



RCD – Information Sheet

For further information head to the Department of Commerce website

What is an RCD?

An RCD is a safety device that prevents electrocution by cutting the electricity supply immediately. It works on the principle that the electricity flowing into a circuit must be equal to the current flowing out of a circuit. When you receive a shock it means an electrical current has passed through the body directly to earth.

RCDs are fitted at the meter box and will have a test button on them. If you press the 'test' button or the RCD has detected an issue, the on/off switch will go to the 'off' position.

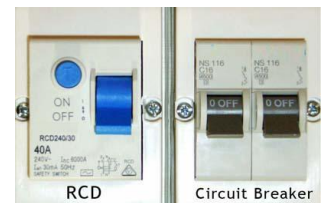
A minimum of two RCDs are required to ensure some light and power remains if one operates. Two RCDs also reduces the possibility of tripping due to some appliances which have low levels of earth leakage.



RCD VS Circuit Breaker

Circuit breakers and fuses are designed to protect electrical cables and fittings installed in the home from overloading and short circuits. They cut the power when electrical wiring in the home has too much current flowing through it. They are designed to prevent electrical fires not electrocution.

An RCD looks like a circuit breaker but also has a test button. The picture shows two circuit breakers compared with an RCD (note the test button). Combined RCD/circuit breakers are available also. These devices provide protection from overload, short circuit and electrocution. They also have a test button.



Homeowners

A minimum of **two RCDs** protecting all power and lighting circuits must be fitted to a residential property before it can be sold and the transfer of title takes place. Penalties apply if RCDs are not fitted and the land title is transferred to another person.

Where a property is intended to be demolished, the seller is not required to install RCDs at the point of sale. The buyer must provide written notice to the seller, stating that the property will be demolished within six months of transfer. If the property is not demolished within six months of transfer, the buyer must then install the required number of RCDs. If the buyer does not do so, he/she is in breach of the regulations.

I have purchased a new property and it's not protected by two RCDs. What do I do?

1. Contact the previous owner and ask them to fit the RCDs to comply with the law.
2. If the previous owner does not arrange for the RCDs to be fitted, then send them a written request. Keep a copy of this letter.
3. If the previous owner fails to fit the RCDs within a reasonable time, send Building and Energy (formerly EnergySafety) a copy of the letter requesting the previous owner to fit the RCDs, a copy of the title for the property (showing the date of transfer of the title) and a photograph of the main switchboard (where the RCDs should be located).
4. Complaints can be sent via email to be.info@dmirs.wa.gov.au or by post to Locked Bag 100, East Perth WA 6892.
5. Once Building and Energy receives this information, we will arrange for the relevant Network Operator to inspect the installation and if RCDs are required to be fitted, issue an Order.
6. Following the issue of an Order you must fit the RCDs. You can also seek reimbursement of the cost but this is a civil matter between the owners.
7. Building and Energy will investigate your complaint.

Simple steps for testing your RCD

1. Follow these simple steps to ensure your RCDs are operating correctly:
2. Plug a small lamp into a power point and make sure it works. Leave it turned on.
3. Make sure that electricity is connected to the property and the main switch is in the "on" position. The lamp should be on.
4. Turn off all electronic equipment (computers and televisions) etc.
5. Push the test button on each RCD. Do not hold your finger on the test button. The RCD should operate (turn off). If it does not operate, it must be checked by an electrical contractor.
6. After pushing the test button and the RCDs have turned off, check that the small lamp is now off. Also check that all the lights and power points do not operate. To do this, plug the small lamp into all the power points and turn the power point on. If the lamp turns on, a licensed electrical contractor must be engaged to correct the wiring.
7. When finished testing, turn the RCDs back on and check that the lamp works when plugged into a power point.

What if the property I own, or want to buy, only has one RCD? Is that enough?

No. A second RCD must be installed and the power point and lighting circuits divided between the two RCDs. If you own the property contact a licensed electrical contractor to arrange for a second RCD to be installed.

If I am selling a house how do I prove to the buyer that two RCDs are installed to meet the new legislation?

There is no requirement to provide proof that RCDs are fitted to a residence under the RCD legislation. However, if requested by the Buyer then it is recommended that you or the Buyer engage a licensed electrical contractor to inspect the residential installation and provide an Electrical Safety Certificate stating that two RCDs are installed protecting all power points and lighting final sub-circuits.

What if I want to buy a house and no RCDs are fitted?

From 9 August 2009, two RCDs must be installed in every residential property before it can be sold. If you are considering buying a property, check the main switchboard of the home for the RCDs. RCDs can be identified by the test button, see picture on page 1. Properties built after 2000 should already have RCDs installed.

Who can install RCDs?

Any licensed electrical contractor can supply and fit RCDs. Get in touch with J & C Electrical Contracting for a no obligation quote.



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