
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1989 No. 635

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and shall come into force on 1st April 1990.

Commencement Information

II [Reg. 1](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Interpretation

2.—(1) In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires—

“approved” means approved in writing for the time being by the Health and Safety Executive for the purposes of these Regulations or conforming with a specification approved in writing by the Health and Safety Executive for the purposes of these Regulations;

“circuit conductor” means any conductor in a system which is intended to carry electric current in normal conditions, or to be energised in normal conditions, and includes a combined neutral and earth conductor, but does not include a conductor provided solely to perform a protective function by connection to earth or other reference point;

“conductor” means a conductor of electrical energy;

“danger” means risk of injury;

“electrical equipment” includes anything used, intended to be used or installed for use, to generate, provide, transmit, transform, rectify, convert, conduct, distribute, control, store, measure or use electrical energy;

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...

“injury” means death or personal injury from electric shock, electric burn, electrical explosion or arcing, or from fire or explosion initiated by electrical energy, where any such death or injury is associated with the generation, provision, transmission, transformation, rectification, conversion, conduction, distribution, control, storage, measurement or use of electrical energy;

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...

“system” means an electrical system in which all the electrical equipment is, or may be, electrically connected to a common source of electrical energy, and includes such source and such equipment.

(2) Unless the context otherwise requires, any reference in these Regulations to—

- (a) a numbered regulation or Schedule is a reference to the regulation or Schedule in these Regulations so numbered;
- (b) a numbered paragraph is a reference to the paragraph so numbered in the regulation or Schedule in which the reference appears.

F1 Words in [reg. 2\(1\)](#) revoked (6.4.2015) by [The Mines Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/3248\)](#), [reg. 1\(2\)](#), [Sch. 4 Pt. 2](#) (with [reg. 1\(3\)](#))

Commencement Information

I2 [Reg. 2](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Persons on whom duties are imposed by these Regulations

3.—(1) Except where otherwise expressly provided in these Regulations, it shall be the duty of every—

- (a) employer and self-employed person to comply with the provisions of these Regulations in so far as they relate to matters which are within his control; and
 - [^{F2}(b) (i) manager, in relation to a mine within the meaning of the Mines and Quarries Act 1954, and
 - (ii) operator, in relation to a quarry within the meaning of regulation 3 of the Quarries Regulations 1999, to ensure that all requirements or prohibitions imposed by or under these Regulations are complied with in so far as they relate to the mine of which he is the manager or quarry of which he is the operator and to matters which are within his control.]
- (2) It shall be the duty of every employee while at work—
- (a) to co-operate with his employer so far as is necessary to enable any duty placed on that employer by the provisions of these Regulations to be complied with; and
 - (b) to comply with the provisions of these Regulations in so far as they relate to matters which are within his control.

F2 [Reg. 3\(1\)\(b\)](#) substituted (1.1.2000) by [The Quarries Regulations 1999 \(S.I. 1999/2024\)](#), [reg. 1\(1\)](#), [Sch. 5 Pt. 2](#)

Commencement Information

I3 [Reg. 3](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

PART II

GENERAL

Systems, work activities and protective equipment

4.—(1) All systems shall at all times be of such construction as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, danger.

(2) As may be necessary to prevent danger, all systems shall be maintained so as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, such danger.

(3) Every work activity, including operation, use and maintenance of a system and work near a system, shall be carried out in such a manner as not to give rise, so far as is reasonably practicable, to danger.

(4) Any equipment provided under these Regulations for the purpose of protecting persons at work on or near electrical equipment shall be suitable for the use for which it is provided, be maintained in a condition suitable for that use, and be properly used.

Commencement Information

I4 [Reg. 4](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Strength and capability of electrical equipment

5. No electrical equipment shall be put into use where its strength and capability may be exceeded in such a way as may give rise to danger.

