



Technical requirements of a body protected area: Guidance sheet for electrical workers and practice leaders

All electrical work must be carried out by a Registered Electrician, and initial inspections require a Registered Electrical Inspector. Ensure the electrical worker is familiar with the current standards for healthcare installations. All new installations and changes must be inspected and registered as high-risk.

AS/NZS 2500 outlines guidelines on safely using medical electrical equipment in healthcare. Practices can refer to this standard to understand the electrical safety requirements, especially when designing or operating Body Protected Areas.

Requirements of a Body Protected Area

The following list is some of the common features and requirements for Body Protected Areas that need to be considered. This list is not comprehensive so reference should be made to AS/NZS 3003 for full details.

- 10mA Type 1 RCDs for medical use are more sensitive than those used in non-medical applications. There are also specific requirements for the arrangement of circuits, labelling and signage which must be complied with. Full details of requirements can be found in AS/NZS 3003.
- All outlets must have earth leakage protection with 10mA Type 1 RCDs located within the body protected area and protecting all outlets within the room.
- Circuits supplying socket outlets must be dedicated to one BPA i.e. the same circuit cannot supply socket outlets in other rooms.
- All equipment used in the area must undergo annual testing to the required standards.
- A beige socket-outlet must be provided for cleaning purposes, labelled “Cleaning Purposes Only.” This must be on a separate circuit to the rest of the room and also protected by a medical grade RCD. There are situations where this socket can be in an adjacent space and shared between rooms.
- Outlets must be labelled with switchboard, circuit breaker, and RCD details.
- The area requires annual certification to AS/NZS 3003.
- All metallic plumbing must be earthed or isolated.



- The area must display a green body protected area sign (stick figure emblem) with a compliance sticker signed off by the inspector and identifying the date of expiry. See below:



- NB: In emergencies, procedures may be performed in non-compliant areas if the immediate risk to the patient outweighs the potential electrical hazards.

The above requirements are checked annually by a registered electrician who provides a 'Record of Inspection report' which the practice needs to retain and be able to provide as evidence of compliance.

New work and additions must be inspected by a registered electrical inspector, who should register it on the high-risk electrical database.

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