

**PRINCIPAL DUTY  
HOLDERS & QUALIFIED  
SUPERVISORS**  
**A GUIDE TO ROLES &  
RESPONSIBILITIES**



**THE POWER BEHIND YOUR BUSINESS**



## ***INTRODUCTION***

This document is intended to provide guidance to Principal Duty Holders (PDH), Qualified Supervisors (QS) and Responsible Persons (RP) to ensure the adequate supervision of electrical installation work undertaken by their businesses and should be read in conjunction with the Electrotechnical Assessment Specification 2015.

### ***THE PDH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT:***

- There are systems in place where all electrical work undertaken is carried out by competent persons
- Employees, including all sub-contracted staff, are adequately and appropriately advised or supervised to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees, customers and other persons

The QS's (RP) fundamental responsibility lies with the quality and compliance of the day-to-day work of the business. It should be noted that this responsibility may affect the amount of time the QS is engaged directly in electrical installation work.

The importance of the role of the QS (RP) and the adequacy of the supervision in the overall process of ensuring that the electrical installation work is compliant can, in some instances, be disregarded through worker ignorance and/or ineptitude regarding the knowledge, attitude, skills and time required to do the job.

The responsibilities of the QS (RP) should be clearly stated by the PDH and consideration should be given to stating these responsibilities in writing.

The level of supervision necessary for electrical installation work undertaken by the business will be determined by the level of competence of each operative with regard to the risks involved in the work they are being instructed to undertake.



Where the risks involved are low, verbal instructions are likely to be adequate but as the risk or complexity increase there is a point where the need for written procedures become important to ensure that instructions may be understood and supervised more rigorously. In this context, supervision does not necessarily require continual attendance at the work site but the degree of supervision and the manner in which it is exercised is for the PDH and QS to arrange to ensure that danger, or injury, is prevented.

The following tabulated information will assist and guide the PDH and QS to ensure that ALL work is adequately supervised. This would only apply where supervision models are used (i.e. where installation work is carried out by someone registered as a QS where there is no additional assessment required, e.g. sole traders).

**TABLE 1 LEVEL OF OPERATIVE SUPERVISED**

<b>OPERATIVE LEVEL</b>	<b>GUIDANCE</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Operatives would be <b>Instructed persons (electrically)</b> who would generally be apprentices, labourers, electrician’s mates or electrical improvers - and who under the supervision of a <b>Skilled person (electrically)</b> , could be able to install wiring systems. Others that fall within this category are career changers who may have training and/or qualifications but lack experience.
<b>Level 2</b>	Operatives would be <b>Instructed persons (electrically)</b> who are experienced, trusted electrical installers who can carry out electrical installation work efficiently and in accordance with the current BS 7671 and Building Regulations/Standards. Therefore they can be expected mostly to work without the need of close and detailed supervision.
<b>Level 3</b>	Operatives would be considered as <b>Skilled persons (electrically)</b> who possess practical, theoretical and electrical engineering skills, experience and knowledge with adequate technical supervisory experience comparable to that of QS/RP.

**TABLE 2 DEGREE OF RISK IN THE ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION WORK**

<b>INSTALLATION WORK EXAMPLES</b>	<small>(note the business will be responsible for judging the degree of risk. This table is provided for guidance)</small>	<b>DEGREE OF RISK TO A CONSUMER</b>
Electrical work where the installation is isolated when not under the control of the installer e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ First fix electrical installation work</li> <li>■ Second fix electrical installation work</li> </ul>		Low
Electrical work defined in BS 7671 as Minor Works in an unoccupied building – subject to safe isolation procedures documented and implemented		Low
Electrical work defined in BS 7671 as Minor Works in an occupied building – subject to safe isolation procedures documented and implemented		Medium
All other Electrical installation work including that covered by relevant Building Regulations and Technical Handbooks.		High
Electrical work – Periodic Inspection and Testing		High

**TABLE 3 RISK MATRIX**

<b>LEVEL OF OPERATIVE SUPERVISED (FROM TABLE 1)</b>	<b>Level 1 Operative (instructed person: apprentice, improver, electrician's mate)</b>			
	<b>Level 2 Operative (instructed person: experienced, trusted)</b>			
	<b>Level 3 Operative (skilled person: equivalent to QS/RP without role or qualification)</b>			
		<b>Low Risk</b>	<b>Medium Risk</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
<b>DEGREE OF RISK IN THE INSTALLATION (FROM TABLE 2)</b>				

**TABLE 4 DEGREE OF SUPERVISION**

<b>RISK</b>	<b>NATURE OF INSTRUCTION TO OPERATIVE</b>	<b>MINIMUM REQUIRED COMPETENCE OF INSPECTOR*</b>	<b>INVOLVEMENT OF QS ON SITE</b>
	Verbal	Satisfying the definition of a <b>Skilled Person (electrically)</b>	Remote
	Written		Periodic
	Written		Close and Detailed

It is recognised that the person responsible for carrying out the initial verification or periodic inspection, testing and certification of the installation may not be the registered QS/RP. The person shall hold an appropriate qualification or be able to demonstrate equivalent competence.