

Bulletin

Managing foil ceiling insulation electrical safety risks – for householders and tradespersons

This information bulletin provides information about the electrical safety risks associated with foil ceiling insulation.

Legislation

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act

The NT WorkSafe information bulletin *Understanding Primary Duty of Care* provides a guide to the duties of care for employers and workers to themselves and others.

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations

Regulation 147 *Risk management* states that a person conducting a business or undertaking at a workplace must manage risks to health and safety associated with electrical risks at the workplace.

Electricity Reform Act

- Section 67 *Electrical installations to comply with technical requirements*
- Section 68 *Responsibility of owner or operator of installation*

Electricity Reform (Safety and Technical) Regulations

- Regulation 3 *Installations to comply with Australian Standard*

Electrical safety risks

There are electrical safety risks associated with ceiling spaces where foil ceiling insulation has been laid on the ceiling structure. In such cases the foil insulation is likely to cover, and has the potential to make contact with, electrical cables/equipment and other services in the ceiling space.

Ceiling insulation faults, defective electrical cables (e.g. perished or rodent-damaged cable insulation) and home maintenance activities may, over time, result in electrification of the foil insulation. These factors increase the risk to householders, and to tradespersons undertaking work in ceiling spaces. Some of the associated risks may include electrocution, serious electric shock and burns.

Advice to householders and tradespersons

NT WorkSafe has the following safety advice for householders and tradespersons needing to access the ceiling space of a house fitted with foil insulation. This advice applies whether or not the foil insulation has been electrically checked by a Licensed Electrical Contractor since its installation.

To reduce risks:

Householders and tradespersons should not enter the ceiling space of a house where foil ceiling insulation is installed.

If access to the ceiling space cannot be avoided:

Householders and tradespersons should ensure that all sources of electricity supply to the premises are isolated before entry to the ceiling space.

- This may include the identification and isolation of all sources of electricity supply to the premises by a Licensed Electrical Contractor.
- If there is another source of power connected to the house, such as a solar panel or generator, this must also be isolated before accessing the ceiling space.
- Simply turning off all main switches at the switchboard/s **may not** isolate all sources of electricity supply to the premises.

Further advice:

- NT WorkSafe considers that the safe removal of foil from the ceiling space provides the greatest level of electrical safety.
- Alternatively, householders should consider the installation of safety switches for all final sub-circuits and sub-mains located in the ceiling space by a licensed electrical contractor.
- Should an electric shock be experienced, no matter how slight, the victim should immediately seek medical assistance. It should also be reported immediately to NT WorkSafe on 1800 019 115.
- Contact with any metal parts in the home should be avoided and all activity in the ceiling space suspended until the electrical installation is verified electrically safe.

Additional information

Information bulletins

- *Voltmeter measurements*
- *Installation of thermal insulation around electrical equipment and accessories*

Safety Alert

- *Incorrect installation of thermal insulation around electrical equipment and accessories*

Contact us

For further information please contact us on 1800 019 115, facsimile (08) 8999 5141, via email at ntworksafe@nt.gov.au or go to the NT WorkSafe website at www.worksafe.nt.gov.au

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