Commencement Information

I5 [Reg. 5](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Adverse or hazardous environments

- 6.** Electrical equipment which may reasonably foreseeably be exposed to—
- (a) mechanical damage;
 - (b) the effects of the weather, natural hazards, temperature or pressure;
 - (c) the effects of wet, dirty, dusty or corrosive conditions; or
 - (d) any flammable or explosive substance, including dusts, vapours or gases,

shall be of such construction or as necessary protected as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, danger arising from such exposure.

Commencement Information

I6 [Reg. 6](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Insulation, protection and placing of conductors

- 7.** All conductors in a system which may give rise to danger shall either—
- (a) be suitably covered with insulating material and as necessary protected so as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, danger; or
 - (b) have such precautions taken in respect of them (including, where appropriate, their being suitably placed) as will prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, danger.

Commencement Information

I7 [Reg. 7](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Earthing or other suitable precautions

8. Precautions shall be taken, either by earthing or by other suitable means, to prevent danger arising when any conductor (other than a circuit conductor) which may reasonably foreseeably become charged as a result of either the use of a system, or a fault in a system, becomes so charged; and, for the purposes of ensuring compliance with this regulation, a conductor shall be regarded as earthed when it is connected to the general mass of earth by conductors of sufficient strength and current-carrying capability to discharge electrical energy to earth.

Commencement Information

I8 Reg. 8 in force at 1.4.1990, see reg. 1

Integrity of referenced conductors

9. If a circuit conductor is connected to earth or to any other reference point, nothing which might reasonably be expected to give rise to danger by breaking the electrical continuity or introducing high impedance shall be placed in that conductor unless suitable precautions are taken to prevent that danger.

Commencement Information

I9 Reg. 9 in force at 1.4.1990, see reg. 1

Connections

10. Where necessary to prevent danger, every joint and connection in a system shall be mechanically and electrically suitable for use.

Commencement Information

I10 Reg. 10 in force at 1.4.1990, see reg. 1

Means for protecting from excess of current

11. Efficient means, suitably located, shall be provided for protecting from excess of current every part of a system as may be necessary to prevent danger.

Commencement Information

I11 Reg. 11 in force at 1.4.1990, see reg. 1

Means for cutting off the supply and for isolation

12.—(1) Subject to paragraph (3), where necessary to prevent danger, suitable means (including, where appropriate, methods of identifying circuits) shall be available for—

- (a) cutting off the supply of electrical energy to any electrical equipment; and
- (b) the isolation of any electrical equipment.

(2) In paragraph (1), “isolation” means the disconnection and separation of the electrical equipment from every source of electrical energy in such a way that this disconnection and separation is secure.

(3) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to electrical equipment which is itself a source of electrical energy but, in such a case as is necessary, precautions shall be taken to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, danger.

Commencement Information

I12 [Reg. 12](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Precautions for work on equipment made dead

13. Adequate precautions shall be taken to prevent electrical equipment, which has been made dead in order to prevent danger while work is carried out on or near that equipment, from becoming electrically charged during that work if danger may thereby arise.

Commencement Information

I13 [Reg. 13](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Work on or near live conductors

14. No person shall be engaged in any work activity on or so near any live conductor (other than one suitably covered with insulating material so as to prevent danger) that danger may arise unless—

- (a) it is unreasonable in all the circumstances for it to be dead; and
- (b) it is reasonable in all the circumstances for him to be at work on or near it while it is live; and
- (c) suitable precautions (including where necessary the provision of suitable protective equipment) are taken to prevent injury.

Commencement Information

I14 [Reg. 14](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Working space, access and lighting

15. For the purposes of enabling injury to be prevented, adequate working space, adequate means of access, and adequate lighting shall be provided at all electrical equipment on which or near which work is being done in circumstances which may give rise to danger.

Commencement Information

I15 [Reg. 15](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Persons to be competent to prevent danger and injury

16. No person shall be engaged in any work activity where technical knowledge or experience is necessary to prevent danger or, where appropriate, injury, unless he possesses such knowledge

or experience, or is under such degree of supervision as may be appropriate having regard to the nature of the work.

