

THOUSANDS OF QUEENSLANDERS ARE LEFT IN ELECTRICAL DANGER DAILY

This year's Electrical industry will continue to leave thousands of tenants, homeowners, apprentices, and electricians at risk of electric shocks, with a growing number of landlords at risk of prosecution.

My name is Clem Capdevila, last year I wrote 8 advertisements explaining my concerns about our current electrical industry. These publications encouraged the Queensland Government to produce a "Landlords Webinar".

The Electrical wiring rules (AS/NZS3000:2018amd.2) do not leave any property electrically safe. On an existing property, there is no need when following the latest wiring rules for an electrician to install any additional safety switches or test anything they did not install. Including, on a new build there is no need to check every power point once installed, leaving the possibility of an electrical hazard. Also, once the power is turned ON to the property, there is no test to ensure there is no voltages on taps or an Energex incoming fault both with the potential for electric shock if present. Therefore, under the definition of electrical safety (as defined below), **the (AS/NZS3000:2018amd.2) does not comply** when working on a new or existing property.

An electrical apprentice and an electrician both receive an electric shock, and the incident is not reported.

In 2021, an electrical apprentice received a painful electrical shock. **The deadly 240 volts of electricity travelled from his right hand, passed his heart, and out through his left hand resulting in strong pain even after the event.** The apprentice notified an electrician, who also received an electric shock. The apprentice claims that he felt like the company did not want to file the incident report with statements such as 'it's a lot of paperwork'. The apprentice fearing losing his job, said to the company that he was "Ok" and would simply return to work.

The company failed to report and failed to apply a mandatory "rack-out system" to protect the workers from electric shock. A rack-out system places a device over the circuit switch, in the "OFF" position. Each electrical worker including apprentices place their own lock on the system. To turn the power back on, each worker must use their own key to remove their lock from the rack-out system.

Most Electrical contracting companies would rather make a few hundred dollars, for the work you requested and move on to the next job, than to talk to you about electrical safety. It's not good enough to tell you your switchboard needs attention on their way out.

The lack of electrical testing is the number one cause of electric shocks and property fire. Closely followed by having electrical work conducted by incompetent electricians,

and unlicensed homeowners and tenants.

An electrician inspects a rental property and passes a non-compliant switchboard. Leaving the landlord at risk of prosecution. Recently my eldest daughter entered into her first rental agreement, naturally she asked me to check the property. She informed me that the property had been inspected by an electrician and had passed. The switchboard (built in 2017) is non-compliant. On my inspection, there are 2 breaches from the 2007 electrical wiring rules. In this case, even though the electrician said it was "ok", the Landlord would still be liable for prosecution under the Queensland Electrical Safety Act 2002 if an incident occurred.

The Queensland Electrical Safety Act 2002 enforces landlords to ensure electrical safety to its tenants.

19 years later, not every landlord is aware of their obligations and especially not all tenants are electrically safe.

The method to create electrical safety as outlined in my earlier publication and the Queensland Governments 2020 Landlords Webinar.

1. Install safety switches on all circuits. A frequent testing procedure must be left with the occupants to ensure they keep working correctly. Old safety switches should be replaced.
2. Test all cables and earths.
3. Test all appliances.
4. Check the property for electrical dangers.
5. Introduce periodic testing to ensure electrical safety is maintained. The obligation for landlords to comply with these 5 steps is mandatory under the Queensland Electrical Safety Act 2002. Landlords can face jail time if tenants are exposed to and receive electrical harm. Furthermore, the landlord cannot transfer the responsibility to an electrician, contractor, real estate, or a body corporate.

The reality is your electrical installation (in any property or appliance), from the day it was turned on is deteriorating. The deterioration time can vary from item to item, with toasters, irons and dryers going first. The same is happening to everything else, and when your electrical cables finally break down completely, it can result in a fire or potentially death. It is true that **the risk is real.** My professional estimation is that the serious reported electric shocks ratio, to non-reported electric shocks is 1/800+. That is, **for every death or hospitalised electric shock, 800 or more electricians, apprentices, homeowners, tenants, and public are receiving electric shocks and are not reported.**

The problems listed are happening every day, month, and year. My experience from speaking to thousands of homeowners and tenants is that once I explain about the real

position of the electrical industry relating to their electrical safety, they become slightly angry, shocked, and left feeling like they are forgotten by their Queensland Government.

