

Minutes of the 25th Meeting of
the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC)

Date : 5 October 2012
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue: Room 7102, EMSD Headquarters, 3 Kai Shing Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Present

Mr. CHUNG Fuk-wai, Simon (Chairman)
Mr. CHAN Fan
Ms. WAN Siu-ling, Emily
Dr. CHAI Ngai-chiu, Sunny
Mr. YIP Ping-nam
Mr. MAK Chi-leung
Mr. CHAN Loong, Geoffrey
Mr. CHAN Chor-man, Chapman
Ms. LAM Lee, Alice
Dr. LO Wai-chau, Edward
Mr. TO Wang-kam, Albert
Mr. YU Chen-on, Emil
Mr. LOK Tat-hong, Howard
Mr. LOK Kwei-sang, Tandy
Mr. WAT Hon-keung
Mr. WONG Chi-ming, Rover
Mr. CHAN Shui-ching (Secretary)

In attendance

Mr. SIT Wing-hang, Alfred	Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, EMSD
Mr. LI Kwok-keung	Assistant Director/Electricity & Energy Efficiency, EMSD
Mr. HO Wing-yiu	Chief E&M Engineer/Electricity Legislation, EMSD
Mr. CHAN Kar-keung, Steve	E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. LEE Chi-leung, Eric	E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. SHUM Ching-nam	E&M Engineer, EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Mr. LIU Hong-fai, Dandy
Professor HUNG Yeung-sam

Agenda Item1: Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed the new members of the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC) to the 25th ESAC meeting. He then briefly introduced the members to each other.
2. The Chairman briefed members on the terms of reference of the ESAC, which are to advise the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services on matters relating to the safety of electricity supply, electrical installations, wiring and electrical products, and the safe use of electricity.
3. The Chairman reminded members that they should follow the guidelines on declaration of interests for members of public councils, boards and committees. If a member became aware that a conflict of interests might arise from his/her participating in the discussion of an agenda item, he/she must disclose full details of the interests involved. The interests declared would be recorded in the minutes of meeting.

Agenda Item2: Overview of the Electricity Ordinance and Its Subsidiary Regulations (ESAC Paper 4/2012)

4. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of the Electricity Ordinance and its subsidiary regulations and EMSD enforcement measures in respect of electrical safety.
5. A member noted that owners of electrical installations were required by the law to arrange periodic inspection and testing for the installations every five years, and inquired whether individual users, such as industrial undertakings, were also covered by the requirement.
6. EMSD responded that according to the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations, if an electrical installation is installed in an industrial undertaking and has an approved loading exceeding 200A, its owner should arrange periodic inspection and testing for the installation once every 5 years to ensure electrical safety.
7. A member noted that as stipulated in the Electricity Ordinance, no person shall contract to carry out electrical work unless he is a registered electrical contractor. However, ordinary decoration firms and outlets of electrical products could also have contracted with others to carry out electrical work, as they might not understand the above-mentioned legal requirements. The member enquired how EMSD would handle such cases.
8. EMSD responded that it was an offence for decoration firms and

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outlets of electrical products to contract to carry out electrical work, and offenders would be liable to prosecution. EMSD had been publicising the requirements of the Electricity Ordinance through various channels since the Ordinance was put into effect. EMSD would continue its publicity efforts in the future to remind trade members of the relevant legal requirements.

Agenda Item 3: Progress Update on Implementation of Continuing Professional Development Scheme for Registered Electrical Workers (ESAC Paper 5/2012)

9. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave a progress update on the implementation of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme for Registered Electrical Workers (REWs).
10. Based on the information in the paper, a member enquired why the number of REWs who met the requirements of the CPD Scheme was higher than the actual number of REWs who were due for registration renewal. The member also enquired about the number of REWs who were not able to renew their registration because they had failed to meet the requirements of the scheme.
11. EMSD responded that the phenomenon was probably due to the fact that REWs were hoping to fulfil the CPD requirements in time so as not to jeopardize their registration renewal. So far, no REWs had failed to renew their registration as a result of the scheme.
12. A member enquired whether the department would provide web-based training for the CPD Scheme.
13. EMSD responded that it did not have any plan yet to provide web-based training, but it would consider the need to introduce web-based training in light of the circumstances. A member noted that according to his personal experience, an REW would have the opportunity to exchange views with the tutor and other members of the trade by physically attending the training course. As such kind of interactive learning opportunity could not be provided by web-based training, he supported the department to maintain the current arrangement of having REWs attend training courses in person.

