



Briefing Note for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

HERS - The Highway Electrical Registration Scheme

What is HERS?

HERS - the Highway Electrical Registration Scheme – is a Competency Scheme and Registration Scheme. HERS is a mandatory requirement of the National Highways Sector Scheme 8 (NHSS 8) for the Overseeing and / or Installation and / or Maintenance of Highway Electrical Equipment and supporting Works. NHSS 8 was initiated by the Highways Agency, and is administered by a Sector Scheme Advisory Committee comprising of employers, clients and other interested parties, which in turn reports to the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (www.ukas.com).

NHSS 8 is an integrated management system which particularises BS EN 9001:2008. However HERS has been designed to permit both quality assured and non-quality assured organisations to comply with the requirements of the Competency Scheme.

How does this relate to the CDM2007 Regulations?

HERS is designed to ensure that organisations demonstrate core competences first, and are registered, and that their employees carrying out work on site also have evidence to prove their core competences. A mapping exercise has been carried out against the core competences within the CDM2007 Regulations ACoP which shows which competences are met by HERS at both organisational level (the majority) and employee level (all). This is available in the downloads section at www.highwayelectrical.org.uk/aslec

What is the Highway Electrical Industry?

The requirements of HERS have applied generally for a number of years to those organisations and personnel carrying out work on site covering the overseeing and / or installation and / or maintenance of street / highway lighting, traffic signals, traffic signs, cameras, communications, variable message signs and slot cutting as well as other electrically supplied highway equipment.

What are the general requirements of HERS?

HERS requires:

- all organisations to be registered with the scheme administrator, ASLEC (the Association of Signals, Lighting and other highway Electrical Contractors) – either as a Quality Assured organisation to BS EN 9001:2008 or having undergone an initial organisational technical audit. ASLEC is a not for profit organisation.
- all employees carrying out work on site to be registered with the scheme administrator, ASLEC,
- all registered employees to be issued with and carry an Electrotechnical Certification Scheme (ECS) - ASLEC Registration Card, issued by the JIB through ASLEC, as a “licence to be on site”
- all registered employees to have portfolios of evidence showing the scope and areas of their competence, together with objective evidence gained from assessment on site- using industry agreed forms for observation and recorded questioning- to support claims of competency. The

areas of competency have been defined in published Competency and Occupations Matrices within the HERS Handbook

- all registered operatives to gain an appropriate Highway Electrical N/SVQ at Level 2 or Level 3 or equivalent within specified timescales, but with the portfolio, as mentioned above, maintained

What are the audit requirements of HERS?

HERS requires:

- a minimum of 10% of portfolios to be reviewed for content by ASLEC, on application for registration of employees
- all portfolios to be reviewed annually by the registered organisation to ensure currency of competency
- portfolios to be audited externally biennially by ASLEC with identified actions completed within six months
- ASLEC to report to the Sector Scheme Committee
- NHSS 8 accredited organisations are also audited externally by their ISO 9001 certification body

How does this relate to the CSCS Scheme?

HERS requires all registered employees to undertake a specific health and safety multiple choice test, as agreed with the JIB. This goes beyond the standard JIB ECS H&S test as it encompasses common hazards within highway electrical work. The HERS Registration Card is produced by the JIB under the ECS (Electrotechnical Certification Scheme) and is affiliated to and accepted by the CSCS.

In addition HERS requires the creation of and maintenance of a portfolio, to an agreed industry standard, using agreed industry forms to assess and record competency under industry agreed task areas, by or under the supervision of a Qualified Supervisor, appointed by the registered organisation. The portfolio of evidence is reviewed by another person (an Authorising Officer) also appointed by the registered organisation, before the employee is recommended as being competent, this recommendation being signed off by the Responsible Manager in the registered organisation.

Gaining an N/SVQ on its own is deemed insufficient, as the ongoing review and auditing of portfolios is considered essential for ensuring competency is maintained (effectively continuing professional development). HERS therefore goes beyond the requirements of the CSCS and of N/SVQ's.

Is training stipulated?

Training requirements have been defined by the NHSS 8 Standards and Training Group which reports to the Sector Scheme Committee. These are contained in the Highway Electrical Training Specification.

Trainers have to be registered and approved by the Highway Electrical Academy, in partnership with Lantra Awards (the N/SVQ awarding body), other than industry agreed equivalent training for, for example, First Aid, MEWPs and some other plant training. The Highway Electrical Academy is constituted under the NHSS 8 Committee, and is supported by ASLEC. Trainers must be, amongst other things, qualified in adult education, experienced in the areas they wish to train in, and maintain their currency of knowledge and expertise. They are subject to audit as part of the process.

Who supports HERS?

HERS is mandatory where Sector Scheme 8 is specified and / or where the Highways Agency Specification for Highway Works is called up in contracts. In particular HERS is mandatory on all Highways Agency roads (Motorways and Trunk Roads). The Scheme is also mandatory for all ASLEC members, as a benchmark for assessing and recording evidence of competency.

In addition the County Surveyors Society (CSS) have recommended this as good practice to all their local authority members. The Institution of Lighting Engineers (ILE) have also embraced the Registration Scheme for their members carrying out work on site. The Highway Electrical Registration Scheme has been publicised across the UK, and is considered by the Sector Scheme Committee to apply equally to contracting organisations, overseeing organisations (e.g. consultants) and clients where they are carrying out work on site (e.g. opening an inspection door on a cabinet or lighting column or carrying out more work than this).

The following organisations have expressly stated their support:

- ASLEC – Association of Signals, Lighting and other highway Electrical Contractors
- CSS – County Surveyors Society (now ADEPT – Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport)
- HA - Highways Agency
- HEMSA – Highway Electrical Manufacturers and Suppliers Association
- HTMA – Highways Term Maintenance Association
- ILE – Institution of Lighting Engineers
- LASMA – Local Authority Sign Manufacturers Association
- Lantra Awards
- TSG – Traffic Systems Group (part of ADEPT)

Currently in the order of 300 organisations and 6,000 employees are registered.

Where can I get further information?

- Further information on Sector Schemes can be obtained from the UKAS web-site at **www.ukas.com**.
- Further information on NHSS 8, HERS, Requirements for Approved Training Organisations and Approved Trainers, together with guidance and FAQ's can be obtained from the Highway Electrical Academy web-site at **www.highwayelectrical.org.uk/hea** or by calling ASLEC on 01273 491145.
- Further information on the mapping between HERS and the core competence criteria in the CDM2007 Regulations ACoP can be obtained in the downloads section at **www.highwayelectrical.org.uk/aslec**