

The prevailing approaches to electrical compliance management are broken!



The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (EAWR) places a legal responsibility on employers and employees, as duty holders, to ensure that electrical systems used at work under their control are safe. This involves amongst other things, proper Electrical, Inspection and Testing (EI&T) of the electrical systems by competent people and the creation and maintenance of records.

The prevailing approach to the planning and quantifying fixed wire Electrical Inspection and Testing programme is a completely manual process: Planning engineers need to trawl through historical documentation in order to work up a plan for electrical testing. This involves finding paper and electronic documentation, site visits and human memory to establish what was previously done. The volume of information is overwhelming and difficult to manage. This approach is compounded by the prevailing belief that electrical certificates for new installations, minor works and condition reports must be manually received, stored, retrieved and managed.

Large buildings typically have over 15,000 circuits. This volume of data creates a challenge in tracking and identifying which circuits were last tested, which circuits should be planned for testing, where the high risk items are, the planning process is forced into assuming that everything must be tested in order to ensure compliance; this is expensive and disruptive. Inevitably a compromise is reached and a sample size to test is agreed on. However, nobody is quite sure whether the sample is suitable for establishing the compliance risk of the electrical system. Furthermore, any recent installations, minor works or inspections will not be included in the latest report, leading to an incomplete view of what the overall compliance situation.

During the testing process the prevailing view is that only a high level reporting is possible, for example, only a rough statement of what sections or distribution boards have been tested. A circuit by circuit report of what is planned and tested is not available, the result is that the evaluation of work done cannot be easily costed.

On completion of testing the distribution board schedules and distribution board networks need to be updated and certificates stored. Again, these documents are manually updated, distributed and filed for future use.

In large estates, disparate systems and formats of storing the electrical data results in the integrity of the electrical data deteriorating over time. This creates an ongoing challenge for reporting on the risk of the electrical system across the estate. The prevailing approaches cannot easily solve this key compliance reporting imperative.

There is no doubt that the process of planning, managing and reporting on the electrical compliance is broken! The result is unnecessary cost, time and risk. Improving the process will reduce the time, effort and cost required to plan, monitor and track the electrical

compliance. In an environment where budgets are under pressure and reduced staff levels are the norm any reduction in effort, cost and time will be a welcome relief.

The current approach is encumbered by the large volume of data, disparate systems, incompatible data structures and ongoing changes to the regulations making any improvement difficult. The problem can be fixed.

The antidote to the problem is SMARTER EI&T®. SMARTER EI&T® is a holistic process, system and governance for reducing the cost, time and risk of planning and managing electrical compliance. The SMARTER EI&T® process aims to ensure that data is captured once and used many times, including the automation of the electrical compliance planning and reporting process.

Adopting SMARTER EI&T® will result in :

- A well defined process for planning, managing and reporting electrical compliance
- Effective governance to ensure the process and systems are used appropriately
- The EDIS system as a central repository for electrical information
- Automatic detailed circuit level reports that compliment human engineering judgements
- Automated document management
- Tightly targeted, well designed risk based testing with visual inspections will allow for better risk management.
- Detail reports circuit level reports can be easily provided
- Automated generation of electrical schematics
- Distribution board schedules are easily accessed and automatically updated throughout the life of the asset.

The SMARTER EI&T® powered by EDIS has been refined over the past 10 years and is used by large NHS Trusts, local councils, public and private estate manager to reduce the costs and time of managing electrical compliance and shines a light the otherwise difficult to assess electrical compliance risk.

About the author:

Michael Joubert, the EDIS Operations Director has over 10 years of experience in working with electrical compliance programmes and ensuring the end-to-end process of planning, testing and reporting electrical compliance regimes is correctly managed.

About EDIS:



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