



**Press release**

**6 December 2004**

## **REGULAR INSPECTIONS OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS: A NECESSITY TO ENSURE SAFETY IN THE HOME**

**Most electrical installations in Europe are inadequate, outdated, unsuited to current electrical needs and, as a result, present potential dangers for the occupants. Only regular inspections will make it possible to ensure safety and to improve comfort in the home. This is the conclusion of the *Forum for Electrical Domestic Safety (FEEDS)* in its last report.**

Most European countries have up to date standards for new electrical installations. However, they are rarely applied retroactively and so only the most recent installations benefit from current safety standards and from the greater comfort and convenience they provide. As is already the case for vehicles, regular inspections of old dwellings are clearly essential. They could take place when the property is sold, or when there is a change of tenant and, at the very least, every ten years. This is consistent with recommendations by the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (Cenelec)<sup>1</sup> and with the advice of the French Consumer Safety Council issued in January 2004.

The average life expectancy of homes in Europe is around 200 years. 60% of current homes are over 30 years old and only 0.32% of the housing stock is made electrically safe each year. This means that a vast majority of electrical installations do not comply with current safety standards. This leads to a series of attention areas: no earthing, supply disruptions, no differential switch, improper usage in wet areas, no protection for children, etc. At the same time, needs are constantly increasing, due to an expansion in household and multimedia appliances. When electrical installations don't meet needs in terms of comfort or convenience, occupants tend to increase the number of dangerous practices: several appliances plugged into the same socket, extension leads under carpets, electrical equipment near water outlets, unsafe DIY jobs...

Every year, 16,000 people are injured and 540 die across Europe from electrical accidents<sup>2</sup>. In France, 20% of the 200,000 fires reported every year result from electrical causes<sup>3</sup>. Faulty electrical installations are the direct cause of around 80 deaths and an estimated 2,000 electric shocks each year, with children under 5 being the main victims. In Spain, some 70% of homes are considered "dangerous", with 30% even "very dangerous". In Italy and France, 40% of installations are not compliant. Public housing is particularly affected by this safety concern, one that is more acutely felt by the most vulnerable sections of society.

The cost of inspection is estimated to be between €50 and €100, with the cost of renovation varying between €300 and €2,000 depending on the extent of the work required.

Setting up regular inspections would also have a positive impact on employment (requiring 13,000 new inspectors and 140,000 electrical contractors across Europe) and would bolster the property and renovation market.

*The **Forum for Electrical Domestic Safety (FEEDS)** is the result of a partnership between 5 international organisations working together to improve the quality of electrical installations through the introduction of regular inspections: the European Copper Institute, a joint venture between the world's mining companies (represented by the International Copper Association, Ltd.) and the leading European fabricators; the European Association of Electrical Contractors (AIE); Europacable; the International Federation for the Safety of Electricity Users (FISUEL) and the International Union for Electricity Applications (UIE).*

<sup>1</sup> European specification for the inspection of domestic properties ES.59009.

<sup>2</sup> Source: *International Federation for the Safety of Electricity Users (FISUEL)*

<sup>3</sup> Source: French agency combating insurance fraud.

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