

CES (COES) - Northmore Gordon

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A Certificate of Electrical Safety (COES) is a mandatory document that must be provided for all electrical installation work in Victoria. It certifies that electrical work has been completed safely and in compliance with relevant standards. The COES requirement ensures that electrical installations meet safety standards and provides documented evidence of compliant work. This is particularly important for property owners, building managers, and organizations undertaking electrical upgrades or modifications, as the certificate establishes that work was performed by qualified practitioners and meets regulatory requirements.

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What is a CES (COES) and why is it required in Victoria?

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What is the timeframe for issuing a Certificate of Electrical Safety?

A Certificate of Electrical Safety must be issued within 30 calendar days of the completion of electrical installation work. This timeframe is important for project coordination and compliance documentation. Meeting this deadline ensures that the certificate is available for record-keeping, property transactions, insurance purposes, and regulatory submissions. Organizations planning energy efficiency projects involving electrical upgrades should factor this timeline into their project schedules and evidence-gathering processes to ensure certificates are available when needed for reporting or compliance purposes.

How does the COES relate to energy efficiency and sustainability projects?

The Certificate of Electrical Safety becomes relevant in energy efficiency projects when electrical work is involved, such as installing lighting upgrades, variable-speed drives, heat pump systems, solar PV

installations, or electrical storage batteries. For projects seeking energy savings certificates or other environmental instruments, the COES provides part of the required evidence that work was completed to standard. We assist clients in coordinating electrical safety certification with broader project evidence requirements, ensuring that all necessary documentation is collected within appropriate timeframes to support investment cases and certificate applications.

Where does the COES requirement apply geographically?

The Certificate of Electrical Safety requirement applies specifically to all electrical installation work in Victoria, Australia. This is a jurisdiction-specific requirement under Victorian electrical safety regulations. Organizations operating in multiple Australian states should be aware that electrical safety certification requirements vary by jurisdiction. When undertaking projects across different states, it is important to understand each jurisdiction's specific documentation requirements. We can assist in clarifying applicable safety and certification requirements for projects in Victoria and other jurisdictions where the organization operates.

What role does the COES play in project record-keeping and evidence?

The Certificate of Electrical Safety is a key component of project record-keeping for electrical installation work. It serves as documented evidence that electrical work was completed by qualified practitioners within the required timeframe. This documentation is important for several purposes: meeting regulatory compliance, supporting investment cases, providing evidence for energy efficiency schemes, and maintaining a complete project file. When combined with other project records such as installation invoices, commissioning reports, and measurement data, the COES contributes to a comprehensive evidence package that may support certificate applications or scheme eligibility assessments.

How should organizations prepare for obtaining a COES in their electrical projects?

Organizations should plan for COES requirements at the project scoping stage by ensuring that all electrical installation work is performed by appropriately licensed practitioners who can issue the certificate. Record the completion date clearly, as the 30-day issuance window begins from completion. Assign responsibility for collecting the COES and ensuring it is filed with other project documentation. When electrical work is part of a larger energy efficiency initiative, integrate the COES timeline into the overall project schedule. We recommend including certificate collection in project briefs and evidence checklists, particularly where electrical work supports energy savings or renewable energy installations that may require scheme documentation.

What information should be captured alongside a COES for energy projects?

When collecting a Certificate of Electrical Safety for energy projects, also document the specific work completed, the contractor or licensed practitioner who performed it, the exact completion date, equipment specifications, and any related commissioning records. This contextual information helps establish the project boundary and supports evidence requirements if the work is part of an energy efficiency or renewable energy scheme. For measurement and verification purposes, record whether the electrical work introduced new metering points, changed load profiles, or modified energy flows. Keeping the COES alongside project briefs, energy audit findings, and financial records creates a complete evidence file that supports investment decisions and potential scheme applications.

How is the COES different from other electrical compliance documentation?

The Certificate of Electrical Safety is specifically a post-completion safety certification issued within 30 days of work completion in Victoria. It differs from preliminary design approvals, building permits, or inspection notifications, which may be required at earlier project stages. The COES confirms that the completed work meets safety standards; other documents may address planning, design approval, or inspection scheduling. In energy projects, multiple compliance documents may be needed: the COES

certifies electrical safety; energy audit reports establish baseline conditions; measurement and verification plans define how savings will be assessed; and scheme-specific documentation addresses certificate eligibility. Understanding which certification is required at each project stage helps ensure comprehensive compliance and evidence gathering.