

APPLICATION NOTE

# Basic electrical installation testing

Growing concern for public safety and the increasing complexity of today's fixed electrical installations in domestic, commercial and industrial premises places extra responsibility on electrical test engineers who are charged with verifying conformity to today's stringent international standards.



It is therefore important to have suitable test tools for carrying out the stringent tests imposed by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC).

IEC 60364, and its various associated national equivalent standards that are published throughout Europe (see table 1), specifies the requirements for fixed electrical installations in buildings. Section 6.61 of this standard describes the requirements for the verification of the compliance of the installation with IEC 60364.

**Table 1**

European equivalents of IEC 60364 (6.61)	
Austria	ÖVE/ÖNORM E8001
Belgium	A.R.E.I./R.G.I.E.
Denmark	Stærkstrømbekendtgørelsen, afsnit 6
Finland	SFS 6000
France	NF C 15-100
Germany	DIN VDE 0100-600 DIN VDE 0105-100
Italy	CEI 64-8
Netherlands	NEN 1010
Norway	NEK 400
Portugal	HD 384
Spain	UNE 20460
Sweden	SS 436 40 00 Del 6
Switzerland	NIN/NIV 2015
UK	BS 7671/17th Edition IEE Wiring Regulations

## The basic requirements of IEC 60364.6.61

Many electrical contractors may already be familiar with IEC 60364.6.61 or its national equivalents. It states that verification of the installation shall be carried out in the following sequence:

1. Visual inspection
2. Testing of the following:
  - continuity of protective conductors;
  - insulation resistance;
  - protection by separation of circuits;
  - floor and wall resistance;
  - automatic disconnection of supply;
  - polarity;
  - functional performance;

In addition to this the following tests are under consideration:

- electric strength test;
- voltage drop.

To test the protective measures as described above, IEC 60364.6.61 refers to the IEC/EN 61557.

## The basic requirements of IEC/EN 61557

The European Norm EN 61557 addresses the requirements for test equipment used in installation testing. It consists of general requirements for test equipment (part 1), specific requirements for combined measuring equipment (part 10) and covers the specific requirements for measuring/testing:

- A. Insulation resistance (part 2)
- B. Loop impedance (part 3)
- C. Resistance of the earth connection (part 4)
- D. Resistance to earth (part 5)
- E. RCD performance in TT and TN systems (part 6)
- F. Phase sequence (part 7)
- G. Insulation monitoring devices for IT systems (part 8)

The Fluke 1660 Series Multifunction Installation Testers are measuring equipment as described in part 10 of EN 61557 and the three different models in the series comply with specific parts of this norm. They are specifically designed to carry out the tests specified in IEC 60364.6.61, and all local standards regulations derived from it, in the safest and most efficient way. They are lightweight, and feature a unique ergonomic 'curved' form that, when carried by the neck strap, makes operation in the field more comfortable.

## Testing an electrical installation

The visual inspection is first carried out to confirm that permanently wired electrical equipment is in compliance with the safety requirements and not visibly damaged, and that fire barriers, protective-, monitoring-, isolating and switching devices, and all relevant documentation are present. After this inspection, electrical testing may commence. Note that the test methods described are given as reference methods in IEC 60364.6.61. Other methods are not precluded provided they give equally valid results. Only with the appropriate experience and training, safe clothing, and the right test tools is a person considered competent to test installations to IEC 60364.6.61. When testing is undertaken it should be ensured that adequate precautions are taken to avoid damage or injury to people, equipment or property, and ensured that unauthorized persons are kept away from danger.

## Continuity

Testing the continuity of protective conductors is normally carried out with an instrument being able to generate a no-load voltage in the range 4 to 24 V (DC or AC) with a minimum current of 0.2 A. The most common continuity test is measuring the resistance of protective conductors, which involves first confirming the continuity of all protective conductors in the installation, and then testing the main and supplementary equipotential bonding conductors. All circuit conductors in the final circuit are also tested. As continuity testing measures very low resistances, the resistance of the test leads must be compensated for. The 1660 has a time-saving auto-null feature that, by simply touching the test leads together and pressing the zero button, measures and stores the test lead resistance, even after the instrument has been switched off.

## Insulation resistance of electrical installation

Insulation integrity is critical to prevent electric shock and fire. It is generally measured between live conductors; and between each live conductor and earth. To measure the insulation resistance between live conductors and earth, the complete installation must be switched off, all lamps removed and all equipment disconnected. All fuses must be left in, circuit breakers closed and final circuit switches closed.



Measurements are carried out with direct current using an instrument capable of supplying a test voltage of 1000, 500 or 250 V depending on the nominal circuit voltage. On single phase supply systems, insulation testing is normally undertaken using a test voltage of 500 V. Before testing, it is necessary to disconnect equipment and take measures to prevent the test voltage damaging voltage-sensitive devices such as dimmer switches, delay timers, and electronic starters for fluorescent lighting. Such devices can easily be missed and bring about great cost to the user and inconvenience to the customer. The 1664 FC has a unique, patent pending Insulation PreTest function which stops the user from making potential serious and costly mistakes. If the tester detects that an appliance is connected to the system under test, it will stop the insulation test and provide a visual warning. This helps eliminate accidental damage to peripheral equipment and keeps customers happy.

