

## PSA Sub Committee Report

Mattie Ryan, Brian Flanagan and Denis Judge sit on the PSA sub-committee of The Association of Electrical Contractors of Ireland. They have had two meetings with the PSA, one in their offices in Tipperary and the other in the AECl Head Office in Blackrock, Dublin.

At the first meeting the AECl sub-committee wanted to get clarification on what were the PSA definitions on a licensable activity, and to clearly point out the AECl members concerns to the PSA representatives.

There were many questions drawn up which had to be clarified by the PSA some of which are listed below:

1. The position of what is deemed electrical works & what is security works.
2. Provision of power supplies for security / Access / Monitoring equipment.
3. Installation of trunking / tray / basket & containment.
4. First fixing of alarm / access control / cctv etc. cabling.
5. Security lighting / emergency lighting / fire alarms / intercoms.

Following a discussion on the importance of clear and definite answers required by our members the PSA requested a further meeting to enable them to fully clarify their response.

We have also worked with the PSA on recommending defined positions where electrical contracting works stops & PSA licence activity starts.

When a document is brought in to law, different interpretations will always emerge as these documents are normally prepared by people who are not familiar with the subject matter.

At our second meeting a lot of this miss information that has been floating around in our industry was firmly laid to rest and a number of clearly defined definitions started to emerge.

In relation to the above we would be in agreement that only a competent person should be allowed to deal with the power requirements to an intruder alarm system, where mains voltage is being applied and as covered by ETCl rules. We do not however consider this to be a licensable activity and as such it is outside of our remit.

1. The power supply after the spur outlet is 220 volts and under ETCl wiring rules should only be handled by a qualified electrician. Change to "Power Supplies after the Control Panel".
2. As indicated at our meeting on 11 October 2006 by yourself, this element of work should be completed to ETCl rules, however our remit extends only to licensable activities and we do not consider the installation of the conduits and trunking to be licensable.
3. First Fixing or Pre-wiring of Intruder Alarm Systems (IAS')

First fixing of cabling for intruder alarm systems & cctv & access control

May be installed by a none licensee but shall only be installed by competent person. The second fixing of any of the various component elements for intruder alarm systems & cctv & access control.

Can Only Be Carried Out By A holder of a valid installer (intruder alarm) licence.

4. Security lighting is not a licensable activity however, intruder alarm and access control systems are licensable activities where they warn, monitor or record. No distinction has been drawn in our legislation or regulations as to whether they provide these functions on the date of installation or not, merely whether this functionality exists in a given installation or not.

We will continue to engage in meaningful dialogue with the PSA.

and as our motto states:

WE WILL ALWAYS FOSTER & PROTECT THE ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR & OUR INDUSTRY

Best Regards  
Denis Judge

## RAFFLE RESULTS

The AECl held a raffle in February for all members who paid their subscription before 31<sup>st</sup> January. The winners were as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Alan Dowling - Cork  
A Robin Megger worth €400
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Dunn-Barr Electric - Carlow  
A Finest 135 true RMS Clamp-on metre worth €200
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Instrotec Ltd. - Dublin  
A Reflector Jacket from Bunzl worth €200
- 4<sup>th</sup> Prize: John O'Dwyer - Kilkenny  
One night's accommodation and one round of golf at The Glasson Golf Hotel and Country Club

The AECl would like to thank Eurosales, C.T. Electric, Galway, Bunzl and The Glasson Golf Hotel and Country Club for donating the prizes.

# AECl NEWS

The voice of the electrical contracting industry

February 07



## President's Message

The Officers, Executive Council and myself have invested significant time and energy in the AECl last year. Typical activities included everything from representing the AECl in various industry and electrical trade related meetings, bodies and functions, to supporting the day-to-day running of the Association, the office, organising Association events, and responding to members requests for support and information. The AECl office receives a significant number of calls every day from members seeking information or requesting support with all the varied aspects of running their businesses. We feel this type of support is a core function and benefit of the Association for our members.

