

DEPARTMENT OF
THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND JUSTICE

Electricity Safety Regulator

Annual Report
2023-2024

NTWork**Safe**



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Role and Responsibilities of the Electricity Safety Regulator

The role of the Electricity Safety Regulator was established by the introduction of the now repealed Electricity Reform Act 2000 (the ER Act), which came into force on 1 April 2000.

The functions of the Electricity Safety Regulator are to monitor and regulate safety and technical standards with respect to electrical installations (excluding electrical infrastructure owned and operated by an electricity entity, and wires, fittings, equipment or accessories connected to and beyond an electrical outlet at which fixed wiring terminates).

The Electricity Safety Regulator has the power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with or incidental to the performance of those functions, which includes:

- inspections, site visits and investigations;
- the provision of electrical safety advice and information;
- advice in relation to national performance standards for appliances and electrical equipment;
- input into training courses involving the regulation and standards for electrical work; and
- representation on the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council.

Electrical Safety Act 2022 and Electrical Safety Regulations 2024

In 2017-18, the Government established a tri-partite Electrical Safety and Licensing Reference Group to examine the ER Act and the now repealed Electrical Workers and Contractors Act 1978. The purpose of the review was to examine and provide direction to the Northern Territory Government about what amendments are necessary to address concerns in relation to electrical safety and electrical licensing. NT WorkSafe participated in this review.

The Electrical Safety and Licensing Reference Group completed their report in December 2019. In 2020 Cabinet accepted the recommendations and authorised the development of new legislation.

As a result of the work and recommendations of the Reference Group, the *Electrical Safety Act 2022* (the ES Act) was passed however its commencement was delayed to allow for the development of the Electrical Safety Regulations (the ES Regulations). There was a delay in the development of the Electrical Safety Regulations due to limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Electrical Safety Regulations were developed over the period from 2023 to 2024 and both the ES Act and the ES Regulations came into effect in the Territory on 01 July 2024.

The former Part 4.7 of the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011* that dealt with general electrical safety in workplaces and energised electrical work has been repealed. These provisions are now contained within the *Electrical Safety Regulations 2024*.

The purpose of the new legislation is to prevent people from being killed or injured by electricity, and to prevent property from being destroyed or damaged by electricity. To this end, the new legislation:

- creates the role of the Electrical Safety Regulator and establishes a new Electrical Safety Board;
- imposes obligations on persons who may affect the electrical safety of others by acts or omissions;
- enhances the requirements for safety management systems for electricity entities;
- introduces safety requirements for all electrical goods through the adoption of a national scheme; and
- provides for the safety of all persons through:
 - modernised licensing of electrical workers and electrical contractors;
 - establishment of a discipline committee for persons who perform electrical work;
 - additional powers to inspectors, such as improvement notices to require the remedying non-compliant electrical work;
 - encouraging compliance through provisions for prosecutions of various offences under the ES Act.

The new legislation applies to all places where electricity is transmitted or consumed. It is not limited to workplaces, but extend to domestic residences and public places. The new legislation encompasses:

- all electrical installations, works of an electricity entity, electrical equipment, cathodic protection systems and activities conducted near and on exposed live electrical parts; and
- all persons who may affect the electrical safety of others and whose electrical safety may be affected.

Information Sessions

In anticipation of the commencement of the *Electrical Safety Act 2022* and the *Electrical Safety Regulations 2023* from 1 July 2024, the Electricity Safety Regulator provided a number of information sessions / briefings in the period from May 2024 to June 2024. These sessions were aimed at different stakeholders, including.

- electrical workers
- electrical contractors
- various industries in which electrical works are conducted;
- general public, community
- Law Society of the Northern Territory and their members
- Real Estate Institute of the Northern Territory and their members
- Conveyancers in the Northern Territory
- Electrical distribution entities

There was a total of 13 such information sessions presented to the various stakeholders.

In addition to the abovementioned sessions, media releases and information on the incoming electrical safety legislation were also published on the NT WorkSafe website.

Consultation generally was also undertaken through a survey on “Have Your Say” website with submissions being sought from 29 April 2024 to 17 May 2024. This public comment period was also supported through print and radio media advertisements.

General Public Awareness and Advice (Part 5 of ER Act)

The Electricity Safety Regulator publishes Safety Alerts and Information Bulletins on the NT WorkSafe website as a means of providing information and advice. The following information products were new or had content updated in 2023-2024:

Safety Alerts

- No electrical safety alerts were issued for 2023-2024.

Bulletins

- Electrical safety - Identifying mismatched d.c. connectors in solar PV installations.
- Requirements for all electrical work on meter boxes and consumer switchboards in existing homes.
- Separation distances required between pools and spas, and electrical infrastructure.

The full catalogue of information products available are listed at:

<https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/safety-and-prevention/electrical-safety>

Activities of the Electricity Safety Regulator for 2023-2024

Part 5 of the ER Act outlines the safety responsibilities and technical requirements which are monitored by the Electricity Safety Regulator. Below are some of the activities undertaken by the Electricity Safety Regulator under Part 5.

Regulatory Requirement	No	Description
Certificates of Compliance audited as per sections 67 and 68 of the Act.	1461	Inspections and site visits
Complaints investigated as per sections 67 and 68 of the Act.	90	Complaints
Report of accidents involving electric shock as per section 71 of the Act.	71	Electric Shocks

Part 6 of the Act provides for specific enforcement powers. A summary of enforcement powers exercised by the Electricity Safety Regulator and authorised officers in 2023-2024 is provided in the following table.

Regulatory Requirement	No	Description
Exercise of specific powers under section 10 of the Act – Require Information	1	
Exercise of specific powers under section 11 of the Act – Disclose Information	9	Fire Investigation Reports
Exercise of specific powers under section 70 of the Act – Rectification by Direction	67	Owner/Operator Non-compliance
Exercise of specific powers under section 70 of the Act – Rectification by Direction	186	Contractor Non-compliance
Exercise of specific powers under section 78, 79 and 80 of the Act – Disconnection	0	Installations disconnected

Part 7 of the Act provides for reviews and appeals. There were no applications for review made in the 2022-2023 financial year.

Regulatory Requirement	No	Description
Review of decisions as per section 83 of the Act – Review by Regulator	0	
Review of decisions as per section 84 of the Act – Appeals	0	
Review of decisions as per section 85 of the Act – Ministerial Intervention	0	
Dispensations as per section 87(4) of the Act	0	

The Electrical Safety Unit of NT WorkSafe continued engagement throughout 2023-2024 with Northern Territory electrical contractors regarding implementation of emerging clean and renewable energy technologies.