



New Laws Residual Current Devices (RCDs)

New regulations under the Electricity Act 1945 that take effect on 9 August 2009 require homes to have two residual current devices (RCDs) installed at the time the ownership is transferred or, when a new rental lease is made.

RCDs save lives

RCDs monitor the flow of electricity from the main switchboard and prevent electrocution by cutting the electricity supply if an imbalance in the current is detected. By installing two RCDs, the property's circuits can be divided evenly between the two. This ensures some light and power remain if one RCD operates and also minimises faulty operation from appliances which have low-level leakage current. All properties constructed from the year 2000 should already have two RCDs fitted.

Homes for sale

From 9 August 2009, two RCDs must be fitted to protect all power point and lighting circuits in all homes before the land title is transferred. If you are planning to sell your home and it does not already have two RCDs protecting all power point and lighting circuits, you will need to engage a licensed electrical contractor to fit two RCDs to the main switchboard or distribution board.

Renting a home

Landlords must arrange for two RCDs to be installed on the switchboard at their rental premises before a new tenant takes up occupancy or before August 2011 for continuing tenancies. If RCDs are not fitted at the time that a new lease is entered into, tenants should contact the managing agent or landlord and request that two RCDs be installed.

Testing the RCD

All RCDs have a test button which should be pressed every three months. Pushing the test button simulates an earth leakage fault and indicates whether or not the RCD is operating correctly. Electric clocks and timers will require resetting after each test.

Cost of RCDs

As a guide, it should cost no more than \$500 to supply and fit two single-phase RCDs in an average sized 4x2 home.

Compliance

Electrical inspectors will monitor homes sold or leased for compliance. Penalties of up to \$15,000 for individuals and up to \$100,000 for a body corporate may apply if the regulations are breached.

For more information visit
www.energysafety.wa.gov.au/RCD
or call 9422 5200.

