



Home ceiling insulation and electrical safety for householders

This information details the new safety requirements for the installation of ceiling insulation in Queensland from 9 March 2010. For information about the Federal Government's announcement on 10 March regarding the removal of foil insulation and retro-fitting of safety switches contact the Australian Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on 1800 808 571 or at

[www.environment.gov.au/au/.](http://www.environment.gov.au/au/)

Queensland householders considering installing ceiling insulation in their homes need to be aware of new electrical safety requirements, introduced from 9 March 2010.

These new requirements are contained in the *Electrical Safety (Installation of Ceiling Insulation) Notice 2010* which was introduced by the Minister for Industrial Relations on 9 March 2010. The Ministerial Notice applies in Queensland, irrespective of any requirements or conditions of the Australian Government's proposed household Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme.

While installers of ceiling insulation are at present required to abide by the requirements of the *Wiring Rules* (AS/NZS3000: 2007) as they relate

to installation of insulation near downlights and other electrical equipment, several new conditions introduced by the Ministerial Notice apply specifically to the use of all forms of electrically conductive (foil) ceiling insulation - other than metal foil batts.

From 9 March 2010, insulation contractors seeking to install electrically conductive ceiling insulation (other than metal foil batts) are required to comply with the following conditions:

- an electrical safety inspection and test of the electrical installation related to the ceiling space at the premises must be performed by a licensed electrical contractor before electrically conductive (foil) ceiling insulation is installed,
- following the inspection and test, if any part of the electrical installation in the ceiling space is not electrically safe, the installation of electrically conductive (foil) ceiling insulation must not proceed until the installation is made safe or repaired.

If the outcome of the inspection and test of the electrical installation

undertaken confirms that the electrical installation is electrically safe, then electrically conductive (foil) insulation may be installed under the following conditions:

- before installation begins a safety switch is installed on each final sub-circuit and sub-mains located in the ceiling space where possible; and
- the consumer's mains and/or cables of the electrical installation not able to be protected by a safety switch are clearly identified and marked permanently at the most accessible

point and at intervals not exceeding one metre in the ceiling space to the extent that is reasonably practicable; and

- the electrically conductive (foil) ceiling insulation is installed so as to ensure that the consumer's mains, and any circuit not able to be protected by a safety switch, are not covered at any point by the ceiling insulation; and
- during the installation, a minimum of 25mm separation is maintained between the ceiling insulation material and the consumer's mains and/or any cables of the electrical installation not able to be protected by a safety switch.

These mandatory requirements provide a significantly increased level of electrical safety when using electrically conductive (foil) ceiling insulation and will provide protection for the installer when completing the installation as well as providing ongoing protection for the householder and any workers who may need to enter the ceiling space in the future.

As the decision to install ceiling insulation rests with the householder, any costs, will be met by the householder, and should be discussed by the householder and the installer.

Before undertaking such a project, you are encouraged to consider the advice available in the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Fact Sheet: *Insulation – installing ceiling insulation and your health and Safety* at www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/resources/pdfs/alert-insulation_installing.pdf.

[Frequently asked questions.](#)

For further electrical safety information visit www.electricalsafety.qld.gov.au or telephone 1300 650 662.