

Guidance Note - Roof Space Work

Background

The Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2024 introduced new requirements for carrying out work in or entering domestic roof spaces. These new requirements are specified in [Part 6 Division 7](#) of the Electrical Safety Regulation 2013.

From 1 January 2025, a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that a worker does not carry out work in or enter the roof space of a building unless the building's relevant electrical installation(s) have been de-energised.

What buildings are captured

The requirements apply to the following building classes as provided for under the Building Code of Australia:

- Class 1 - residential buildings such as houses, town houses, row houses. This also captures boarding houses and guest houses, as well as hostels with a floor area less than 300m² and ordinarily having less than 12 people living in them
- Class 2 - apartment buildings
- Class 10a - non-habitable buildings such as sheds, carports and private garages.

Further guidance on building classes can be found in the Building Code of Australia on the Queensland Building and Construction Commission website qbcc.qld.gov.au.

What is a “roof space”

A roof space refers to the space in the domestic building which is:

- immediately under the roof; or
- if there is a ceiling under any part of the roof – between the space immediately under the roof and the ceiling including the ceiling structure.

A roof space does not include habitable areas of the roof space. For example: a space that has been re-purposed for storage, as a bedroom or activity room.

What does “entering the roof space” mean

Carrying out work in or otherwise entering a roof space refers to a situation where you enter a domestic property for the purposes of doing work (including for a preliminary quote or inspection), and whilst at the place any part of a worker's body enters the roof space. This includes where a worker:

- enters the roof space in order to access the roof
- threads a wire through a hole in the roof space
- stick their head through the roof space entry point to visually inspect the roof space
- places their hand through a hole in the ceiling sheets to reach into the roof space
- places a body part in the roof space in the course of removing sheeting or tiles from the roof.

When can I enter a roof space

You must not enter the roof space unless –

- the relevant electrical installation(s) for the building are de-energised; or
- either of the following two prescribed circumstances apply:
 - a) it is not reasonably practicable to carry out the work or enter the roof space while the relevant electrical installation(s) are de-energised; **or**

For example, the building has solar panels on the roof or is supplied by an overhead electricity service. Whilst it is imperative that all main switches are turned off, the solar PV array cables and/or consumer mains cable running through the roof is still energised causing the electrical installation to be partially energised.

If power is necessary to perform electrical work, the requirements for electrical work on energised electrical equipment apply.

- b) It is necessary to test, service or commission a thing, other than electrical equipment, that is energised and located in, or accessible by, the roof space.

For example: a roof mounted air extraction system where adjustments may be required on the ELV temperature control unit.

Is a licensed electrical worker needed to de-energise the building's relevant electrical installation(s)

No. The electrical installation(s) can generally be de-energised by turning off all main switches on a building's main switchboard. An electrician is not needed to do this.

Even though the main switch(es) have been turned off, consumer mains and solar PV array cables may still be energised, presenting a risk to a person carrying out work in or otherwise entering the roof space. Where the consumer mains or solar PV array cables run through the roof space, a risk assessment and statement are to be conducted before any work is undertaken or entry is made.

A way to determine the relevant electrical installation(s) have been de-energised, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to turn on a light and/or appliance before turning off the main switch(es) and then checking that light/appliance is off.

Points to consider when de-energising the relevant electrical installation(s) include:

- Switch off all power at the main switchboard by turning off the main switch(es) and confirm the installation is de-energised, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- If possible, place a lockout tag on the main switches(es) or lock the switchboard itself.
- Use a commercially available device, tag or label to indicate the switches have been turned off to facilitate entry into a roof space so someone else doesn't turn them back on while a person is working in the roof space.
- Always let someone know a person is going up into the roof space and the expected time they will be in the roof space.
- Non-electrical workers must not attempt to remove any fuses on the switchboard.

Checks that can be made to determine if the relevant installation is de-energised include:

- Before entering the roof space confirm the power is off by trying to turn on lights or appliances within the property as a check.
- A non-contact proximity voltage tester, known as a 'volt stick', can be used to check on wiring and exposed metallic material.

If you are not sure that the power has been isolated, contact a licensed electrician to confirm.

What documentation is required

Where entry to a roof space is required under either of the two prescribed circumstances, a risk assessment must be conducted and a statement for the work or entry prepared.

A **risk assessment** involves identifying any hazards, assessing the risks from the identified hazards, determining ways to control the risks, and ensuring controls are in place and remain effective for the duration of the work.

A **statement** for the work or entry (*statement*) involves:

- identifying the work or entry.
- specifying the hazards associated with the work and risks associated with the hazards.
- describing what measures are to be taken to control the risks.
- describing how the measures are going to be implemented, monitored and reviewed.

When completing the work or entry, PCBU's must ensure that workers do so in accordance with the statement.

Risk assessments and statements must be retained by the PCBU for the following durations and be made available to a request for inspection under the *Electrical Safety Act 2002*:

- risk assessment – at least 28 days after the work or entry is completed.
- statement – until the work or entry is completed.

Where a serious electrical incident or dangerous electrical event occurs, PCBU's must retain both the risk assessment and statement for at least 2 years.

Do these requirements apply to roof spaces of a commercial building

Work in commercial buildings is generally not included. However, where a building is a class 1 building under the Building Code of Australia the requirements do apply (e.g., boarding houses, guest houses and smaller hostels).

When carrying out work in or otherwise entering a roof space of a commercial building, PCBU's and workers should take all necessary steps to ensure they have identified the hazards, managed the risk and implemented a safe system of work when carrying out the work or entry.

The owner will not let me turn the power off

If the PCBU or worker is not able to de-energise the relevant electrical installation(s), for whatever reason, or be satisfied that either of the two exemptions (prescribed circumstances) apply, the work or entry **must not proceed**. Not de-energising the relevant electrical installation(s) for convenience would fail to meet either of the exemptions.

The Electrical Safety Office has produced a letter to the homeowner highlighting the mandatory requirements for roof space work. The letter can be used by PCBU's and workers when explaining the roof space work and entry requirements. The letter is available for download from the WorkSafe Queensland website.

What if something happens when I turn the power back on

If a fault occurs when the power is turned back on (e.g. safety switch trips and will not reset), the owner/occupier should be advised to contact their preferred licensed electrical contractor and ask them to attend and investigate the cause of the fault.

Please note that electrical work must only be performed by a person who holds an appropriate electrical work licence.

Learn more

Further information can be found at [Carrying out work in or entering domestic roof spaces | WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/Carrying-out-work-in-or-entering-domestic-roof-spaces).

PCBUs and workers must also comply with work health and safety requirements to minimise risks caused by other factors such as heat, biological hazards, asbestos, and restricted spaces. Further information on managing work health and safety risks can be found at [Ceiling spaces | WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/Ceiling-spaces).