We restructured the AECl office last year. This transition was challenging for myself and the other Officers but we feel it was necessary to ensure the continued sound financial basis of the Association. We appreciate your continued support and patience as we strive to broaden and improve our responsiveness, services and support infrastructure for our members.

We had a very strong year for the Association in 2006. The Association hosted the largest Electrical Industry Trade show in the country in May. We continue to represent the interests of our members with all the relevant government, industry and trade bodies.

We look forward this year to providing further improved services to our members and we encourage your active involvement in your Association.

Best regards,

Dermot Mc Clannon  
President

Our President, Mr. Dermot Mc Clannon, is also the Vice-President of the EIFI. He was guest of honour at their EIFI Annual Ball, at which he presented a cheque for €3,000 to the EIBF (Electrical Industry Benevolent Fund). This money was raised at our Annual Conference in May 2006.

## AECl TRADE SHOW 2007

SATURDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MAY  
THE RADISSON HOTEL, ATHLONE

11.00am - 4.00pm



This year we will have over 55 exhibitors including all the major equipment and service manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers.

We hope you, our members, will support us on the day and we look forward to meeting you all there



L-R: Ann Ryan, Celine Mc Clannon, Mattie Ryan and Dermot Mc Clannon

## Conference 2006

Last year our conference was held in The Lyrath Estate Hotel in Kilkenny. What a fabulous venue but equally what a fabulous conference. Our best to date! It was very well attended by you our members and others in the trade and we thank you for your support but there is always room for more. So to all of you who did not make it last year please come and support us in 2007 in The Radisson Hotel, Athlone on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May.

We had 55 stands and the feed-back from our exhibitors was very positive. Three seminars during the day, from FAS, ESB and Absolute Health and Safety were very well received and we thank them for their participation at our biggest annual event. This event is the largest electrical trade show of its kind held in Ireland and if you are involved in the electrical trade, this is where you need to be. Don't forget this year!

Our golf competition was sponsored again by Arachas/Hiberian and as usual we would like to extend our thanks to them for their continued support. The event as ever was a great success and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who played.

A special presentation was made to Michael Moran of a Lifetime membership to the AECl and we thank him for his ongoing contribution to our industry and the AECl.

€3000 was raised at the raffle on the Saturday night and a cheque was presented to the EIFI by Dermot McClannon last December. We would like to thank all those who contributed to the raffle both by donating prizes and buying tickets.

The social aspect of the week-end was also a tremendous success. Following the Buffet and Gala Dinners, dancing and fun were the order of the night and a great time was had by all.

We look forward to seeing you all again in 2007 and welcome all those who have yet to visit our Trade Show.



Michael Moran (left) accepting his lifetime membership of AECl from Dermot Mc Clannon



John Berry, Masonry Fixings, winner of the "Product of the Show" award 2006

## ETCI

The Electro-Technical Council of Ireland has prepared the following proposed drafts for National Rules for Electrical Installations, 4th Edition.

- Chapter 52: Selection & Erection of Wiring Systems.
- Chapter 53: Switchgear & Control gear: Protection, Isolation, Switching, Control & Monitoring.
- Section 551: Low Voltage Generating Sets.
- Section 552: Motor/Caravan Equipment.
- Section 553: Transformers, Reactors & Power Factor Correction Equipment.
- Section 555: Electrical Appliances.
- Section 556: Electrical Machinery.
- Section 721: Caravans & Motor Caravans.

This set of drafts has been posted to all interested parties inviting observations to be forwarded to ETCI as part of ETCI's Public Enquiry Procedure. These drafts are also available in a password protected format on the ETCI website, [www.etcie.ie](http://www.etcie.ie)

Members who wish to download these password protected drafts are requested to contact ETCI (T: 01 4290088, e-mail: [general@etcie.ie](mailto:general@etcie.ie)) giving their names, occupations and contact details. On receipt of this information, an opening password will be provided. Please note that this information is required solely as a record of persons partaking in the Public Enquiry Process. This information will not, in any way, be used to violate your rights under the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003.

