

YOUR GUIDE TO ELECTRICAL WORK IN THE BATHROOM



THE POWER TO MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER



ELECSA

BATHROOMS ARE INCREASINGLY BECOMING AN IMPORTANT FEATURE OF ANY MODERN HOME.

As a relaxing sanctuary from a busy family life they are getting bigger and better, with separate showers, oversized tubs, sauna rooms and even televisions.

However, water and electricity are a dangerous mix so it when it comes to installing any electrical circuits or items, a bathroom is considered a special location.

This means that certain electrical work carried out in the bathroom has to be notified and signed off by a local building control department so that it meets the appropriate safety standards.

A straightforward way of meeting the requirements is to use a contractor who is registered with a competent person scheme such as NICEIC or ELECSA. They can self-certify the work and notify the local building control department on your behalf.

What type of work is notifiable?

When it comes to electrical installations, bathrooms are considered a high risk location.

If you are carrying out work in the bathroom that requires any addition or alteration to existing circuits then the work could be notifiable to your local building control department to ensure it meets the correct safety standards.

Generally, any work carried out to the circuit within a specific zone close to the bath or shower unit is considered notifiable.

A straightforward way of meeting the requirements is to use a contractor who is registered with a Competent Person Scheme such as NICEIC or ELECSA. They can self-certify the work and notify the local building control department on your behalf.

Electrical Sockets

Electrical sockets are permitted in bathrooms or shower rooms as long as they are located more than 3m from the edge of the bath or shower. Specially designed shaver units are an exception to this rule and can be located slightly nearer, but still no closer than 600mm from the bath or shower.

Electric Showers

Electric showers require their own electrical circuit, which in general will have the highest electrical demand out of your household appliances.

All circuits in a bathroom must be protected by a RCD (Residual Current Device).

They will need to be connected to the consumer unit and protected by an RCD. The cost of fitting an electric shower will depend on whether the consumer unit requires updating to comply with current safety standards.

Building regulations require an adequate means of ventilation. An extractor fan is essential and will help cut down steam in the bathroom.

Bathroom Heating

All electric heaters and water heaters in a bathroom must be fixed and permanently wired. Hot water central heating or underfloor heating is the safest way of keeping a bathroom warm, but if you do have an electric room heater it must be out of the reach of someone in the bath or shower.

Underfloor heating may require sub-floors to be laid, made up of 20mm of chipboard or plywood to provide an even level and insulation, and then the heating is laid with a screed over the top.

If you're not having floor tiles and choose lino or carpet instead you will need thicker screed before laying the final floor finish, this will allow for the build-up and even spread of heat.

A wall-mounted thermostat will need to be positioned where water can't splash and will generally be linked to a heat-sensing probe situated within the floor. It's best to choose a thermostat with a timer, so you can set it when the heating comes on. This type of system requires RCD protection.



Bathroom Lighting

Lighting needs to be functional, but can also be adaptable for mood setting.

For make-up application and shaving it's best to have a bright light, but if relaxing for a soak in the tub you'll want to be sure you can dim the lights.

Wall lights look better if they are hard wired into the wall with tiles laid over the top. If you're not planning on changing the tiles you will have to enclose any cables in trunking.

Enclosed ceiling lights such as spotlights are preferable to pendant light fittings and all other wall lights must be out of reach, or enclosed to keep water out.

If spotlights are being installed above a shower or bath (within the special zones) then they must be enclosed. It is recommended that spotlights are fitted properly with a fire hood or be flame safe for protection against heat and to prevent the spread of fire.

They should be controlled by a ceiling mounted pull-cord switch, where the cord is made of insulating material, or a wall switch, which must be mounted a set distance away from the areas considered special zones within a bathroom.



Bathroom Luxuries

If you have extra budget and want to turn your bathroom into your personal spa or television room, there's always a way, but just make sure that all electrics are fitted safely.

Whirlpool tub

Increasing numbers of homeowners are turning luxury into a reality by installing spa baths.

Pumps are fitted underneath the bath and an isolator switch must be located outside the bathroom to turn off the mains power and be RCD protected.

Television

All TVs have to be fitted into a wall cavity and the area around the screen siliconed to prevent water getting in.

You'll need a depth of 75mm to 85mm so that the screen sits flush with the wall. To prevent the screen steaming up the TV glass is heated.

You'll also need speakers, which like the TV, must be hardwired into the wall or ceiling.



I want to fit a new bathroom. What do I need to know?

Due to the increased risk of water mixing with electricity the bathroom is potentially one of the most dangerous rooms in the home.

The chances of an electric shock occurring in the bathroom are increased and so due care must be taken when dealing with remedial or building work in this area.

Certain electrical work carried out in the bathroom has to be notified to the local building control department so that it meets the appropriate safety standards.

Speak to the electrician before any work to upgrade your bathroom commences, particularly if you are installing a new shower, lighting or heating system.

Find out if the work complies with Part P of the building regulations and that the appropriate notification and certification will be taken care of once the work is completed.

A straightforward way of meeting the requirements is to use an NICEIC or ELECSA registered contractor. They can self-certify the work and notify the local building control department on your behalf.

How can I get my bathroom checked for electrical safety?

You should contact your local NICEIC or ELECSA registered contractor and ask them to carry out an electrical inspection (sometimes known as a periodic inspection) of the property.

Much like an MOT, this is an inspection of the current condition of an electrical installation in your home. On completion of the inspection, you will receive an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) detailing any damage, deterioration, defects, dangerous conditions and anything not in line with the present-day safety standard which might give rise to danger.

How often should this check be carried out?

There is no regulation regarding how often an electrical inspection should be carried out. However, NICEIC and ELECSA recommend that an EICR is carried out every ten years in a privately owned home. For rented properties this should be every five years or when there is a change of occupancy.

Where can I find an NICEIC or ELECSA registered electrician?

You can search for a registered electrical contractor in your area by simply visiting niceic.com or elecsa.co.uk and typing in your postcode. We would recommend getting quotes from at least 3 different firms before agreeing to carry out any work.

Why use an NICEIC or ELECSA registered contractor?

Choosing an NICEIC or ELECSA registered contractor is a householder's best way to ensure a safe job. Electricians registered with NICEIC and ELECSA are assessed on a regular basis to ensure high standards and their work is checked against the IET Wiring Regulations as well as other standards.

What happens if something goes wrong?



All NICEIC and ELECSA registered businesses are covered by the Platinum Promise – a promise that protects you against all non-compliant installation work.

Should any work carried out by one of our contractors be found not to comply with the Building Regulations or relevant installation standards, we can instruct the contractor to go back and carry out the work to the required standard.

If the contractor is no longer in business or disputes the matter we will have the work rectified by another registered contractor at no extra cost.

The Platinum promise is valid for up to six years from the date of the completion of the original work and covers work up to a maximum of £25,000 for any one installation.

**TO FIND A REGISTERED ELECTRICIAN IN YOUR AREA
VISIT NICEIC.COM OR ELECSA.CO.UK OR CALL 0843 290 3439**