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# What an electrical Certificate of Compliance must contain

An electrical CoC is a prescribed form. Regulation 7(1) of the Electrical Installation Regulations, 2009 requires it to be “in the form of Annexure 1” — there is no freedom to design another one. Most people buying a certificate have never seen what it must carry, and much of what is published about it is wrong.

**This is a question sheet, not a certificate.**

Attest has verified nothing about whoever gives you this document or fills it in. Answers on it are that person's own claims, unchecked by us.

A completed copy is not a Certificate of Compliance, not an attestation, and not evidence that anybody is registered.

v1.728f5f · current as at 2026-11-08 · the current version is always at attest.africa/za/electricians/coc/. A copy older than the one there may not reflect the law.

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## When you need a certificate

Most people first meet a Certificate of Compliance when selling a property. That is not when the law says you need one.

**You must have one at all times**

Regulation 7(1): "every user or lessor of an electrical installation ... shall have a valid certificate of compliance for that installation in the form of Annexure 1, which shall be accompanied by a test report". This is a continuing duty, not something triggered by a sale.

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| **The duty falls on the user or lessor — not necessarily the owner** | The regulation says user or lessor throughout. If you let a property, or you manage and occupy one you do not own, the obligation can be yours rather than the owner's. Worth settling in writing between the parties, because the regulation does not settle it for you. |
| **You must produce it on request** | Regulation 7(2): on request, to an inspector, a supplier, or an approved inspection authority. |
| **Older installations are exempt — until they are altered** | Regulation 7(3): the duty does not apply to an installation that existed before 23 October 1992 where there has been no change of ownership after 1 March 1994. But if any addition or alteration is made, a certificate must be obtained for the **whole** installation, and the duty then applies from that point on. |
| **Any addition or alteration needs its own certificate** | Regulation 7(4): where an installation already has a certificate and work is later done, a certificate must be obtained for at least the addition or alteration. |
| **A certificate older than two years blocks a transfer** | Regulation 7(5): the user or lessor may not allow a change of ownership on a certificate older than two years. Note what this restricts — the transaction, not the certificate. |

**Insurance and bond consequences are commonly asserted and are not in these regulations.** Whether a missing certificate affects a claim is a matter between you and your insurer or lender. Attest has not established what any insurer requires — ask them, not us.

## What the certificate must contain

Every field below is required by Annexure 1. Those marked CHECK THIS are the ones a buyer can actually do something with.

### The certificate itself

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| **Certificate number** | Identifies this certificate. The electrician assigns it themselves — GN 258 of 2012 permits registered persons to generate their own sequential number because the central numbering promised by the regulation was never introduced. **It proves nothing on its own and two certificates can legitimately carry the same number.** |
| **Initial or Supplementary** | Whether this is the main certificate for the installation or a top-up covering later work. A supplementary certificate is worthless without the initial one it supplements. |
| **Supplement cross-reference** | If supplementary: the number and date of the initial certificate it attaches to. |

## Which property it covers

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| **Physical address** | The property the certificate covers. |
| **Name of building** | For complexes, farms and industrial sites where a street address is ambiguous. |
| **GPS coordinates** | Unambiguous location — useful exactly where addresses fail. |
| **Suburb or township** | Location. |
| **Pole number** | Identifies the supply point for rural and informal properties with no street address. |
| **District, town or city** | Location. |
| **Erf or lot number** | The cadastral identifier — the field a conveyancer actually works from. |

## The electrician's declaration

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| **Registered person's name and ID number** | The human being who personally inspected and tested the installation, and who is accountable for it. |
| **Registered person's registration number** CHECK THIS | **The one field that can be checked.** Registration under regulation 11 with the Department of Employment and Labour. Ask for it before work starts. |
| **Date of that registration** CHECK THIS | Should predate the certificate. |
| **Type of registration** CHECK THIS | Electrical tester for single phase, installation electrician, or master installation electrician. This sets what they may lawfully certify — a single-phase tester is limited to single-phase supply at the point of control and cannot certify specialised installations. |
| **Which of regulation 9(2)(a), (b) or (c) applies** CHECK THIS | What is actually being certified: brand-new work, a pre-existing installation assessed only against the general safety principles of the standard, or an extension where both the existing installation and the new work are covered. |
| **The declaration wording** | That they "personally carried out" the inspection and testing, and deem the installation "reasonably safe when properly used". Note that phrase — it is an opinion about safe use, not a guarantee against failure. |
| **Signature and date of signature** | Without the signature there is no declaration. The date drives the two-year restriction on transfer described below. |

| | |
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| `Telephone, fax, cell, email and address` | How to reach the person who signed, to query or challenge the certificate. |

### The contractor's declaration — a second, separate promise

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|---|---|
| `Electrical contractor's name and ID number` | The business accountable for the installation work. Often, but not always, the same party as the electrician who signs. |
| `Contractor's declaration` | That the work was done in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations. This is about the *work*, not only the test result. |
| `Electrical contractor registration number` `CHECK THIS` | The firm's registration under regulation 6 with the Department. A different registration from the electrician's, and both are required. |
| `Date of contractor registration` `CHECK THIS` | Contractor registration is renewed **annually**. A date several years old suggests the registration has lapsed. |
| `Signature, address, telephone, fax, cell and email` | Without the signature the contractor's declaration is unmade. |

