

**ELECTRICAL**

# Ceiling Foil Insulation Risks to Licenced Electrical Workers

This information bulletin provides information to Licenced Electrical Workers and Contractors on the risks associated with foil ceiling insulation.

When working in ceiling spaces where foil insulation has been laid on the ceiling structure, you must prevent or minimise the associated electrical safety risks. In such cases the foil insulation is likely to cover, and has the potential to make contact with, electrical cables / equipment and other services within the ceiling space. Some of the associated risks may include electrocution, serious electric shock and burns.

A number of factors should be considered as part of the licenced electrical worker's risk assessment before entering the ceiling space or commencing any work on such installations. These factors include:

- Electrical cables which may have been damaged during the installation of ceiling insulation eg. cutting, piercing, nailing or stapling into electrical cables
- Defective electrical cables eg. perished or rodent-damaged cable insulation
- Exposed terminals or conductors of electrical equipment in the ceiling space eg. behind light fittings, fans etc
- Longer-term electrical safety risks associated with foil insulation due to the disturbance of the foil, and home maintenance activities which may result in the electrification of the foil insulation.

These factors result in an increased risk to electrical workers undertaking work including electrical testing at these installations.

The detection of voltage when testing foil insulation may be due to a voltage other than directly from the mains supply or electricity generation systems. Please see NT WorkSafe information bulletin [05.01.05](#) Voltmeter measurements – for assistance in the interpretation of test readings.

For further information on this safety issue and related information please see:

- [19.01.03](#) Public Safety – Managing foil ceiling insulation risks – householders and tradespersons
- [05.01.05](#) Voltmeter measurements
- [05.02.04](#) Thermal insulation around electrical equipment and accessories
- [SA200908](#) Safety Alert – Incorrect installation of thermal insulation around electrical equipment and accessories

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