If you wish to make any comments on these draft documents, please forward them so as to reach the Chief Executive Officer, ETCI on or before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007, or to the AECl Office before the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February next.

### Correct Cable Core Colours

RECI Inspectors quite often find cables installed with the wrong core colours. Particularly four core NYMJ or SWA and four core flexible cable which do not have a blue neutral. Contractors should always specify to the wholesaler the type of cable, the number of cores and the required core colours. When the cable arrives on site the core colours should be checked before work commences not at some later stage when a lot of wiring has been completed or when RECI come to inspect the installation.

Core colours are an important part of the Wiring Rules and safety of electrical installations. Always make sure that your order to your wholesaler is accurate and check that you are supplied with the correct cable.

### Wiring of Smoke & Heat Detectors to Fire Alarm Code of Practice

RECI Inspectors have discovered several cases where contractors have used protective conductors, i.e. "earthwire" as signal wires between smoke and heat detectors in domestic installations. It was also discovered that the protective conductors were then accidentally connected to the earthing system of the installation. Contractors are reminded that under no circumstances should protective conductors be used as signal wires between smoke or heat detectors.

These articles are taken from the RECI article in the Jan/Feb issue of WiredIN.

### Falls from Height 'not falling' – Norwich Union

Electricians are still not managing work at height, as revealed by claims being made against employers. Insurance company Norwich Union's own claims research has highlighted that falls remain a major cause of injuries and fatalities. Phil Grace, Norwich Union's casualty risk manager, says: "Industry needs to get its house in order by improving the control of work at height".

And some of the most serious consequences are caused by falls from a 'low height' – in other words, activities that are carried out close to the ground. In one claim, valued at more than £200,000 sterling, an employee fell while working on a van that was located on a low loader. He was using a chair to stand on at the time.

# Budget Summery 2006 - from George Frisby

## Income Tax Reliefs:

### Marginal rate of tax

The marginal rate of tax has been reduced from 42% to 41%.

### Mortgage Interest Relief

The current annual ceiling on the amount of interest that can be allowed on a mortgage is being doubled for first-time buyers from €4,000/€8,000 single/married to €8,000/€16,000 single/married. The increased relief will be available to all first-time buyers who are in the first seven years of their mortgage.

The ceiling for non-first-time buyers is also being increased, from €2,540/€5,080 single/married to €3,000/€6,000 single/married.

Business Expansion Scheme (BES) and Seed Capital Scheme (SCS) The Business Expansion Scheme is being renewed from 1 January 2007 for seven years period to 31 December 2013. The BES company limit is being increased from its current level of €1 million to €2 million, subject to a maximum of €1.5 million to be raised in a twelve month period. The investor limit is being increased from its current level of €31,750 to €150,000.

The Seed Capital Scheme is also being renewed from 1 January 2007 for a seven year period to 31 December 2013. The SCS permits employees who leave employment to invest in certain new businesses and take up a job in a relevant business to claim a refund of tax for up to the previous six years. An unemployed person or a person who was made redundant may also claim the relief. The level of an individual's tax refund depends on the level of the investment and the amount of the tax the individual has paid in previous years.

### Threshold for Tax Clearance Certificates

The transaction threshold which triggers the requirements for a tax clearance certificate for the award of a public sector contract or grant is being increased from the current €6,000 to €10,000, with effect from 1 January 2007.

## PRSI Changes

### Employee PRSI annual ceiling

As from 1 January 2007, the PRSI contribution ceiling will increase from €46,000 to €48,800.

### Employee PRSI weekly threshold

As from 1 January 2007, the employee weekly threshold for liability to PRSI will increase from €300 to €339.

### Health Contribution levy

For individuals with income in excess of €100,100 the health levy will be charged at 2.5% on the income exceeding €100,100 (2% up to €100,100).

