

Electrical safety

3. The law

Health and safety legislation relevant to the management of Electrical assets includes the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (EaWR)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (for mainline railway undertakings)

It should be noted that the Electricity at Work Regulations contain some regulations that are absolute. These can be identified if the requirement for that duty in that regulation is not qualified by the words 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. This means that the requirements of that regulation must be met regardless of cost or other consideration.

Guidance

- HSE – The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Guidance on Regulations
- HSE – Electricity at work: Safe working practices

See appendix for details of the growth in electrified lines on the mainline network. A large proportion of mainline electrical assets – both DC 3rd rail systems and AC overhead line equipment – was constructed before the Electricity at Work Regulations. The requirements of the Regulations are not retrospective, but Network Rail must – as part of its wider health and safety duties – keep risk control arrangements under review and identify opportunities for improvement.

As part of a 'deep dive' review undertaken by Network Rail into electrical safety it identified that if renewal of its legacy electrical assets to modern compliant standards relied solely on existing condition-based intervals, it would take over a century to achieve compliance. This was deemed unacceptable and led to the evolution of the Electrical Safety Delivery Programme described later in the chapter.

- ← Previous 2. Our view of the risk
- → Next 4. Sector overview and compliance expectations