

Electrical Safety Policy

Date Reviewed	02/02/2022	Next Review Date	01/02/2025
Reviewed by	Head of Assets & Investment	Approval by	Executive Team
Consultation	Health & Safety Panel	Responsible Officer	Deputy Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE

To ensure the safety of fixed electrical installation and portable appliances (where applicable) in properties we own and manage. To give assurance we meet our obligations as a landlord and employer, that electrical safety is adequately managed, minimising the risks of electrocution, fire, damage to property, injury or death to customers, colleagues and the general public.

The main objectives of this policy are to ensure:

- Legal compliance is achieved, and good practice is adopted.
- There is a clear approach for the maintenance and upgrading of electrical installations.
- Remedial works are carried out within appropriate time scales so that homes remain safe and electrical installations are maintained to a high standard.
- A prompt, efficient and cost-effective electrical installation repair, servicing and inspection service is provided.
- Adequate records and quality monitoring systems are implemented.
- The basis on which portable appliance (PAT) testing is understood.

2. SCOPE

This policy relates to all properties owned and managed by BCHG. An exception can be made for agency managed properties where the lease states that electrical testing is responsibility of the leaseholder.

An electrical installation is made up of all fixed electrical wiring and equipment that is supplied from the point of the electricity meter and beyond. It includes the cables that are usually hidden in the fabric of the building (walls, floors and ceilings), accessories (sockets, switches and light fittings) and the consumer unit (fuse box) that contains all the fuses, circuit-breakers and residual current devices (RCD's).

This policy covers testing, upgrading and inspection of all electrical installations. All electrical repairs, upgrades and renewals will be categorised to ensure that the correct levels of priority are given.

Electrical systems will be repaired, renewed, upgraded and tested in accordance with industry guidance and manufacturers recommendations.

Typical installations and systems covered include domestic electrical installations; communal landlord installations; emergency lighting systems; fixed fire alarm installations; door entry systems; electric heating systems (including convectional and sustainable heating systems i.e. air source heat pumps); portable equipment owned by the organisation.

3. DEFINITIONS

Only appropriately skilled and competent persons will carry out electrical inspections and testing. A person shall be deemed skilled to carry out the appropriate inspection and testing only if they have sufficient qualification, knowledge and experience. All appointed electrical contractors shall be registered with the NICEIC, ECA, NAPIT or other accredited bodies and shall be registered under a recognised Domestic Installer Self-Certification Scheme in compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations.

We will ensure that all our homes and communal installations are tested in accordance with the Institute of Engineering Technology (EIT) Regulation statutory timescales.

We will also complete an Electrical Installation Certificate on all properties that are subject to particular types of improvement works where electrical circuits are affected.

4. RELATED POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The key areas of Internal policies and government legislation for this policy are:

Internal

Policies/Procedures	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs & Maintenance Policy • Asbestos Policy • Fire Safety Policy • Complaints Policy and Procedure • Void Property Procedure • Contractor Code of Conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Strategy • Environmental Management Strategy • Strategic Plan • Customer Engagement Strategy

External

Legislation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defective Premises Act 1972 • Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 • The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 • Housing Act 2004 • Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 • Building Regulations Act 1984 • Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 • Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes (Fitness for Habitation) Act 2018 • RSH Home Standard • Decent Homes Standard • Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006 • Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 • Provisional Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Deputy Chief Executive retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are available to enable the objectives of this policy to be met.

The Asset and Building Safety Manager is responsible for the associated procedures; this includes responsibility for monitoring, review, policy development and ensuring risks associated with electrical installations and safety are managed effectively.

The Asset and Building Safety Manager is responsible for the operational delivery of, and compliance of this policy, staff awareness, training and communication to customers.

The Compliance Manager will take day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy, including:

- Ensuring adequate processes and procedures are in place to manage the risks arising from electrical works.
- Ensuring sufficient information, instruction and training is carried out; monitoring the performance of staff and contractors; ensuring that members of the public, staff and contractors are not unnecessarily exposed to risk.
- Ensuring appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and that regular reviews are carried out.
- Ensuring appropriate inspections are made to assess the condition of electrical installations and equipment, maintain property records and relevant certification.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of legislative requirements and best practice.
- Providing regular instruction and training to maintain skills, provide advice on the application of this policy on an individual case by case basis.

