

**Minutes of the 27th Meeting of
the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC)**

Date: 27 September 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
Mr. YIP Ping-nam
Dr. LIU Hong-fai, Dandy
Mr. CHAN Chor-man, Chapman
Professor HUNG Yeung-sam (Professor HUNG left the meeting early due to another
engagement after EMSD gave a report on Paper
6/2013)

Ms. LAM Lee, Alice
Dr. LO Wai-chau, Edward
Mr. WAT Hon-keung
Mr. YU Chen-on, Emil
Mr. LOK Tat-hong, Howard
Mr. LOK Kwei-sang, Tandy
Mr. CHAN Loong, Geoffrey
Mr. MAK Chi-leung
Mr. CHAN Shui-ching (Secretary)

In attendance

Mr. LAI Hon-chung, Harry Acting Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, EMSD
Mr. HO Wing-yiu Chief E&M Engineer/Electricity Legislation, EMSD
Mr. HO Wai-keung, Paul E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. WUT Siu-pang, Pan E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. CHAN Wing-yip, John E&M Engineer, EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Mr. WONG Chi-ming, Rover
Mr. TO Wang-kam, Albert
Dr. CHAI Ngai-chiu, Sunny

Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed members to the 27th meeting of the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC). He introduced to members those who were in attendance at the meeting.
2. The Chairman reminded members that they must 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 26th Meeting held on 22 March 2013

3. Members did not raise any amendment to the minutes of the 26th meeting. The Chairman declared the minutes of the 26th meeting confirmed.
4. The Chairman stated that EMSD had reported on the actions taken on some of the issues requiring follow-up in the minutes of the 26th meeting. According to EMSD's report, the issues arising from items 6 and 10 in the minutes of the last meeting had been relayed to the Labour Department. EMSD would also continue to follow up on items 14 and 17 in the minutes of the last meeting, such as working with the trade and District Councils to step up publicity and education on electrical safety. With regard to item 23 of the minutes in the last meeting, EMSD had already drawn up the publicity plan for the coming year to increase contractors' awareness of all reasonable steps and measures that should be taken. A series of publicity leaflets entitled "Take all Reasonable Steps and Measures" and "8 Steps for Underground Cable Detection" had been distributed to stakeholders in the middle of the year.

Agenda Item 3: Workplan for Reviewing the Code of Practice for the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations (ESAC Paper 4/2013)

5. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of the workplan formulated by EMSD for reviewing and updating the Code of Practice for the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations (CoP).
6. A member observed that the safety requirements for electrical work were becoming more stringent, such as the enforcement of the requirement to switch off electricity supply before carrying out

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electrical work. He considered that the trade should explore the practical solutions with regard to some of the implementation problems (such as the “log-out tag-out” arrangement for miniature circuit breaker”).

7. EMSD stated in response that the trade would be consulted on the review and updating of the CoP. The views raised by members, together with the comments from other stakeholders, would be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the working group.
8. A member remarked that the code of practice relevant to electrical workers was different from the code relevant to electrical products.
9. The Chairman noted that since electrical equipment such as miniature circuit-breaker, socket outlet, etc. would be involved when electrical wiring installation work was carried out by electrical workers, EMSD had to specify the scope of the electrical products that would be included when formulating the CoP.
10. EMSD responded that the CoP mentioned in the paper focused on the safety requirements of electrical work on fixed electrical installations, which covered relevant electrical equipment as well. The CoP would provide the international standards for the electrical equipment included. With regard to household electrical products, EMSD had also issued the relevant Guidance Notes for the Electrical Products (Safety) Regulation.
11. A member enquired whether the current review and update would involve major alterations or controversial items.
12. The Chairman remarked that he was a member of the working group for the revision of the Code of Practice 2009 edition. At each working group meeting, there were four to five items for members to devote their discussion and give their views on the direction of revision and the international standards that should be accepted.
13. A member, who also served as a member of the working group for the revision of the Code of Practice 2009 edition, recalled that there were 12 revision items at the time, and the topic of “switching off electricity supply before electrical work” was the most controversial. Eventually, the working group agreed to include the requirement of “switching off electricity supply before electrical work” in the Appendices for better adaptation by the trade. The member noted that although the trade expressed concerns, safety was the top priority.

