

**Minutes of the 26th Meeting of
the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC)**

Date : 22 March 2013
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. LIU Hong-fai, Dandy
Mr. MAK Chi-leung
Mr. CHAN Loong, Geoffrey
Mr. CHAN Chor-man, Chapman
Dr. LO Wai-chau, Edward
Mr. TO Wang-kam, Albert
Mr. LOK Tat-hong, Howard
Mr. LOK Kwei-sang, Tandy
Mr. WAT Hon-keung
Mr. CHAN Shui-ching (Secretary)

In attendance

Mr. HO Wing-yiu Chief E&M Engineer/Electricity Legislation, EMSD
Mr. YIU Tak-tai, Boris E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. WUT Siu-pang, Pan E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. WONG Kai-por, Chris E&M Engineer, EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Ms. LAM Lee, Alice
Mr. YU Chen-on, Emil
Mr. WONG Chi-ming, Rover
Professor HUNG Yeung-sam

Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed members to the 26th meeting of the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC). He briefly introduced the members to each other.
2. 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 Item 2: Confirmation of Minutes of the 25th Meeting held on 5 October 2012

3. Members did not raise any amendment to the minutes of the 25th meeting. The Chairman declared the minutes of the 25th meeting confirmed.

Agenda Item 3: Enhancement of Electrical Safety at Construction Sites (ESAC Paper 1/2013)

4. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of the specific actions taken by EMSD to enhance electrical safety awareness in construction sites of Hong Kong.
5. A member remarked that on-site safety officers could take on more management responsibilities, supervise the work at the site and issue safety reminders, or even stop the conduction of non-compliance work.
6. EMSD stated that electrical safety at construction sites involved not only electrical workers, but also other personnel working there. In view of this, EMSD and the Labour Department (LD) were working closely to implement a series of specific measures to enhance electrical safety at construction sites. EMSD would reflect members' views on on-site safety officers to LD through the appropriate channels. EMSD
7. A member observed that the dissemination by LD and the various works departments of different messages and guidelines on safety requirements to contractors was somewhat confusing. He asked if EMSD could play a coordinating role.
8. EMSD stated in response that the use of separate means and

channels to convey safety messages by LD and the various works departments was conducive to fast and wide dissemination of messages to the different trades and sectors. EMSD, LD and the various works departments would from time to time coordinate with each other on the safety messages being released to ensure the accuracy of their content. For example, EMSD would advise LD on the content of electrical safety messages being released. EMSD stated that centralised dissemination might not be the most appropriate arrangement as it would affect the speed and scope of dissemination.

9. A member stated that according to the EMSD paper, 67% of serious incidents occurred because electricity supply was not switched off before electrical work. Moreover, 78% of the incidents involved working at height, especially falling down from a height of 1.5 metres while working on a ladder. He enquired whether EMSD, in view of the situation, would put forward improvement measures and guidelines in collaboration with LD.

10. EMSD responded that according to its analysis, falling from height after electrocution would aggravate injury and the fatality rate. Prevention of electrical accidents was the major emphasis of the work of EMSD. To promote the practice of "switching off electricity supply before electrical work," EMSD would continue to work with the trade unions and associations to strengthen publicity in the trade. EMSD would also relay members' concern about the prevention of accidents involving working at height to LD through the appropriate channels.

EMSD

11. A member suggested that EMSD could consider working with District Councils to promote electrical safety.

12. EMSD responded that it would maintain close communication and collaboration with District Councils and District Fire Safety Committees so as to conduct promotional and educational work on electrical safety among the public and property owners on district level. Messages to be promoted included, for example, the safe use of electrical products and the 5-yearly inspections of electrical installations.

13. A member representing a trade union observed that enhancement of training and promotion of the role of safety supervisors could also help improve construction site safety. Moreover, he was of the view that trade unions and District Councils could also work together to promote electrical safety. He pointed out that trade unions were promoting the wearing of gloves at work and advising workers not to expose the upper part

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of their bodies during work, as these measures could help enhance electrical work safety.

14. EMSD responded that the department was happy to work with all relevant parties, including trade unions and District Councils, to enhance publicity and education on electrical safety. EMSD

Agenda Item 4: Review of Electrical Products Safety in 2012 (ESAC Paper 2/2013)

15. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of the major actions taken by EMSD in enforcing the Electrical Products (Safety) Regulation in 2012.

16. A member said that according to his understanding, safety hazard might be caused when a fuse of an incorrect rated current is used in the replacement of a fuse in the 13A plug of an electrical product. To deal with the problem, he suggested to EMSD that a label reminding the public should be affixed to the 13A plugs of electrical products as a publicity measure. He also suggested that EMSD should look for new publicity strategies and channels, such as organising promotional activities in collaboration with the local community and District Council members.

17. EMSD responded that it would follow up on the situation. It also agreed with the comment about new publicity channels. EMSD had been exploring new publicity methods and channels, such as YouTube, the Internet, mobile applications, etc. EMSD

Agenda Item 5: An Update on the Enforcement of the Electricity Supply Lines (Protection) Regulation (ESAC Paper 3/2013)

18. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an update on the enforcement of the Electricity Supply Lines (Protection) Regulation including enforcement and publicity efforts, achievements to date and way forward.

19. A member enquired whether demerit points would be recorded against or performance monitoring points deducted from contractors for minor irregularities identified after inspections by EMSD. The member would also like to know more about EMSD's criteria in identifying contractors for specific inspections and publicity.

20. EMSD stated in response that the demerit points or performance monitoring points system was applicable to situations governed

by registration mechanisms. As the Electricity Supply Lines (Protection) Regulation covered all general contractors like the building and piling contractors involved in excavation works and working at height that might jeopardise the overhead electricity lines, the demerit points system was not applicable to these contractors. EMSD also stated that it would use the database collated from past records to identify contractors with more frequent irregularities in stepping up construction site inspections and publicity.

21. A member observed that EMSD and the power companies had been working very well together on the joint inspections of high risk construction sites. He considered that EMSD was very efficient and effective in dealing with such kind of work which, on the whole, had achieved very good results. In response to the question relating to the identification of high risk construction sites for inspections, the member pointed out that some small contractors were more danger prone as they might not be familiar with the requirements for working in the vicinity of overhead electricity lines. He commended EMSD for using different strategies and approaches in handling these high risk construction sites effectively.
22. A member enquired whether EMSD would divide cable damage incidents into different categories, so as to implement specific measures to enhance its regulatory control/publicity work, or make improvements in collaboration with power companies.
23. EMSD responded that cable damage incidents were divided into different categories. Generally speaking, these incidents were caused by failure to take all reasonable steps as required by the Code of Practice, such as asking power companies for cable plans, carrying out passive detection, trial hole excavation, as well as active detection. Therefore, EMSD would enhance its publicity work, putting emphasis on the required reasonable steps. EMSD would provide members with the relevant information at the next meeting. EMSD
24. A member noted that the cable plans of power companies and information provided by owners of other underground facilities only showed the approximate locations of such facilities. He asked if an accurate digital database could be set up to facilitate the implementation of works in Hong Kong.
25. EMSD responded that information on underground alignment provided by energy companies, including the two power companies and the town gas company, was subject to change

due to the aging of these facilities or road resurfacing works. Therefore, there was no way the information in these plans could be completely accurate. Under such circumstances, EMSD advised contractors to use information in the cable plans only for reference and to follow the 8 Steps for Underground Cable Detection, so as to prevent underground cables from being damaged during the course of work.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

26. No other business was raised by members.

Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

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