All employees, irrespective of their position shall; take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of the persons who may be adversely affected by the works, including members of the public, tenants, visitors and contractors; co-operate as appropriately with other staff and agencies to ensure compliance with this policy and all other legal requirements, halt works that, in their opinion, may represent a serious risk to health and safety; report any concerns that they may have in relation to the management of electrical compliance and electrical safety.

BCHG RESPONSIBILITIES

- We aim to ensure that all electrical installations are installed and maintained to the relevant standards and are sufficient to meet the needs of our tenants and leaseholders.
- In achieving this we will ensure sufficient socket outlets for the number of portable appliances likely to be used, in order to minimise the use of multi socket adapters and extension leads.
- Ensure provision is in place to prevent contact with live parts; residual current device (RCD) protection is provided where appropriate; satisfactory

earthing/bonding arrangements are present to incoming services, e.g. gas, water etc; sufficient circuits are installed to avoid danger and minimise inconvenience in the event of a fault; cables, fittings and equipment are correctly specified; all properties meet the BCHG Lettable Standard; sufficient maintenance and testing programme are in place.

- Make arrangements and inform tenants and leaseholders of electrical works. We recognise that in certain cases there may be underlying issues that contribute to access problems. These can relate to a support need, language or format issue, or a specific tenancy management problem. In these circumstances, where it is reasonably practicable to identify the need, we will try to overcome or resolve the cause of the problem and be sensitive to the issue before pursuing legal action.
- Detailed information will be kept for at least 5 years of all landlord's electrical safety certificates.
- Appropriate and regular electrical safety awareness training will be provided to all relevant staff. We will employ only suitably qualified and competent staff to manage and oversee electrical works.

CUSTOMERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Under the terms of their Tenancy Agreement tenants must allow access to their property for maintenance and / or safety checks to be carried out. In order to undertake works it may be necessary to de-energise the electrical supply to the property.
- It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that: any action in relation to saving electronics files i.e. IT related software, programmes or other electronic storage is taken prior to the commencement of the work; any contingency arrangements arising from the absence of electrical supplies are highlighted and agreed in advance of works; appropriate access and relocation / removal of any obstacles will need to be undertaken (in situations where the tenant is unable to manage, support will be agreed); the emptying and storage of freezers / fridges etc; there is a temporary provision of heating and hot water as required; floor covering such as laminate floor are removed; loft spaces are cleared; any repairs or faults are reported in a timely manner. BCHG will not be responsible for tenant's floor covering or decorations, however, will take reasonable steps to minimise decorative damages.
- Where tenants carry out property alterations and improvements, which include additions / alteration to the electrics, they should seek authorisation prior to any works being undertaken. If works are approved, tenants are responsible for ensuring appropriate safety checks are carried out and all the relevant certificates are supplied following the works/installation as set out in the Tenancy Agreement. Tenants are also responsible for meeting the cost of this.
- Any unauthorised works needing rectification may incur a recharge if any installation has been undertaken without permission and is found to be defective.

CONTRACTORS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Contractors will comply with our Contractor Code of Conduct. When undertaking any electrical installation works, the contractor will also be required to conform in full with the requirements of this policy.
- All appointed electrical contractors shall be registered with the NICEIC, ECA, NAPIT or other accredited bodies and shall be registered under a recognised Domestic Installer Self-Certification Scheme in compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations.
- Every effort will be made to arrange a convenient time and date with the tenant for access to complete the works. Appointments will be made and in certain situations written notice provided. In cases where access is denied on several pre-arranged occasions and following several written notifications, we will consider using legal action to gain access.

6. FREQUENCY

The frequency of inspection and testing will be determined by considering: the type of installation and adequacy of earthing and bonding; suitability of switchgear and control gear; serviceability of accessories and fitting; type of systems and their condition; extent of wear and tear, damage or other deterioration of other parts of the installation and level of misuse (e.g., vandalism); presence of adequate identification and notices; any change in the use of premises which have led to, or might lead to, deficiencies in the installation.