## Indirect taxes

Reduction in Excise Duty for Home Heating Oils (Kerosene & LPG) The Excise Duty on Kerosene is being reduced from €16 per 1,000 litres to zero. The Excise Duty on LPG is being reduced from €10 per 1,000 litres to zero. These reductions are effective from 1 January 2007.

### VAT Registration Thresholds for SMEs

The VAT registration thresholds for small businesses are being increased from €27,500 to €35,000 in the case of services, and from €55,000 to €70,000 in the case of goods. These increases will take effect from 1 March 2007.

### VAT Cash Accounting Threshold

The annual VAT Cash Accounting Threshold for small firms is being increased from €635,000 to €1,000,000 with effect from 1 March 2007. This will simplify administration and reduce working capital requirements.

### Less Frequent VAT Returns for Small Businesses

The frequency of VAT payments, currently six per year, for smaller businesses is being reduced with effect from 1 July 2007. For businesses with a yearly liability of €3,000 or less, the option of filing returns on a half-yearly basis will be available. For businesses with yearly liability between €3,001 and €14,400, the option of filing returns every four months will be available.

### VAT Relief for Conferences

A specific measure which will allow deductibility of VAT on conference-related accommodation expenses will be introduced during 2007. Full details of the measure will be set out in the Finance Bill.

## Capital Gains Tax

### Increase in Threshold for CGT Retirement Relief

An exemption from CGT applies in the case of individuals aged 55 and over who dispose of qualifying business or farming assets subject to certain conditions. Disposal made to a child or favourite niece/nephew are relieved in full. All other disposals are relieved up to the threshold of €500,000. This threshold is being increased from €500,000 to €750,000 from 1 January 2007.

## Corporation Tax

Preliminary Tax payment arrangements for Corporation Tax Small companies have the option of paying preliminary tax at the lower of 90% of the final liability of the current accounting period or 100% of the final liability of the previous accounting period. The corporation tax liability threshold for treatment as a small company is being increased from €50,000 to €150,000. This will be effective from preliminary tax payment dates after 6 December 2006.

New or start-up companies with a corporation tax liability of €150,000 or less for their first accounting period will not be required to pay preliminary tax in respect of that first accounting period and will instead be required to pay their final corporation tax liability for the accounting period at the same time as they are required to submit their tax return (9 months after the end of the accounting period). This measure will come into effect for preliminary tax payment dates arising after 6 December 2006.

## Capital Allowances and Tax Incentive Schemes

### Capital Allowances (and Expenses) for Business Cars

The car value threshold for business cars is being increased from €23,000 to €24,000. The new threshold will apply to capital allowances and leasing charges for new and second-hand cars used in the course of a trade, profession or employment.

In the case of corporation tax, the new threshold will apply for expenditure incurred in an accounting period ending on or after 1 January 2007. In the case of income tax, the new threshold will apply for expenditure incurred in the basis period for the tax year 2007 and subsequent tax year.

### Corporation Tax Relief for Investment in Renewable Energy Generation

The qualifying period for the scheme of tax relief for corporate investment in certain renewable energy projects is being extended from 31 December 2006 to 31 December 2011. The extension is subject to clearance by the European Commission from State aid perspective, and will come into operation by way of a Commencement Order to be made by the Minister for Finance following such clearance.

## Disclaimer:

The material in this article is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute professional advice. It is necessarily in a condensed form. It should not be regarded as a basis for ascertaining the liability to tax in specific circumstances. Readers are advised to seek professional advice with regard to their particular situation before taking any decision or course of action.

# BRANDON

## AGENCIES

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## Office News

The AECl office has had a make-over! The latter half of 2006 was a busy one for the office. We installed a new computer system complete with flat screen monitors and a separate server to which all data is automatically saved on a daily basis.

We also changed our accounting system from Sage to The Big Red Book. This is a very simple accounts package to use even if you have no accounts experience whatsoever. It took some time to transfer all the information but we are now fully operational. If any of you are considering an accounts system The Big Red Book will make your life a whole lot simpler. If you would like to know more about The Big Red Book please call them on 01 204 8300 and they will be delighted to answer any of your queries.

