

Electrical Safety in QLD Under Harmonised Legislation

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The introduction of the harmonised WHS legislation in most States and Territories in January 2012 was designed to minimise the impact of managing WHS across borders. However with existing legislation already in place in some jurisdictions for certain risk areas (ie. fire safety, electrical safety), a number of sections from the model legislation were not introduced. Given the existence of the Electrical Safety Act and Regulation 2002 in Queensland, the need for enacting Part 4.7 “General Electrical Safety in Workplaces and Energised Electrical Work” of the model WHS legislation was not required, hence this section of the legislation was dropped from Queensland. The requirements to ensure electrical safety in the workplace in Queensland are not dissimilar to those under Part 4.7 of the harmonised legislation. The following table is a summary of the equivalent sections of the Queensland legislation (non-energised work, non-construction).

Harmonised Regulation Part 4.7*	Equivalent QLD Requirement
Division 3 - Section 149 – Unsafe Electrical Equipment	General Duty Under Part 2 of Electrical Safety Act 2002
Division 3 - Section 150 – Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment	Division 5 of Electrical Safety Regulation 2002 – Section depends on type of work (ie. construction, manufacturing, service / office)
Division 3 - Section 164 – Use of Socket Outlets in Hostile Operating Environment	Division 5 of Electrical Safety Regulation 2002 – Section depends on type of work (ie. construction, manufacturing, service / office)
Division 3 - Section 165 – Testing of Residual Current Devices	Division 5 of Electrical Safety Regulation 2002 – Section depends on type of work (ie. construction, manufacturing, service / office)

* Part 4.7 of the harmonised regulations has been included in the legislation for NSW, ACT, NT

Requirement for Test and Tag and RCD Use in Service/Office Situations

The following comparison has been made between the requirements under the Harmonised Regulations and the Qld Electrical Safety Regulations.

Harmonised Regulation Division 3

Section 149 of the harmonised WHS regulation requires a PCBU to ensure that electrical equipment that is connected to electricity through a socket outlet and is located in an environment that is likely to result in damage to the equipment (or a reduction in its expected life span) is *Regularly Inspected and Tested by a Competent Person*. A record of the inspection and testing is to be retained.

AND in addition to the testing and tagging above, Section 164 of the regulation requires a PCBU to ensure that electrical equipment is protected by the use of a Residual Current Device where the equipment is:

- used in an environment in which the normal use of the equipment exposes the equipment to operating conditions that are likely to result in damage to the equipment



- or a reduction in its expected life span; or
- moved between different locations in circumstances where damage to the equipment or to a flexible electricity supply cord is reasonably likely; or
- frequently moved during its normal use; or
- forms part of, or is used in connection with, an amusement device.



QLD Electrical Safety Regulation Division 5

Division 5 of the Queensland Electrical Safety Regulation requires a PCBU who has control of service / office work situations where specified electrical equipment is used to **EITHER**:

- conduct inspection, testing and tagging of electrical equipment; **OR**
- connect the electrical equipment to the electricity supply through a tested and tagged type 1 or type 2 safety switch (ie. RCD).

There is a requirement for both test and tag of the equipment and use of an RCD to be applied in higher risk situations such as situations where maintenance work is being undertaken on a building.

The following table provides a summary of the application of the legislation to a typical office situation.

Scenario	Harmonised Regulation Part 4.7*	QLD Electrical Safety Regulation 2002
Office Building – Photocopier	No specific requirement to Test and Tag or use RCD protection	
Office Building – Toaster in Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment Test and Tag; AND • Residual Current Device. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment Test and Tag; OR • Residual Current Device.
Office Building – Vacuum Cleaner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment Test and Tag; AND • Residual Current Device. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment Test and Tag; OR • Residual Current Device.
Office Building – Maintenance Work (using electric drill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment Test and Tag; AND • Residual Current Device. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment Test and Tag; AND • Residual Current Device.

If you have specific queries regarding these requirements please call Wade Russell on 0405 582 700 or Cameron Hunter on 0488 555 460.