The 1660 series testers generate the required test voltages (selectable) and, uniquely for an installation tester of this type, the models 1663 and 1664 also have 50 and 100 V test voltages as required for testing telecommunications installations, fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, intruder alarms, sound systems or conductivity of floors. To enhance safety, 1660 Series installation testers have a live voltage indicator to warn users if a live voltage is still present. Testing is inhibited if a voltage is detected. When taking a measurement, the dual display indicates both the insulation resistance and the applied test voltage.

According to IEC 60364.6.61 the resistance values should be greater than 1 Megohm for 1000 V test voltage, 0.5 megohms for 500 V, and 0.25 megohms for 250 V.

### **Protection by separation of circuits**

The separation of the live parts from those of other circuits and from earth should be verified by a measurement of the insulation resistance. The resistance values obtained should be identical with the values mentioned previously with all appliances, as far as possible, connected.

### **Floor and wall resistance**

If applicable, at least three floor and wall resistance measurements need to be made per location, one being approximately 1 meter from any accessible extraneous-conductive part in the location, with the remaining two measurements taken at greater distances. The series of measurements is repeated for each relevant surface of the location.

The 1660 series insulation test function with a no-load voltage of 500 V (or 1000 V if the rated voltage of the installation exceeds 500 V) is used as a DC source. The resistance is measured between a test electrode (such as a 250 mm square metallic plate with a 270 mm square of damped water-absorbent paper from which surplus water has been removed) and a protective conductor of the installation.

## Verifying protection by automatic supply disconnection

Verification of the effectiveness of the measures for protection against indirect contact by automatic disconnection of supply depends on the type of system. In summary, it is as follows:

- For TN systems: measurement of the fault loop impedance; and verification of the characteristics of the associated protective device (i.e. visual inspection of the nominal current setting for circuit breakers, the current ratings for fuses and testing RCDs).
- For TT systems: measurement of the earth electrode resistance for exposed-conductive-parts of the installation; and verification of the characteristics of the associated protective device (i.e. RCDs by visual inspection and by test).
- For IT systems: Calculation or measurement of the fault current.

## Measurement of the earth electrode resistance

Measurement of the resistance of an earth electrode is made by an appropriate method, for example, using two auxiliary earth electrodes or 'spikes'. These electrodes are available as an accessory kit for use with the 1663 and 1664 model. Before testing, the earthing rod must be disconnected from the installation's main earthing terminal. In doing this, the installation will consequently have no earth protection and therefore must be completely deenergized prior to testing. Earth resistance testing must not be carried out on a live system.

One auxiliary electrode is placed at a set distance from the earth electrode, and the other at 62% of the distance between the two in a straight line. The test measures the earth resistance and also detects the voltage between the auxiliary electrodes, and if this exceeds 10 V, the test is inhibited.

## Measurement of fault loop impedance

Measurement of the fault loop impedance is carried out using the same frequency as the nominal frequency of the circuit (50 Hz). The earth-loop impedance test measures the resistance of the path that a fault current would take between line and protective earth, which must be low

## Testing RCDs

Residual Current Operated Devices (RCDs) are often fitted for additional protection, where they detect currents flowing to earth that are too small to trigger over-current operated protective devices or to blow fuses, but would still be sufficient to cause a dangerous shock or generate enough heat to start a fire. Basic testing of RCDs involves determining the tripping time (in milliseconds) by introducing a fault current in the circuit.

The 1660 Series installation testers also perform a pre-test to determine if the actual test will cause a fault voltage exceeding a 50 V or 25 V safety limit. To manually measure the tripping time, the RCD's tripping current rating, a test current multiplier, the RCD type and the test current phase setting are selected using the menu buttons. Because some RCDs are more sensitive in one half cycle than the other, the test is carried out for both 0 and 180° phase settings. The longest time is recorded.

To simplify testing, the 1660 Series models have an auto mode for measuring RCD tripping time in which six tests are automatically carried out in sequence. This means the test engineer does not need to keep returning to the installation tester after resetting a tripped RCD. The instrument senses when the RCD has been reset and initiates the next test in the sequence. Results are held in temporary memory, and viewed by stepping through with the arrow buttons. The 1663 and 1664 also have internal memory for storing results for later recall. The 1662, 1663 and 1664 can also measure RCD tripping current (commonly referred to as a ramp test) by gradually increasing an applied current until the RCD trips.

## Polarity test

Where local regulations forbid the installation of single-pole switching devices in the neutral conductor, a test of polarity must be made to verify that all such devices are connected in the phase only. Incorrect polarity results in parts of an installation remaining connected to a live phase conductor even when a single-pole switch is off, or an over-current protection device has tripped. The 1660 Series installation testers test for correct polarity using the continuity mode.

