

Requirements for the Effective Supervision of Apprentice Electricians

These requirements have been developed to assist supervising electricians and electrical contractors in providing supervision to electrical apprentices during the on-the-job training element of an electrical apprenticeship. The requirements reflect the intent of 'effective supervision' as defined in the Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009, and assist with compliance to the Electrical Safety Act 1998.

It is the responsibility of the supervising electrician to provide effective supervision to the apprentice. Effective supervision means being present at the site of the electrical work to the extent necessary to ensure that the work is being correctly performed and carried out in accordance with the Act and Regulations. The supervisor must be aware of the details of the electrical work being performed, give instruction and direction, and is responsible for the compliance of the electrical work.

Restrictions

In all cases, the supervising electrician shall be responsible for carrying out isolation procedures, confirmation of isolation, compliance testing and commissioning / energisation. Apprentices should have the opportunity to carry out these tasks in the final stages of their apprenticeship, but only under direct supervision, and under the conditions below:

- A 3rd stage apprentice may carry out basic fault finding under direct supervision
- A 4th stage apprentice may carry out basic fault finding under general supervision only if they have been deemed competent to do so
- A 4th stage apprentice may carry out advanced fault finding and confirmation of isolation under direct supervision.

Diversification of training

The level of guidance required by an apprentice may be expected to gradually diminish from direct supervision through general instruction to a broad direction over the stages of the apprenticeship, as competency is attained and demonstrated by the apprentice.

The level of competency directly relates to the type of work being carried out. For example, a 4th stage apprentice who generally works on domestic installations would not necessarily be competent to work at the same level on a construction site or a large industrial site, and may require additional direct supervision on the requirements when introduced to these unfamiliar work sites. Therefore the supervising electrician must ensure the apprentice is given adequate supervision until it can be established that they are considered as competent to perform the task for a particular installation.

It is desirable for the apprentice to be given experience in a broad range of electrical installation work, to ensure a balanced overall electrical knowledge is obtained at the completion of training.

Direct Supervision

The supervising electrician shall provide specific and constant guidance to the apprentice, closely liaising with and monitoring the apprentice, and continually reviewing the work practices and the standard of the apprentice's work. The electrician shall be readily available in the immediate work area, within audible range (earshot) and where possible within the visual range of the apprentice.

General Supervision

The apprentice does not require specific constant guidance from the supervising electrician whilst performing familiar tasks. However the apprentice will still require tangible face-to-face contact at regular intervals throughout the day. The supervising electrician shall provide the apprentice with instruction and direction for the tasks to be performed. They shall periodically check and test the work being performed and provide the apprentice with additional guidance and assistance as required.

Broad Supervision

The apprentice at this level of supervision must be able to demonstrate electrical knowledge relevant to the task. As such, the apprentice will not require constant guidance from the supervising electrician whilst performing **familiar tasks**. The supervising electrician shall consult with the apprentice in regard to the tasks being performed, and provide instruction and direction as required. The supervising electrician shall provide periodic face-to-face contact throughout the day, to check the work being carried out by the apprentice complies with electrical and safety requirements. The apprentice may only isolate, test or commission circuits and equipment, whilst under the **direct** supervision of the supervising electrician.

Stages of Training

Throughout these requirements, an electrical apprentice is a person under a contract of training that will result in a Certificate III Electrotechnology. The reference to first, second, third and fourth stages relate to attaining the required level of competency and progression at the Registered Training Organisations, and are not specifically calendar years.

What is not covered by these requirements

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 places a duty of care on employers to provide such supervision to employees as necessary to enable the employees to perform their work in a manner that is safe and without risks to health. The use of the above requirements in no way removes or limits the employer's duty of care under Occupational Health and Safety legislation in providing a safe workplace.

Supervision Requirements for an Electrical Apprentice