On completion of the test, certification will be issued. This will make recommendations which will be reviewed by a competent person and the necessary remedial works prioritised accordingly.

Where appropriate, works will be batched and delivered through a programmed approach either individually or as part of other programmed works (e.g. Kitchen/Bathroom replacements). Where recommendations relate to observations only, these will be monitored through subsequent inspection and testing.

Electrical works identified on certification will be recorded using the following categories:

Code C1: Where a real and immediate danger is observed that puts the safety of those using the installation at risk.

- The contractor will be authorised to remedy the emergency rectification of this deficiency immediately.

Code C2: An observed deficiency not considered to be dangerous at the time of inspection but would become a real and immediate danger if a fault or the foreseeable event was to occur.

- If not carried out at the time of inspection, remedial works will take place no longer than six months after the inspection.

Code C3: Used to indicate that, whilst an observed deficiency is not considered to be a source of immediate or potential danger, improvement would contribute to an enhancement of the safety of the electrical installation.

- If not carried out at the time of the inspection, the work would be scheduled as part of the next rewire, planned major works, or be picked up as part of the void process.

BCHG's stock will be subject to a full electrical condition report and test at the following intervals:

- New build - A valid electrical test certificate will be a pre-requisite of the handover process and is to be provided to BCHG prior to completion for review and amendment/retesting as required. The first inspection following installation will be carried out within 5 years of the date of the installation certificate.
- Acquisitions - A valid electrical test certificate will be a pre-requisite of the acceptance of the property for purchase/transfer
- Rewires - First inspection carried out within 5 years of the date of the installation certificate.
- 5 Yearly - General needs stock and communal areas to be inspected every five years, or at a change of occupancy (Voids and Mutual Exchanges).
- Annually - Laundry rooms and commercial kitchens will be inspected, and a certificate issued.
- Annually - Electric vehicle charging points in communal areas and offices
- Upgrade/Risk event - Following any major upgrade works or event where electrical installations are affected.

7. PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) testing will be delivered by suitably trained and qualified personnel/contractors.

PAT testing will be carried out at the following intervals;

- Frequently used equipment i.e. Vacuum Cleaners, Floor Polishers and any other equipment subject to heavy and sustained use will be tested at an interval **not exceeding 6 months**
- All other equipment shall be tested at an interval **not exceeding 2 years**

8. MONITORING AND CONTROL

In order to ensure full compliance, monitoring will be undertaken regularly through the use of BCHG's Asset Compliance system (Pimss), documenting all assets and their relevant testing and timescales.

The Compliance Manager will review the system regularly and a summary of our electrical compliance provided quarterly to BCHG's Group Audit Committee.

Appropriate information and certification will be stored on BCHG's SharePoint document management system against each property file.

9. AUDITING AND REVIEW

Quality of work is assessed in four ways:

- Internal staff reviewing certificates.
- Contractor's internal quality control regime in producing certificates.
- Annual NICEIC Accreditation Audit of BCHG's Qualified Supervisor(s).
- Internal audit according to BCHG's compliance audit schedule.
- External audit – where concern is raised from any of the above 4 areas of control.

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is central to our business; promoting fairness and opportunity for customers and staff; helping BCHG to provide the best services shaped by and for customers; and provide you with the right personnel for your circumstances.

We are committed to celebrating diversity. To ensure equal access to our services is available, BCHG comply with the Equality Act 2010 and all other legislative requirements relating to equality. We will work to avoid exclusions or restrictions that are not appropriate to the needs of our tenants and that may lead to discrimination. We will endeavour to ensure that all customers receive a consistent level of quality service.

Equality Consideration

Under the Equality Act 2010 BCHG must consider whether our policies adversely affect our customers and/or staff and in this case, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed.

The following table identifies whether this policy disproportionately impacts upon any individuals in regard to the key protected characteristics, as identified in the Act:

Special Characteristic	Any impact? (Yes or No)
Disability	No Impact
Gender reassignment	No Impact
Marriage and civil partnership	No Impact
Pregnancy and maternity	No Impact
Race	No Impact
Religion or Belief	No Impact
Sexual Orientation	No Impact
Sex (gender)	No Impact
Age	No Impact