



Michael Daley

MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Police
Minister for Finance**

Safety switches to be Mandatory in all Workplaces

Sunday 12th December 2010

Minister for Finance Michael Daley today announced new regulations would be introduced to mandate safety switches in all workplaces.

Mr Daley said safety switches are globally recognised as life-saving devices that detect when electricity is 'leaking' and cut any existing power to the electrical appliance in lightning speed.

"Today I am committing NSW to the highest electrical safety standards in the workplace," he said.

"These devices have been a major factor in the continuing reduction of electrocutions in Australia and the State Government will continue to improve electrical safety in NSW workplaces.

"I am determined that we take all reasonable steps to prevent unnecessary death and injury at work. Safety switches are one part of the answer."

Rebates of up to \$500 to purchase and install safety switches will be available for small businesses that attend a WorkCover business advisory workshop or arrange a visit from a business advisory officer.

Under the changes workplaces using higher risk moveable electrical equipment or equipment in higher risk environments must ensure either fixed or portable safety switches protect users of that equipment by December 2011.

These higher risk provisions include:

- Hand-held electrical equipment such as circular saws, angle grinders or hair dryers;
- Portable equipment that is moved whilst in operation such as floor polishers, vacuum cleaners, portable lighting;
- Electrical equipment that is moved between operations such as welding machines; and
- Electrical equipment used in hostile conditions such as construction sites, in wet or dusty environments, outdoors or in factories.

By December 2014, all businesses will be required to protect workers with safety switches where reasonably practicable.

NSW will now be one of five jurisdictions (SA, WA, NT and QLD) to have the safety switch provisions for workplaces.

Current NSW regulations only mandate safety switches for construction and building sites under an approved industry code of practice.

Energy Networks Association Chief Executive Andrew Blyth said Australia's peak energy network representative body recognises the value in creating a safer working environment and this initiative compliments the practical outcomes of the recent energy ministers meeting and will help deliver better safeguards to workers within and outside the energy industry.

Master Electricians Association Chief Executive Malcolm Richards said safety switches could detect the loss of power from a circuit associated with a person suffering an electric shock, and cut the flow of electricity in less than 40 milliseconds.

“Master Electricians congratulates the NSW Government on its determination to make every workplace as safe as possible, and for putting its money where its mouth is by offering rebates to install safety switches,” he said.