Commencement Information

I16 Reg. 16 in force at 1.4.1990, see **reg. 1**

PART III

REGULATIONS APPLYING TO MINES ONLY

Provisions applying to mines only

F317.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Introduction of electrical equipment

F318.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Restriction of equipment in certain zones below ground

F319.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Cutting off electricity or making safe where firedamp is found either below ground or at the surface

F320.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Approval of certain equipment for use in safety-lamp mines

F321.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Means of cutting off electricity to circuits below ground

F322.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Oil-filled equipment

F323.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Records and information

F324.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Electric shock notices

F325.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Introduction of battery-powered locomotives and vehicles into safety-lamp mines

F326.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Storage, charging and transfer of electrical storage batteries

F327.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

Disapplication of section 157 of the Mines and Quarries Act 1954

F328.

F3 Regs. 17-28 revoked (6.4.2015) by The Mines Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/3248), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 4 Pt. 2** (with reg. 1(3))

PART IV

MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL

Defence

29. In any proceedings for an offence consisting of a contravention of regulations 4(4), 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 or 25, it shall be a defence for any person to prove that he took all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence to avoid the commission of that offence.

Commencement Information

I17 [Reg. 29](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

Exemption certificates

30.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the Health and Safety Executive may, by a certificate in writing, exempt—

- (a) any person;
- (b) any premises;
- (c) any electrical equipment;
- (d) any electrical system;
- (e) any electrical process;
- (f) any activity,

or any class of the above, from any requirement or prohibition imposed by these Regulations and any such exemption may be granted subject to conditions and to a limit of time and may be revoked by a certificate in writing at any time.

(2) The Executive shall not grant any such exemption unless, having regard to the circumstances of the case, and in particular to—

- (a) the conditions, if any, which it proposes to attach to the exemption; and
- (b) any other requirements imposed by or under any enactment which apply to the case,

it is satisfied that the health and safety of persons who are likely to be affected by the exemption will not be prejudiced in consequence of it.

Commencement Information

I18 [Reg. 30](#) in force at 1.4.1990, see [reg. 1](#)

[^{F4}Application

31. These Regulations shall apply—

- (a) in Great Britain; and
- (b) outside Great Britain as sections 1 to 59 and 80 to 82 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 apply by virtue of the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (Application outside Great Britain) Order 1995.]

F4 Reg. 31 substituted (21.2.1998) by The Offshore Electricity and Noise Regulations 1997 (S.I. 1997/1993), regs. 1, 2

Commencement Information

I19 Reg. 31 in force at 1.4.1990, see **reg. 1**

Disapplication of duties

- 32.** The duties imposed by these Regulations shall not extend to—
- (a) the master or crew of a sea-going ship or to the employer of such persons, in relation to the normal ship-board activities of a ship's crew under the direction of the master; or
 - (b) any person, in relation to any aircraft or hovercraft which is moving under its own power.

Commencement Information

I20 Reg. 32 in force at 1.4.1990, see **reg. 1**

Revocations and modifications

33.—(1) The instruments specified in column 1 of Part I of Schedule 2 are revoked to the extent specified in the corresponding entry in column 3 of that Part.

(2) The enactments and instruments specified in Part II of Schedule 2 shall be modified to the extent specified in that Part.

(3) In the Mines and Quarries Act 1954, the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969(1) and the Mines Management Act 1971(2), and in regulations made under any of those Acts, or in health and safety regulations, any reference to any of those Acts shall be treated as including a reference to these Regulations.

Commencement Information

I21 Reg. 33 in force at 1.4.1990, see **reg. 1**

Signed by order of the Secretary of State.

7th April 1989

Patrick Nicholls
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Department of Employment

(1) 1969 c. 10.
(2) 1971 c. 20.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.