



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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ELECTRICAL SAFETY INSPECTIONS FOR FOIL INSULATION

Every home that has foil insulation installed under the Government's Home Insulation Program will undergo an electrical safety inspection, Environment Minister Peter Garrett announced today.

Mr Garrett said the move to a full program of electrical safety inspections followed the findings of inspections to date which had identified examples of 'live' insulation in roofs.

"I have made this decision today after reviewing the results of insulation electrical safety inspections conducted so far and believe this is the right move to provide certainty for households about the quality and safety of their insulation job," Mr Garrett said.

"Householder safety is the absolute priority under this program. This full program of electrical safety inspections for foil insulation reinforces that commitment.

"In order to ensure this is rolled out as quickly as possible the program for inspections will roll out in two ways.

"In the first instance a householder will be able to engage any licenced electrician to conduct a safety inspection, and where necessary, rectification work related to the installation of foil insulation under the HIP.

"This will ensure that householders will not be out of pocket for any inspection or rectification works. The licenced electrician will be able to seek reimbursement of the costs from the Commonwealth.

"Beyond the immediate term the Government will also engage one or more organisations to ensure all homes with foil insulation installed under this program are inspected and, where necessary, rectified."

Mr Garrett said the Government would be writing to all homes that have had foil insulation installed under the HIP advising householders of the situation and their options. A hotline will also be set up and available from 8am tomorrow to provide information to affected householders. That number will be 131 792

Electrical safety issues that are identified as a result of these inspections will be rectified and the Commonwealth will seek to recover the costs of that rectification from the installer, including by withholding payments for other installations.

Installers who have not complied with program guidelines will be deregistered and have their details included on the name and shame register.

“I have made it clear from the outset that the Government would not hesitate to make changes to this program to improve householder and installer safety.

“It is why we banned the use of metal fasteners for foil last year and commenced an immediate inspection program of 10 per cent of roofs with foil insulation.

“Unfortunately, despite these strong measures we are still seeing evidence of foil installations which do not meet clear program requirements.

“That is why I took steps yesterday to suspend the use of foil under this program.

“My Department will continue urgent consultations with technical experts and electrical safety authorities, as well as the foil insulation industry, and based on the outcome of these discussions I will consider what additional steps will be required if foil insulation is to remain eligible for a rebate under the Home Insulation Program.

“As I have said consistently, safety is the absolute priority under this program. That is why we have already raised safety standards, making them tougher than those in the Australian Standards and the Building Code.

“We believe that safe use of products, mandatory training or minimum skill requirements, combined with formal risk assessments and enhanced training materials, are the best ways to ensure safety for householders and installers.

Minister Garrett said the Government will not tolerate anyone who breaches the Program Guidelines. Installers have already been struck off the Installer Provider Register, and that will continue to happen if there has been a breach of the guidelines.

Mandatory training standards for all insulation installers commence from this Friday, February 12.