### Handover, and the document that must come with it

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|---|---|
| `Recipient's name, signature and date received` | The only record on the form that the certificate was handed over. |
| `The test report, attached` `CHECK THIS` | **The certificate is invalid without it.** Regulation 7(1) requires a test report to accompany the certificate, and Annexure 1 says in terms that the certificate is invalid unless the report is attached. It is the evidence behind the declaration — what was inspected, what was tested, what the readings were. |

## Questions to ask before you appoint an electrician

Ask these in writing. An electrician who is registered and intends to issue a proper certificate will answer them without difficulty.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | `WHAT IS YOUR REGISTERED PERSON REGISTRATION NUMBER WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR, AND WHEN WERE YOU REGISTERED?` | Regulation 11. Only a registered person may issue a Certificate of Compliance, and that |

person is an individual, not a company.

2 **WHICH TYPE OF REGISTRATION DO YOU HOLD — ELECTRICAL TESTER FOR SINGLE PHASE, INSTALLATION ELECTRICIAN, OR MASTER INSTALLATION ELECTRICIAN?**

This sets what you may lawfully certify. If the work involves a three-phase supply or a specialised installation, a single-phase tester cannot certify it.

3 **WHAT IS THE ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION NUMBER OF THE BUSINESS, AND WHEN WAS IT LAST RENEWED?**

Regulation 6, and it is an annual renewal. Both registrations are required and they are separate.

4 **WILL YOU PERSONALLY CARRY OUT THE INSPECTION AND TESTING THAT THE CERTIFICATE DECLARES?**

The declaration on Annexure 1 says the registered person personally did it. Someone else doing the work and a registered person signing for it is not what the form says.

5 **WILL THE WORK BEING CERTIFIED BE CARRIED OUT UNDER YOUR GENERAL CONTROL?**

Regulation 9(2)(a) requires exactly this for new work, and 9(2)(c)(ii) for extensions and alterations: they must have "been carried out under his or her general control". An electrician cannot lawfully certify work they had no control over. This is the single most useful question on this sheet.

6 **IF THIS IS AN EXTENSION OR ALTERATION TO AN OLDER INSTALLATION, WILL THE CERTIFICATE COVER BOTH THE EXISTING PART AND THE NEW WORK?**

Regulation 9(2)(c) has two limbs: the existing part must comply with the general safety principles of the standard and be reasonably safe, and the extensions must comply with regulation 5(1). A certificate covering only the new work does not meet it.

7 **WILL THE CERTIFICATE BE ISSUED ON THE ANNEXURE 1 FORM, WITH A TEST REPORT ATTACHED?**

Regulation 7(1) prescribes the form and requires the report. Annexure 1 states the certificate is invalid without the report attached.

8 **WILL I RECEIVE THE ORIGINAL SIGNED CERTIFICATE, NOT ONLY A SCAN OR**

**PHOTOGRAPH?**

The regulation contemplates a signed original. A scan is a copy of a certificate, not the certificate.

9

**WHICH OF REGULATION 9(2)(A), (B) OR (C) WILL THE CERTIFICATE BE ISSUED UNDER?**

Worth asking up front, because (b) — a pre-existing installation — is assessed only against the general safety principles of the standard, not against the current standard in full.

## Five things commonly said about CoCs that are not true

> *"A Certificate of Compliance expires after two years."*
>
> It does not. Regulation 7(5) says a user or lessor may not allow a **change of ownership** on a certificate older than two years. That restricts one transaction. The certificate itself does not lapse, and on an unaltered installation a certificate two years old or younger satisfies the rule.

> *"You can check a certificate is genuine by its certificate number."*
>
> You cannot. No body has ever issued certificate numbers. The Department's own 2012 guidance permits registered persons to generate their own sequential numbers because central numbering was never introduced. Check the **registration numbers** instead.

> *"A certificate with a correction on it is fine."*
>
> Annexure 1 states the certificate is invalid if any corrections have been made. Ask for a clean certificate.

> *"The certificate form was shortened when the wiring standard was updated."*
>
> A standards body cannot amend an annexure to a regulation. Only the Minister can, by gazette. The prescribed form is the one in the regulations.

> *"There is a public register where you can look up an electrician."*
>
> There is not. The regulations oblige the chief inspector to keep a national database, and it has never been published. The Department's published way to check a contractor's registration is a telephone number. Ask the electrician for their numbers, and keep the certificate.

## Sources

Electrical Installation Regulations, 2009 — GN R. 242, *Government Gazette* 31975, 6 March 2009, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993. Annexure 1 and regulations 1, 6, 7, 9 and 11. Guidance notes —

GN 258 of 2012, *Government Gazette* 35180, 26 March 2012. Read 2026-09-14.

This describes the law as Attest read it on the date shown. It is not legal advice.

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