The number one thing people say to me is "you're the first electrician to ever explain everything like this", this really indicates how things need to change. Last year as an electrical contractor I made a difference. Below is how I would solve the problems listed above, I hope that this will help again and see if the ratio of reported and non-reported electric shocks can drop significantly.

To prevent electric shocks to apprentices and electricians, the Queensland Government can promote a campaign to brand a new belief in the industry. Without a rack-out lock on the electrical circuit, no one is working. **"NO LOCK—NO WORK"** (sticker example below)



This should also include companies that fail to report an electric shock to incur a hefty fine in the sum of up to \$5,000,000.00. Furthermore, receiving the same fine again if dismissing an apprentice or electrician after reporting an electric shock. **Our young workforce needs to be protected by more than just words to change the cultural belief of our future Queensland electrical industry.**

The Electrical wiring rules (AS/NZS3000:2018amd.2) needs an amendment 3, that incorporates the 5 points of electrical safety for electricians working on existing properties. Landlords want to be electrically safe too, and workers have the right to work in an electrically safe environment. Furthermore, electricians working on existing properties need to be **upskilled on how to perform electrical safety inspections correctly and understand legislation.**

To protect tenants and Landlords

Step 1. The Queensland Government needs to force all real estates to disclose landlord details, and information relating to their obligations should be sent to landlords.

Step 2. **Upskilled electricians** must then check all Landlord properties.

Step 3. Create a data base with 1. Property details. 2. 1st inspection results (with requirements if any) 3. Electrical Safety status confirmed (with periodic testing in place).

Fines need to be set and made public for any unlicensed electrical work conducted.

With these changes we will have a confident young workforce able to report electric shocks and protecting our electrical workforce by refusing to work without their lock installed. Upskilled electricians

will provide a stronger workforce for our safety. Protecting tenants and landlords in an equal level of electrical safety for all Queenslanders. To ensure our best chance at success, I have emailed this publication to every politician in Queensland.

Meanwhile, while we wait for our Queensland Government, part of my immediate solution for the Queensland public, is to teach everyone on how to test for electrical safety with all the information and equipment to make it easy and electrically safe.

This will provide the public with information and knowledge about their electrical safety. **A D.I.Y system for non-electrical licenced people such as homeowners, tenants, shop owners, school ground keepers and so on. The D.I.Y testing process will not expose any live terminals, making the procedure completely safe.**

This system is designed to test and identify dangers that electricians don't look for, due to problems with the current electrical industry system outlined above. This will empower the public with knowledge and the means to check for electrical dangers themselves.

The system is sold as "Clems Electrical D.I.Y Home & Office Electrical Danger Testing Kits" with videos, pdfs and testing equipment needed to perform D.I.Y electrical safety testing.

Testing kits will teach you how to identify and test for electrical dangers in your home and office. A testing sheet provided is filled and presented to a licenced electrician to repair any identified dangers. **Please remember, the only way to check if you are electrically safe is to do it yourself. Then, tell an electrician what to fix.** Expecting electricians to check for your electrical safety is not in their thinking process.

I am providing a system that can be used by anybody. It has videos and pdfs to guide you through the entire process. An advantage of testing yourself is that it keeps nosy people from going into every corner of your home, providing real privacy. Clems Electrical has been offering this service to customers for 6 years running. **My experience is that most properties have some form of electrical danger.** I have gathered my experience on the field and created a system for QLD to use safely.

The time required and frequency as to how often you should test, is outlined in the instructions provided in the videos and pdfs. The system cannot only save you money, but potentially also your life by finding the danger before it becomes a reality. **The Risk is real.**

To purchase a kit simply email clem@clemselectrical.com.au

Thank you for reading, Clem Capdevila.

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