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Prepare Now for New Electrical Rules or Face Costly Refits, Says phs Compliance

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There are important new rules for electrical installations coming into place next year, designed to improve safety, energy efficiency and the future readiness of the UK's electrical systems.

For businesses, this means any future electrical work – such as installing energy storage, upgrading IT systems or improving building efficiency – will need to meet these new safety and performance standards.

Preparing now will help avoid costly retrofits and compliance issues once the new rules take effect, says Jonathan Mackie, Managing Director at phs Compliance, the UK's leading provider of electrical testing for businesses.

"BS7671, also known as the IET Wiring Regulations, is the national standard for electrical installation and wiring safety in the UK. It covers the design, installation and verification of electrical installations, including additions and alterations, in both domestic and commercial environments.

"In 2026, BS7671 will see an important new amendment. Amendment 4 to BS7671 (2026), as it is known, will introduce updates to electrical installation regulations, driven by the need to keep pace with technological advances and to harmonise with evolving European standards.

"Whilst still in development and not expected to be published until next year, the final Amendment 4 is expected to touch nearly every facet of modern electrical installation work and shape the regulatory landscape for the next five years.

"Key updates include clearer requirements for modern technologies like battery storage systems (used for backup power or solar energy), smart devices powered by data cables (Power over Ethernet) and improved

fire safety in buildings. These changes will help ensure that electrical installations in homes, offices and commercial buildings meet the highest safety and performance standards.

“The changes also support businesses in reducing energy costs, increasing sustainability and complying with fire and safety laws linked to the Building Safety Act.

“Whilst they will not come into effect until next year, preparing now will ensure the smoothest, most cost-effective transition. If you have electrical work planned, or are likely to in the future, it’s important to take steps now.

“The new rules are detailed and specific so it’s crucial that you work with a qualified and experienced electrical contractor, like phs Compliance, who fully understands these changes and can ensure any future electrical work meets the new standards. Cutting corners is not an option.

“phs Compliance can talk you through how the new rules apply to your business and future electrical work and can help you take steps now to stay compliant in the most cost-effective way.”

phs Compliance is offering businesses four practical steps to take now to future-proof their electrical work:

- Talk to your electrical contractor now if you are planning any future building upgrades, solar panels or IT system changes. This will avoid redoing work to meet the new standard when it takes effect.
- Review future projects because the changes may affect how these are designed and installed. This is particularly true for energy saving upgrades like smart lighting, emergency systems and ICT network upgrades.
- Make sure your electrical installations are aligned with your fire strategy – the changes focus heavily on the safe installation of battery systems, emergency power supplies and cabling in fire exit routes.
- Budget for new compliance. Unfortunately, the changes may mean that you face extra costs so planning ahead with an expert can make the changes as cost-effective as possible.

Amendment 4 is still in development with the IET (The Institution of Engineering and Technology) and the final document is expected to be published in 2026. The following are draft proposals only at this stage from the IET and may or may not be included in the final publication of Amendment 4.

The proposals include a new:

· Section 545, Functional earthing and functional-equipotential- bonding for information communication technology equipment and systems (ICT), such as broadcast, communication technology and computer network systems.

· Chapter 57, Stationary secondary battery installations.

· Section 716, Distribution of ELV DC power using balanced, information technology cables and accessories primarily designed for data transmission. Detailed requirements on low voltage generating sets.

In addition, there are updates throughout BS 7671, including changes to:

- Requirements for medical locations
- Requirements for firefighter's switches
- Chapter 65 concerning periodic inspection and testing

phs Compliance has the largest team of specialist statutory testing operators in the industry, bringing unrivalled expertise and the best service and value to businesses across the country.

phs Compliance holds accreditation with UKAS as a Type C inspection body accredited to ISO/IEC 17020:2012, which covers the inspection of new and existing electrical installations and the in-service inspection and testing of electrical equipment.

phs Compliance's accreditation with UKAS ensures that every aspect of its quality management system, including competency and impartiality of its engineers, inspection methods and management system procedures are comprehensively audited at the highest level within the industry. phs Compliance is also certified by the NICEIC as an approved contractor.