

Infinity Cable Recall - What you need to know

As you may be aware the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has issued a national safety recall of Infinity and Olsent brand electrical cables, following Master Electricians Australia's year-long battle to have the dangerous products removed from Australian homes.

The safety recall applies to all sizes and configurations of TPS and Orange Round mains power cables sold under the Infinity and Olsent brands.

Both brands of cable were sold by Masters Home Improvement between March 2012 and September 2013, while Infinity cable was also sold by a number of other suppliers. This cabling was used widely throughout the building industry in both residential and commercial project and was available for sale in all states excluding the Northern Territory.

Ageing tests identified the cabling does not comply with safety standards (AS/NZS 5000.2:2006) and will deteriorate over time, and if disturbed the insulation could break and expose live conductors, resulting in possible electric shock or fires.

Master Electricians Australia first blew the whistle on the dangers of the cables on August 22nd last year, and has since campaigned to have the products banned from sale in every state and territory.

Some of the cable was first recalled in August 2013 by the importer, Infinity Cable Co Pty Ltd. After further tests and negotiations led by NSW Fair Trading, Infinity Cable Co Pty Ltd went into liquidation and a mandatory recall in NSW followed in October 2013. State and Territory government agencies across Australia then acted to halt the supply and installation of all of these cables.

These recalls have now been replaced with the national ACCC product recall which addresses the safety of all affected cables installed across Australia. This means in certain circumstances, cable that has been used must be removed and replaced.

We've prepared the following information which covers details about the recall, who is liable, and an outline of the steps that members need to take.

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More details about the recall, including product description, traders who sold this product and Frequently Asked Questions for the industry are available on the [ACCC website](#).

For more information or specific advice about the recall, please contact us on 1300 889 198.

About the recall

The cable has been recalled by 18 retailers and wholesalers and covers all states and territories, except the Northern Territory. It is estimated that around 40,000 households and businesses may have been affected across the country. Olsent power cables sourced from Infinity Cable Co Pty Ltd and solely supplied by Masters Home Improvement are also affected.

While there is no immediate danger, testing has found that the cables will degrade prematurely and if the cables are disturbed, the insulation could break and expose live conductors, resulting in possible electric shock or fires.

The ACCC's safety recall requires the following:

1. The removal and replacement of all Infinity cable installed in proximity to heat sources, such as recessed lighting, heaters, ovens, stoves, hot water systems, spas, in-floor heating, air conditioners, gas appliances, flues and chimneys, wood heaters and oil heaters.
2. The removal and replacement of all cable installed in areas that are accessible to building owners, tradespeople or the public, unless the cable is laid in an appropriate cable conduit or other suitable mechanical protection.

'Accessible areas' include all accessible roof spaces and accessible spaces under floors.

An 'appropriate cable conduit or other suitable mechanical protection' is electrically non-conductive, flame retardant (or self-extinguishing) and with appropriate ingress protection (IP) rating that prevents access to the cable inside.

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3. Any Infinity cable left installed in a cable conduit or in inaccessible wall, floor or ceiling spaces or embedded into a masonry wall surface must have an electrical safety switch (residual current device) installed and tested on that cable, if such a device is not already installed and tested.
4. Any premises with Infinity cable left installed must have an appropriate warning sticker affixed to the electrical metering/switch box alerting building owners and tradespeople to the presence of inaccessible Infinity sourced cable.

Who is liable?

The ACCC's recall addresses the safety of the installed cable. The ACCC has worked with the cable suppliers (Masters Home Improvement, Mitre 10 and other retailers) and negotiated an outcome whereby in certain circumstances (defined in the recall guidelines) these suppliers will bear the cost of removal and replacement of the faulty cable. In these cases, where the costs of the recall are being covered by the cable suppliers, they are making all of the arrangements for work to be done by electrical contractors of their own choosing.

However, we have serious concerns about the liability of electrical contractors where faulty cable is left in the building because it was inaccessible.

Under the Australian Consumer Laws, the contractor who installed the electrical cable has a duty to supply goods that are fit for purpose. Arguably, it has been demonstrated that the Infinity cable is not fit for purpose.

On that basis, the electrical contractor will remain liable for the cable that remains in the building. This means that consumers with concerns about the quality of any Infinity cable that remains installed, will have rights under the consumer guarantees of the Australian Consumer Law. Members could well face a claim for any damage or loss suffered as a result.

We are currently seeking legal and insurance advice to ensure that the residual liability for any cable that is left in place is left with the cable supplier and not the electrical contractor. Updates on this issue will be made available to members as it becomes available.

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Are you covered by insurance?

Insurance policies vary, and generally, construction works policies will not pay the costs of rectifying or replacing defective works or materials. Public liability policies normally require that all reasonable precautions be taken to prevent personal injury or property damage, and generally will exclude coverage for claims arising from known defects in your works. We suggest you discuss this with your insurer.

What should you do?

1. Contact all businesses and individuals you have completed work for since March 2012, advising if you have used Infinity cabling.
2. If you have used the cabling, contact the retailer from which the cable was purchased, to establish what they intend to do about replacing the defective cable as per the recall guidelines.
3. If you are aware that Infinity cable has been used and the retailer fails to provide an adequate response to your request, contact Master Electricians Australia immediately to access our initial free legal advice.
4. You may wish to check any insurance coverage you hold.

You should keep a copy of all written correspondence between all parties for your records.

What is Master Electricians Australia doing?

We are currently seeking legal and insurance advice to ensure that the residual liability for any cable that is left in place is left with the cable supplier and not the electrical contractor. Updates on this issue will be made available to members as it becomes available.

For further assistance, please contact us on 1300 889 198

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