



MEDIA RELEASE

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Insulation death should prompt immediate policy change

The Federal Government must immediately withdraw its rebate for metal insulation products following Wednesday's death of an installer on Brisbane's south side, Master Electricians Australia said today.

The Queensland Electrical Safety Office has reported an installer was electrocuted while installing metal insulation in a home. While investigations are ongoing, the ESO believes a staple use to fix foil insulation pierced an electrical cable.

Master Electricians CEO Malcolm Richards said the Federal Government should act immediately to ensure this tragedy was not repeated.

"The government must withdraw the \$1600 rebate from metal-based insulation products. These products simply are not safe," he said.

"Metal sarking or insulation blankets with foil layers are usually laid directly over electrical cables. Once they are laid, it's impossible to judge where the cables are located when the products are being stapled into place.

"Master Electricians Australia has been warning since May of the safety risk associated with the surge in demand for roof insulation associated with the government rebate.

"This massive demand has meant that traditional products such as batts or spray-in insulation have been in short supply, and new installers have turned to other products, including metal foils and blankets.

"From an electrical point of view it is highly dangerous to lay products over cables and staple them in place, as these metal types of insulation require."

Master Electricians has also expressed concern that the rebate program has attracted a large number of new installers who, while registered with the government scheme, are not trained or experienced in dealing with the electrical safety issues associated with laying insulation.

"Across the country, our members have been reporting an increase in repair jobs as a result of poor service providers installing insulation," he said.

"As well as the electrocution risk, poorly installed insulation can also pose a fire risk if it is laid too close to down lights.

"The heat from ceiling lights cannot escape if insulation is laid incorrectly, and ceiling dust and debris can then spark a fire."

Mr Richards urged homeowners to select qualified and experienced tradespeople to reduce the risk of fire or electrocution.

“Homeowners should avoid cost-cutting, as unskilled work can lead to further costs in repair and maintenance.”

“And if you are unsure the insulation has been installed correctly, contact a Master Electrician to test that electrical cabling hasn’t been compromised during the installation, and that the work complies with fire safety standards.”

For more information visit www.masterelectricians.com.au.

Malcolm Richards is available for interviews.

Contact David Melloy, Executive Manager Marketing on 1300 889 198.