

ETU OHS REPS NEWSLETTER



ELECTRICAL RISK—INSULATION ISSUES

The information below comes from a WorkSafe publication. Whilst the publication is primarily aimed at those persons who install insulation in ceiling spaces it does raise certain issues that electrical workers should take into account if they are required to enter ceiling spaces or to provide advice to householders.

As part of the Australian Government's 'Energy Efficient Homes Package', grants have been provided to homeowners to have ceiling insulation installed.

A fatality and serious injury in Brisbane in mid-October and a fatality in New South Wales highlight the serious risks associated with installing ceiling insulation.

Hazards in this type of work include:

- *electrical wiring or fittings that can cause electric shock or fire*
- *working at heights*
- *hazardous fibres or dusts*
- *heat stress*
- *vermin or insects.*

Control measures

WorkSafe expects that:

- *insulation installers are warned of the risks associated with installing conductive foil-type insulation near electrical equipment including cables, light fittings and ceiling fans. If installed incorrectly, the insulation can become energised, not only posing an electrical risk to the installer but also to others*
- *a safe system of work be used to manage such risks. This system must include measures to avoid damaging*

electrical equipment/cables when installing conductive material like aluminium insulation products

- *anyone entering a roof space to work should assess the risk from any hazards identified in the roof.*

Insulation installers should read - Construction industry pocket book – Resource for installers of ceiling insulation.

This book includes the key things to consider when installing ceiling insulation. People having insulation installed may also find the book useful.

From the publication above the hazards to consider are that foil insulation may be energised or may become energised; and that insulation may cover halogen recessed down lights and pose a fire risk.

Foil insulation in contact with cabling will pose a risk where rodent damage to the insulation is such that the cable energises the foil. Testing to confirm the status of the insulation will only confirm that at that time it was safe to enter the ceiling space. This should never be considered to be a safe installation in the long term, whilst the cable and foil insulation touch each other.

The best remedy is for the foil insulation to be removed. The other issue with insulation covering halogen down lights, a barrier must be put in place to ensure that air flow is maintained around the light in accordance with the Wiring Rules (4.5.2.3—200mm in all directions and 50mm clearance from the transformer).

NEWS

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed to an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety.

WorkSafe's research consistently shows 14 per cent of Victorian workers experienced bullying.

As well as creating a risk to health and safety, bullying can impact an organisation through reduced productivity, staff turnover and legal costs.

The WorkSafe guide, [Preventing and responding to bullying at work](#), will assist people with duties under occupational health and safety (OHS) to comply with those laws in relation to bullying at work.

The following tools (available from WorkSafe's website www.worksafe.vic.gov.au - click on bullying) can be used to help implement the advice in the guide: [What to do if bullying happens to you](#), [Employer checklist - preventing and responding to bullying at work](#) and the [Bullying risk indicator](#).

The publication provides advice applicable to any workplace in Victoria.

[A copy of Preventing and responding to bullying at work](#) can be order from the web site or can be downloaded.

It contains information for employers and employees (including volunteers) in any

job or industry.

Musculoskeletal Injuries

Every week, 400 Victorian workers suffer a preventable musculoskeletal injury.

Musculoskeletal injuries' is a broad term for a lot of different conditions that we commonly know as:

- back pain
- muscle sprains and strains
- soft tissue injuries to the neck, arms, shoulders or legs
- abdominal hernias
- carpal tunnel syndrome
- tendonitis
- Fractures and dislocations

They're all injuries to the body's musculoskeletal system – our bones, muscles, ligaments and tendons, as well as the soft tissues that connect them all together.

They can affect anyone, regardless of age or occupation.

Musculoskeletal injuries can occur suddenly as the result of a single event, e.g. a sprained ankle, or symptoms can develop slowly over time, e.g. gradual onset of lower back pain.

There are two leading causes of these injuries in Victorian workplaces, [manual handling](#), and [slips, trips and falls](#)

These injuries are preventable and the solutions are often easier than you might think.

2010 Calendar

EEIT OHS MEETING DATES

10AM –12PM

Melbourne –

21st April

23rd June

25th August

20th October

Held at:

ETU Office

200 Arden Street

North Melbourne

OHS REP TRAINING

Contact Tanya—0393269377 to book into the courses below.

Initial 5 Day OHS REPS Course

July 7, 8, 13, 14, 15

October 6, 7, 12, 13, 14

1 Day Refresher OHS Rep Course

Melbourne

April 14

July 21

October 27

Country

May 26 Morwell

July 28 Portland

September 22 Shepparton

November 24 Mildura