

UPDATE ON BESS SCHEME FOR IS 3217.

The BESS Steering Committee met on 20th December to review progress on the scheme and the way forward. Among those represented at this meeting were NSAI, RECI, ECSSA, AEI, ECA, Fire Officers, ACEI.

The following is a summary of the key messages from the meeting:

- It was agreed that the BESS scheme would move into 'Implementation Phase' from the 1st January with the supervisory bodies (RECI & ECSSA) continuing the current Register pending the urgent development of a two tier training course and modified certificates to meet the new requirements. Consequently, Emergency Lighting certificates are available to all Registered Electrical Contractors for the time being.
- A sub-group has been assigned the task of developing a training course of one days duration which would meet the competency requirements for Commissioning/Inspecting the less complicated installations. These would be categorised based on risk analysis inputs from the Fire Officers and the objective is to cover that work currently undertaken by RECs who are sole traders or have few employees. The course would be a 'stepping stone' to gaining the full Level 6 qualification which covers the full range of Emergency Lighting Installations. There would be an assessment at the end of the one day course. The target is to have this course developed and approved by the end of Quarter 1 ó 2012.
- When the new course is developed and approved members on the BESS Registers will have to undertake to complete either the tier 1 course or the full BESS level 6 course to remain on the Register.
- The Register will continue to be hosted by ETCI with sub sections for RECI and ECSSA members.
- In the meantime there will be a number of new service providers coming on stream to provide the full level 6 course and the RECs have the choice (depending on the range of work they wish to undertake) to complete this course and secure their place on the Register.
- The sub-group set up to review the Certificates is also aiming to have their work completed by the end of Quarter 1.
- At a recent meeting of the Fire Officers Association there was full support for the scheme. The Fire Officers see the implementation of the BESS scheme as a strong reassurance to them that the certification of premises for compliance with the IS 3217 standard by members of the BESS Registers is a guarantee of the work being carried out by competent persons as required by SI299/2007.
- Based on the experience with the Pilot scheme and the needs of the Industry the Steering Committee is confident that this is the way forward to implementing the scheme and meet the requirements of Competency and Compliance with IS 3217 thus improving this key area of Public Safety which is of high risk to life and limb when something goes wrong due to incompetent and negligent work. The implementation of the BESS Register will lead on to Quality Assurance of work on Emergency Lighting Installations as we progress with the implementation of this voluntary regulatory scheme in tandem with the Fire Officers.