## Functional test

All assemblies, such as switchgear and control gear assemblies, drives, controls and interlocks, should be functionally tested to show that they are properly mounted, adjusted and installed in accordance with the relevant requirements of the standard. Protective devices must be functionally tested to check whether they are properly installed and adjusted.

enough to allow sufficient current to flow to trip a circuit protection device such as a MCB (Miniature Circuit Breaker). A new Z-max memory function on the 1663 and 1664 allows the user to easily evaluate the highest earth-loop value on the circuit, ensuring it does not exceed the recommended value. In addition, the 1664 has a mΩ resolution for measuring short earth loop paths such as when close to a supply transformer. The 1664 carries out this test using three separate test leads or the lead fitted with a mains plug. It calculates the Prospective Fault Current (PFC), and this appears in the lower part of the dual display. Determining the PFC is important to ensure that the capability of fuses and over-current circuit breakers is not exceeded. The 1663 and 1664 instruments can also measure the earth resistance component of the total loop resistance, and line impedance (source impedance between line and neutral, or the line-to-line impedance in three-phase systems) as well as calculate the Prospective Short Circuit current (PSC) which could flow when there is a short circuit between line and neutral.

Measuring loop impedance can actually trip RCDs in the circuit being tested, preventing further measurement. To prevent this the Fluke 1660 series testers use innovative and patent pending technology. This means more consistent and highly repeatable results.

### Fluke 1660 Series Installation Testers

The Fluke 1660 Series improves upon Fluke's installation testers by putting more testing power in the user's hands, protecting appliances that may inadvertently connected to the installation under test, and making it easy to share test results over your smartphone.

#### Insulation PreTest—protect the installation; avoid costly mistakes.

The Fluke 1664 FC installation tester is the only installation tester with Insulation PreTest, which stops you from making potential serious and costly mistakes. If the tester detects that an appliance is connected to the system under test, it will stop the insulation test and provide a visual warning. This helps eliminate accidental damage to peripheral equipment and keeps your customers happy.

#### Auto Test for faster, easier testing

Auto Test does 5 required installation tests in one sequence, ensuring compliance with local installation regulations. It reduces the number of manual connections, decreases the possibility of making errors and reduces test time up to 40% from previous Fluke models.

#### 1664 FC

Work safer, protect the installation under test, share results

The Fluke 1664 FC is the only installation tester that protects appliances from damage during installation tests, and allows you to share your test results wirelessly with coworkers or customers. Fluke's patent pending Insulation PreTest stops you from performing tests with appliances that are connected to the system during test. This helps eliminate accidental damage and keeps your customers happy. It also has a megohm resolution (0.001 Ω) for measuring short earth loop paths, such as when close to a supply transformer.



In addition, the Fluke 1664 FC offers you the power of Fluke Connect. Now you can send test results straight from your Fluke 1664 FC to your smartphone, and transmit those results to other members of your team. It's the fastest way to let your team see what you see, and help process the test results without leaving the field. You can get feedback, suggestions and answers to questions.

Fluke Cloud™ storage—eliminate data transcription errors. Fluke Cloud™ storage reduces data transfer time and eliminates transcription errors. Plus you get world-class data protection with Fluke Cloud™ storage. Safe. Secure. Fast. More accurate. All from the power of Fluke Connect®.

ShareLive™ video calls—share test results from anywhere. Stay on the same page even when you and your team are in different places, only with ShareLive™ video call. Fluke Connect allows your 1664 FC Installation Tester to send test results to your smartphone so you can connect and collaborate with others. It's the fastest way to let your team see what you see, helping you get approvals without leaving the field.

**1663**

The ideal tester for professional installers

This instrument is ideal for professional users—full-featured functionality, advanced measurement capability, yet it is still easy to use. Operation is intuitive and easily mastered by all levels of field workers.

**1662**

A solid, entry level installation tester

The Fluke 1662 gives you Fluke reliability, simple operation and all the testing power you need for basic installation testing.

**Caution!** *This Application Note is not intended to replace or supersede the recognized standards in IEC 60364 (or its national equivalents), but to provide a summary of the general requirements. Note that not all tests are mentioned. If in any doubt, always consult the appropriate standards publication.*



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**Fluke Europe B.V.**  
 P.O. Box 1186  
 5602 BD Eindhoven  
 The Netherlands  
 Web: [www.fluke.co.uk](http://www.fluke.co.uk)

**For more information call:**  
 In Europe/M-East/Africa  
 +31 (0)40 267 5100 or  
 Fax +31 (0)40 267 5222

**Fluke (UK) Ltd.**  
 52 Hurricane Way  
 Norwich, Norfolk  
 NR6 6JB  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel.: +44 (0) 20 7942 0700  
 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7942 0701  
 E-mail: [industrial@uk.fluke.nl](mailto:industrial@uk.fluke.nl)  
 Web: [www.fluke.co.uk](http://www.fluke.co.uk)

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