risks in terms of carrying out the activity and the cost. The greater the risk, the less weight can be given to the cost of preventative measures.

**2**

**“Absolute”**

If the regulation does not qualify that is ‘reasonably practicable’ then it is **Absolute** and the requirement must be met regardless of the cost.

**The regulations:**

- A** Impose duties on those involved with electrical work activities
- B** Restrict the work on Live electrical systems
- C** Apply to all work activities on electrical systems
- D** Place requirements on competence

This list is not exhaustive



The published **EAWR Guidance on Regulations HSR25** will help duty holders meet the requirements of the **Electricity at Work Regulations 1989**.

It will be of interest and practical help to all duty holders, particularly engineers (including those involved in the design, construction, operation or maintenance of electrical systems), technicians and their managers.



There are 33 Regulations listed under EAWR, although Regulations 17-28 were revoked by the Mines Regulations 2014.

Reg No.	Description	Reasonably Practicable	Absolute
1	EAWR 1989 came into force 1st April 1990	N/A	N/A
2	Interpretations / Definitions	N/A	N/A
3	Person whom the duties are imposed	N/A	N/A
4 (1)	System construction	✓	
4 (2)	System maintenance	✓	
4 (3)	Work activity	✓	
4 (4)	Protective equipment		✓
5	Strength & capability of electrical equipment		✓
6	Adverse or hazardous environments	✓	
7	Insulation protection & placing of conductors	✓	
8	Earthing or other suitable precautions		✓
9	Integrity or referenced conductors, systems of earthing		✓
10	Connection electrically & mechanically suitable		✓
11	Means of protecting from excess of current		✓
12	Means of cutting off supply & isolation		✓
13	Precautions for work on equipment made dead		✓
14	Work on or near live conductors		✓
15	Working space, access and lighting		✓
16	Persons to be competent to prevent danger & injury		✓
17-28	Revoked by Mines Regulations 2014	N/A	N/A
29	Defence where all reasonable steps taken for Absolute		
30	Exemption certificates by HSE	N/A	N/A
31	Extension outside of Great Britain	N/A	N/A
32	Disapplication of duties, sea-going ship, air or hovercraft	N/A	N/A
33	Revocations and modifications	N/A	N/A
App 1	Working space and access- Historical comments	N/A	N/A



### **The Regulations cover all operational voltages from any source of supply and cover all electrical systems and equipment.**

The Regulations apply to all electrical systems and equipment (as defined) whenever manufactured, purchased, installed or taken into use even if its manufacture or installation pre-dates the Regulations.



Even if the system or equipment pre-date the EAWR, competent persons can assess such systems to confirm they are safe for continued use. If they are found to be unsafe, the unsafe aspects must be updated or replaced in a reasonable time frame to ensure compliance with the EAWR.

**BS 7671 is a recognised British Standard and compliance with it is likely to achieve compliance with the relevant aspects of the EAWR.**

Many systems are excluded from BS 7671 requirements, but those systems would still be subject to the EAWR.

BS 7671 provides requirements for electrical installations for a range of voltages up to **1000 V AC or 1500 V DC**. Once again, any electrical systems beyond these voltage ranges would still be subject to the EAWR.

For supply to an electrical installation, including where supply distribution cables are installed within a building such as those controlled by building network operators, the **Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002 (ESQCR)** impose requirements in respect of the generation, distribution and supply of electricity, including supply networks and electrical equipment.



Some ESQCR obligations – such as requirements for connection with earth – overlap with the EAWR Regulations, but others provide additional requirements.

### **In summary...**

*The EAWR were a welcome introduction in 1990 to improve the safety of electrical systems, installations and equipment and continue to provide such safety.*

*The Health and Safety Executive use the powers within these regulations to ensure duty holders comply with the requirements to ensure electrical safety is monitored and maintained for users.*



This leaflet aims to provide a summary of the full regulations which are available to view [here](#). The leaflets alone, should not be relied upon for compliance.

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