Agenda Item 4: Household Electrical Products Incidents Review (ESAC Paper 6/2012)

14. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an account of the results of its review exercise on household electrical products incidents over the past three years and its follow-up actions.

Action

15. A member enquired whether the department would consider requiring electrical product suppliers to conduct periodic testing and obtain safety certificates for their products to ensure the production quality of electrical products.
16. EMSD responded that the product cycle of electrical products varied, so periodic testing was not feasible for electrical products with a relatively short product cycle. For electrical products with a longer product cycle, the department conducted random inspections in the market to keep the suppliers vigilant. The department would constantly keep in view the international safety requirements on electrical products, and take actions accordingly.
17. A member enquired whether the department had analysed the reasons for an increase in the number of accidents related to washing machines in 2011. The member also enquired if there was any specific reason for the increase in accidents attributed to component fault in 2010 and 2011. The member further observed that the majority of incidents over the past few years were caused by a lack of proper maintenance, and enquired whether this was attributable to product design.
18. EMSD responded that the department constantly monitored and analysed the incident figures. As soon as the main cause of an incident was established, the department would definitely release the relevant information to the public. It was difficult to identify the reasons for an increase or decrease of a certain incident figure, as the cause of the incident could be attributed to a number of factors and the base number of accident figures was relatively small. Nevertheless, it was believed that weather condition was one of the reasons. For example, if the weather was hot, the air conditioners would be kept running for longer periods of time, so the incident figures involving air conditioners would correspondingly be higher. Also, when the humidity was high, there would be more incidents involving electrical appliances. EMSD
19. A member noted that as human factor was one of the main causes of accidents involving electrical products, effective promotion of the proper use of electrical products was of particular importance. Furthermore, it was also equally important that electrical products must be properly installed and be provided with operational manuals and suitable warning labels.
20. EMSD shared the views of the member and would continue to step up its efforts in publicity and public education. EMSD

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

21. A member noted that currently there was no explicit requirement in the Electricity Ordinance with regard to the specifications of power cord conductivity, and enquired whether the department would follow up on this matter.
22. EMSD responded that the power cord was an electrical product and its safety was governed by the Electrical Products (Safety) Regulation. The department was aware of the newspaper coverage on the conductivity problem of poor quality power cords, and would explore with the trade on whether it was necessary to issue relevant guidelines in addition to the existing legislation to stop the supply of poor quality power cords. EMSD
23. A member noted that there had been several electrical industrial accidents recently, and enquired whether there would be any follow-up action by the department.
24. EMSD responded that it was very concerned about the recent electrical industrial accidents. The department would conduct follow-up investigation into each incident, and should anyone be found contravening the legislation, enforcement action would be taken accordingly. Furthermore, the department would promote more vigorously the work safety culture of “switching off electricity supply before electrical work” among the trade members. The series of publicity activities in response to the recent incidents included the publication of an extra issue of Electricity News, the inclusion of case studies in the Annual Technical Seminar for the electrical trade held in November, and reminding trade members of work safety during the CPD talks. The department would also collaborate with the Labour Department to step up publicity on electrical safety among the construction trade. EMSD
25. A member enquired whether the department could make arrangements to introduce legislation on “switching off electricity supply before electrical work” to ensure electrical work safety.
26. EMSD responded that an REW should comply with the requirements concerning the conditions and safety precautions for live work stipulated in the Code of Practice for the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations, so as to ensure that the electrical work conducted by him or under his supervision would not cause danger. Non-compliance with the above Code of Practice causing danger to arise from the conduction of electrical work was already an offence and was liable to disciplinary action. EMSD
27. A member representing the electrical trade noted that trade

practitioners had been observing the requirement of “switching off electricity supply before electrical work” by the department, and would conduct risk assessment before carrying out live work. In addition, the trade had collaborated with the Occupational Safety and Health Council to further promote electrical work safety.

Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

28. Members would be informed of the date, time and venue of the next meeting in due course.