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By choosing an **accredited Master Electrician** you are choosing a **quality electrical contractor** who has proven they have the experience to provide you with a **safe, energy efficient solution** for your home or business.

New Work Health and Safety requirements
for RCDs in NSW Workplaces

**What you need
to know**



What is an RCD?

Residual current devices (RCDs), commonly referred to as 'safety switches', are electrical safety devices designed to immediately switch off the supply of electricity when electricity leaking to earth is detected at harmful levels.

RCDs offer high levels of personal protection from electric shock by detecting an imbalance in the electrical current and disconnecting the power, preventing electrocution and fire in your workplace.

Electrical hazards are often hidden and can be difficult to identify, such as a small hole in an extension lead or a power board damaged internally. Electrical accidents occur in an instant. RCDs can protect your workers from these hidden dangers and give them a second chance.



What are the new laws regarding RCDs?

If you are an employer, self-employed person or a controller of premises in New South Wales, you will have new duties under the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (section 164).

From 1 January 2013, new requirements for the installation of RCDs on socket outlets in hostile operating environments* in the workplace will come into effect.

* A hostile operating environment is where an electrical article is in its normal use subjected to operating conditions that are likely to result in damage to the item of equipment.

For example: conditions that are subject to moisture, heat, vibration, corrosive chemicals or dust in the construction, demolition, manufacturing or food industries.

The *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (section 164) states that the risk to electrical safety must be minimised by the use of an RCD if electrical equipment is connected through a socket outlet and the equipment:

- Is exposed to operating conditions that are likely to result in damage to the equipment (or a reduction in its expected life span) including conditions that involve exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals or dust
- Is moved between different locations in circumstances where damage to the equipment or to a flexible electricity supply cord is reasonably likely
- Is frequently moved during its normal use
- Forms part of, or is used with, an amusement device.

The maximum penalty for contravening this requirement is \$6,000 for an individual and \$30,000 for a body corporate.



Testing of RCDs

The *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (section 165) states that the person with management or control of a workplace must ensure that RCDs used at a workplace are tested regularly by a competent person to ensure the devices are working effectively.

The testing of an RCD involves two types of tests. The first is a simple push button test that can be carried out by a person that has been instructed on how to use the built-in test push button.

The second test involves testing the operational performance of the RCD that measures the tripping time and tripping current. This type of testing needs to be carried out by a person who is trained in the use of an RCD tester, such as your local Master Electrician.

The maximum penalty for contravening this requirement is \$3,600 for an individual and \$18,000 for a body corporate.

All RCDs that are not operating effectively must be replaced as soon as practicable. A record of testing (other than daily testing) must be kept until the device is next tested or disposed of.

The maximum penalty for contravening this requirement is \$1,250 for an individual and \$6,000 for a body corporate.



What action should I take to implement the RCD laws in my workplace?

It is recommended that planning and implementation efforts are focused on achieving compliance with the new requirements, before 1 January 2013.

Contact your local Master Electrician today for an RCD inspection and ensure you are compliant under this new regulation.

See overleaf for your local Master Electrician's contact details.