We have also updated our database information on all of our members and have installed a new database. Again this was a time consuming exercise but will hopefully avoid returned post and mysterious letters that never arrive!

In addition to this we have introduced new structures and procedures to streamline the day to day running of the office. Please be assured if you have any queries do not hesitate to call the office where you will be advised or directed to someone who can answer your query.

This has led to greater efficiency for us all and we look forward to 2007 with our NEW LOOK well and truly in place.

*The AECl would like to extend its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the late Joe Flaherty, a long standing member of the AECl, who passed away suddenly on 12<sup>th</sup> February last. We extend our sympathy also to Joe's parents-in-law, Tommy Heffernan (AECl Council Member) and his wife Rose.*

## ETCI

### warns about polystyrene beads thermal insulation

The Electro-Technical Council of Ireland (ETCI) wants to draw attention to those in the building industry and associated organisations to the damage that may be caused to electrical wiring systems by contact with expanded polystyrene thermal insulation in whatever form.

When expanded polystyrene comes in contact with PVC cable, it has the potential to cause material degradation of the PVC insulation which could result in the wiring becoming unsafe. If this situation occurs there is an increased risk of fire or electric shock. Many householders may not be aware of this potential hazard.

ETCI recommends that installers and suppliers of this type of thermal installation should:

- Ensure that expanded polystyrene insulation is kept clear of electric wiring, particularly in attics.
- Warn the householder of the potential danger when using expanded polystyrene.
- Include a suitable warning notice when this insulating material is supplied.

Note that other types of insulation, e.g. placed directly on electric cables, may cause overheating of the cables concerned. Suitable warning labels should be applied to these insulating products to advise householders of the potential risk.

## Recent EGM - Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone.



Denis Judge, Treasurer and Dermot Mc Clannon, President



L-R: Denis Judge, Treasurer, Dermot Mc Clannon, President, Michael Mangan, Acting Honorary Secretary and Willie Ahern, Vice-President

The AECl held an EGM on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January last in Athlone at which there were three motions proposed by the Executive Council. The first two motions were approved unanimously and the third motion in relation to the appointment of trustees was deferred in order to get clarification on the current interpretation of rule fourteen.

Motion number one removes the word " practicing within the City of Dublin" from rule seventeen.

Motion number two ratified the appointment of M. Mangan as Acting Honorary Secretary of the AECl for 2006 / 2007.

Although the attendance was relatively small, some good and frank discussions took place on the direction the AECl should take and on the overall finances of the Association.

Some members in attendance at the EGM



## Health & Safety Check List - New Employee - No 1

- 1 A pre employment medical should be done prior to employment.
- 2 Health & Safety starts the first day of employment with the induction of your new employee to your health & safety policies "how we work safely around here".
- 3 Explain in simple plain english what is expected of them and this should include disciplinary proceeding if health & safety policies are not followed.
- 4 The company safety statement is part of your health & safety management tools and relevant sections should be gone through with the new employee. On completion of induction, ensure the employee signs a form stating that induction was given and that they are sure of what is expected of them.
- 5 Give new employee a copy of safety statement and give a specified time (i.e. 2 weeks) to read it and sign a form to state that they agree with and understand the contents and will keep their copy safe should they need to refer to its contents at a later date. Place copy of signed form in individual personal file.
- 6 Lead by example, from top management down to last recruit. ( do as we do - not just as we say) . Get all employees involved as part of safety team - it's their Health & Safety, not just yours.
- 7 Encourage an open door policy where the employee feels that they can discuss procedures or policies with you at ease should the need arise.
- 8 Ensure that all employees understand that by reporting small near misses, we can prevent accidents and injuries and ensure a safer working environment.
- 9 Ensure your company safety statement is current, company specific and includes all statutory sections.
- 10 Issue a signed list of all equipment given to employee (signed by you and employee).

**"SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS".**