

The interval to the next periodic inspection

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this article is to make contractors aware of a subtle but nevertheless significant change introduced to the requirements of **BS 7671:2018** for recommending the interval to the next inspection of an electrical installation.

Introduction

Electrical installations should be inspected and tested at appropriate intervals throughout their lifetime to identify damage, deterioration, defects or dangerous conditions that might affect safety (Regulation 651.4). It is the installation designer’s responsibility for making the recommendation to the first periodic inspection, taking into account the frequency and quality of the maintenance the installation is likely to receive (Regulation 341.1). However, for subsequent periodic inspections, it is a matter of engineering judgement to be exercised by the inspector, who in making that recommendation should not be unduly influenced by the person ordering the work or their representatives.

In view of this, it should be noted that the previous requirement to record an appropriate interval on the Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is now contained in Regulation 653.4 of **BS 7671: 2018** and is amended as follows:

‘The Report shall indicate a recommended interval until the next inspection, supported by an explanation for the recommendation’

As a result, those responsible for compiling NICEIC Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) will notice that reports updated to the 18th edition of **BS 7671** include an additional item for this purpose.

Where required by the person ordering the work, a detailed explanation for recommending a particular interval can be provided on an additional page and attached to the Report, but this is not generally necessary. In most cases, a brief statement giving the main reason for the recommendation is sufficient. Therefore, as shown in Fig 1, NICEIC EICRs updated to the 18th edition of **BS 7671** include an item entitled ‘Give reason for recommendation’.

In addition to the frequency and quality of maintenance that the installation is likely to receive, Regulation 652.1 requires the interval between periodic inspection and testing to be determined, taking into consideration factors such as:

- the type of installation and the equipment installed,
- comparison of test results with the previous records,
- the manner which the installation is used and operated,
- the external influences to which the installation is likely to be exposed, and
- change of use.

The age of the installation and the availability of electrical records are other factors that

Fig 1 Next inspection

PART 5: NEXT INSPECTION

I/We (as indicated on page 1) recommend that subject to the necessary remedial work being taken, this installation should be further inspected and tested after an interval of not more than..... years/months* (delete as appropriate)
 Give reason for recommendation:

Fig 2 Example of completing 'Part 5 Next Inspection'

I/We (as indicated on page 1) recommend that subject to the necessary remedial work being taken, this installation should be further inspected and tested after an interval of not more than.....**5**..... years/months* (delete as appropriate)
 Give reason for recommendation:**As required by HMO legislation, the installation must be inspected within the interval stated**.....

contribute when determining the interval to the next inspection, but only the main reason for recommending the interval needs to be recorded on the Report. For some installations, such as construction sites and certain other special installations and locations, Part 7 of BS 7671 specifies a maximum interval, while for other installations the interval should be determined based on the inspection and testing results obtained, and taking into consideration factors such as those listed previously.

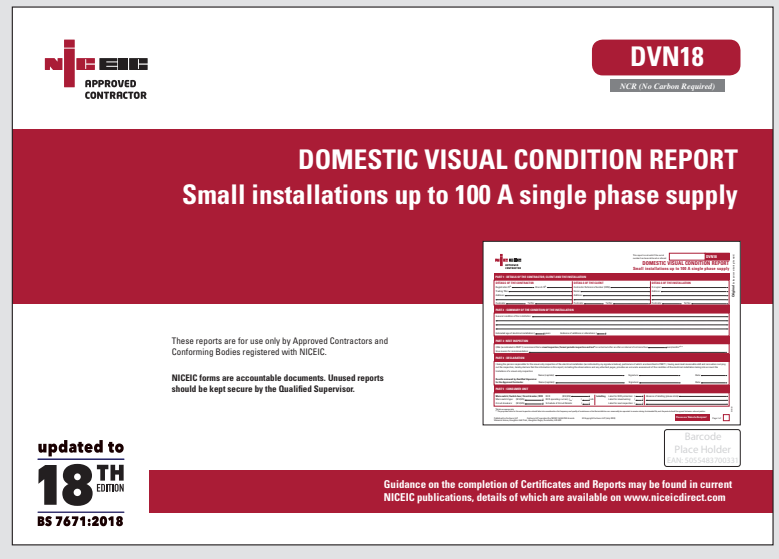
Depending on the type of installation, particular legislative or licensing requirements may require periodic inspection to be undertaken within a specified interval. For example, legislation covering a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) requires such premises to be inspected and tested at an interval not exceeding five years¹. Therefore, it would not be acceptable to record an inspection date which exceeds this interval. Where an interval less than the maximum specified in legislative or licensing requirements is stated, the reason for recommending the reduced interval should be recorded. This may be the case, for example, where the insulation resistance values obtained show a marked deterioration, or where the installation has suffered damage as a result of flooding, fire, rodent attack and the like.

A five-yearly frequency is also recommended for a domestic rental property. The Landlord and Tenant Act (England & Wales) 1985 places a duty of care on landlords to maintain their rental properties; however, the act does not specify a maximum interval in which the property should undergo inspection and testing. In Scotland, however, it is a legal requirement for periodic inspection to be undertaken on rental properties within a five-year period.

Note: The interval to the next inspection is conditional upon all items that have been given a code C1 or code C2 being addressed, and any item coded (F) should be investigated without delay.

It should be noted that a formal inspection and test may not always be required². For example, where a change of tenancy occurs within a short period after a premises has been inspected and tested, it would not be necessary to undertake formal inspection and testing again. However, a visual inspection of the

Fig 3 NICEIC 'Domestic Visual Condition Report'



electrical installation should be conducted prior to any new tenants moving into the premises so that any damage that may have been caused to accessories and fixed equipment is identified and addressed.

For the purpose of monitoring the electrical safety of a rental property, it is beneficial to supplement formal inspection and testing with regular (annual) visual inspections. For such purposes, the NICEIC 'Domestic Visual Condition Report' is made available.

Conclusion

Regulation 653.4 of BS 7671: 2018 requires that the interval to the next periodic inspection is supported by an explanation. As outlined in this article, for most purposes it is sufficient to provide a brief statement giving the main reason for the interval recommended. **C**

1 The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 and the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Wales) Regulations 2006. (Similar requirements apply in Scotland and in Northern Ireland).
2 Periodic inspection is not required for an installation that is continuously monitored and maintained by skilled maintenance teams (Regulation 652.2).