The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners
Te Whare Tohu Rata o Aotearoa

Outdated guidance – do not use

For 11.6 Residual current devices (RCDs)

A RCD is a special type of safety switch that can protect against most but not all electric shocks. RCDs are available with various trip current ratings. In New Zealand a medical grade RCD has a 10mAmp trip current.

Standard	Evidence
11.6 The practice has residual current devices (RCDs) where electrical medical devices are used.	• Demonstrate the safe use of RCDs in all applicable areas.

RCDs must be 10mAmp Type 1 and tested regularly to ensure that their capacity to 'trip' is still functioning.

Socket outlet RCDs can be tested by plugging in a small electric appliance (such as a lamp). Press the 'test' button. If the appliance turns off, the RCD is working. If it stays on, get the RCD checked by a licensed electrician. Make sure to press 'reset' once the test is complete.

Portable RCDs are 30mAmp so cannot be used, if an RCD outlet is required, it must be installed by an electrician and be 10mAmp Type 1.

Switchboard RCDs must be tested every six months by checking that they trip when the 'test' button is pushed. However, be aware that tripping circuits will turn off the power to any appliances on that circuit (be careful with the vaccine refrigerator). Appliances with electronic clocks will have to be reset. For this reason, test the switchboard RCDs when changing to and from daylight saving, when clocks must be reset anyway, and it will be about six months since the RCDs were last tested.

In addition, all 10mAmp Type 1 RCDs must be annually tested by an electrician with proper test equipment and documented. Team members need to keep a dated and signed record of any RCD testing – electronic records are acceptable.

The RCD electrical testing records must include:

- Who did the testing?

- What equipment was tested (list what was tested)?
- What they are claiming, for example, it is safe, has it been verified that it is performing properly?
- What is the basis/evidence for the claim, for example, test results, etc?

Body Protected Areas

A Body Protected Area is recommended where patients are treated, diagnosed or monitored using medical electrical appliances. This includes any rooms where medical electrical appliances are used.

Specialised services such as X-ray, minor surgery (involving diathermy and monitoring) and a plaster room would benefit from the use of Body Protected Areas.

The current standard: AS/NZS: 3003, applies to installations (or alterations or additions) made or carried out after the date the Standard was published. Therefore, it is not mandated that all practices install Body Protected Areas but it is recommended.

These include:

- All socket outlets must be protected by 10mAmp Type 1 RCDs.
- The area must be designated by a green Body Protected Area sign on the wall.
- All appliances used within the area (both medical appliances and general appliances) must be tested to the required standard (see above).
- At least one socket outlet shall be provided for cleaning equipment and shall be marked 'Cleaning Purposes Only'.
- The area must be certified annually to the requirements of AS/NZS3003.

It is the responsibility of each practice to ensure they have checked their individual requirements to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation or standards. This work must be undertaken by a Registered Electrician. Some electricians will be more experienced with the requirements for Body Protected Areas than others.

Links to resources

- **Worksafe: Testing and tagging**
- **Electrical (Safety) Regulations, clause 25: Specific installations, fittings, and appliances deemed to be electrically safe**

- **Electrical (Safety) Regulations, clause 60: Certain installations must comply with Part 2 of AS/NZS 3000**

- **Electrical (Safety) Regulations, clause 75: Periodic assessments of certain installations**

- **Electrical (Safety) Regulations, clause 91: Periodic assessment of electrical medical devices**