14. EMSD stated in response that ESAC Paper 4/2013 gave a forward-looking overview of the review and update exercise for the CoP. According to the work plan, the whole revision exercise, already commenced in June 2013, would be completed at end-2014. Since the review had just begun, a complete picture of what changes must be made had yet to be established. EMSD encouraged all trade members to give their views on the review of the CoP. EMSD noted that the working group for the review was made up of representatives from various sectors. The review would be conducted in a detailed and comprehensive manner, with the target of ensuring electrical safety. EMSD also thanked the Chairman and the member for sharing their experience regarding the revision of the Code of Practice 2009 edition.

Agenda Item 4: Review and Overview on the Cooperation Arrangement with Mainland Authorities (AQSIQ) on Electrical Products Safety (ESAC Paper 5/2013)

15. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of the work activities and achievements in respect of electrical products safety after the signing of the "Cooperation Arrangement on Electrical and Mechanical Products Safety" between EMSD and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) on 12 February 2003.
16. A member enquired whether the internet reporting platform was accessible to the general public. The member noted that if public access was allowed, useful information such as products that were recalled, etc. could be made available to the public. The member also enquired whether the electrical products being reported through the platform were restricted to products from the Mainland.
17. EMSD replied that the internet reporting platform was one for the exchange of information of an operational nature. Since the reporting involved sensitive manufacturer data, it was not open to the public. With regard to information concerning electrical products, established channels and means for public dissemination already existed for EMSD. For example, EMSD would publish information on the recall of electrical products through its website or newspapers, and would announce the results of electrical product tests carried out jointly with the Consumer Council through the CHOICE magazine, etc. EMSD remarked that AQSIQ would follow up on the reports made through the internet platform involving non-compliant electrical products manufactured in the Mainland. Moreover, the

Mainland and Hong Kong would exchange other safety information on electrical products through the internet platform, and would endeavour to achieve wider information exchange, both in terms of coverage and content, continuously and through consultation.

18. A member remarked that it was his understanding that although some electrical products of Hong Kong had already fulfilled international standards, they could not be supplied and used in the Mainland for lack of China Compulsory Certification (CCC). The member wondered if EMSD could follow up with the Mainland authorities on this matter.
19. EMSD stated in response that CCC was the certification system for electrical products in the Mainland. Even if a product had met the required national or international standards, it still had to obtain CCC in accordance with the certification system in the Mainland. As regards whether there would be a better arrangement for processing CCC for Hong Kong's electrical products, EMSD believed that the trade could explore that with relevant certification bodies.
20. A member added that there was a difference between product test and certification. Product certification was carried out on the basis that the product concerned had passed the required tests. The certification body would conduct the relevant work, which included regular factory checks, etc., before issuing the certificate to a qualified product. The Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS) had reached an arrangement with relevant departments in the Mainland on the accreditation of certain product tests carried out by laboratories in Hong Kong, with details available on the HKAS website. But CCC was a certification that must be carried out by certification bodies in the Mainland.
21. The Chairman remarked that the internet reporting platform was instrumental in facilitating the exchange of relevant information on product testing and certification between EMSD and AQSIS.

Agenda Item 5: Overview of Disciplinary Actions in 2013 (ESAC Paper 6/2013)

22. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which presented an overview and statistics on the disciplinary actions for the cases of non-compliance with the Electricity Ordinance of Hong Kong.
23. A member asked about the numbers of cases referred to the Disciplinary Tribunal by EMSD.

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24. EMSD responded that the cases referred to the Disciplinary Tribunal were incidents of a more serious nature, so the numbers were relatively smaller. In 2013, there was only one case with proceedings completed.
25. A member enquired about the period covered by the statistics on disciplinary cases put forward by EMSD in the paper, and whether the cases were on an upward or a downward trend.
26. EMSD replied that the statistics on disciplinary cases mentioned in the paper covered the period from January 2011 to December 2012. The numbers of disciplinary cases in 2012 were comparable to those in 2011, indicating that there had been no apparent upward or downward trend.
27. A member asked what types of problems were presented by the sub-standard electrical installation works mentioned in the paper, and whether these problems would cause serious consequences or were only minor problems.
28. EMSD stated in response that the sub-standard electrical installation works mentioned in the paper could present a variety of problems, such as lack of supplementary equipotential cables, installation of incorrect colour coded cables and misconnection of cables inside socket outlets, etc. EMSD would assess each case in terms of serious consequences, including the possibility of fire, property loss or even casualties, etc. In addition to the assessment result, EMSD would also consider the track record of the worker or contractor involved before deciding on the relevant disciplinary action to be taken. Incidents of a more serious nature would be referred to the Disciplinary Tribunal.
29. A member suggested that EMSD could publicise some of the cases of sub-standard electrical installation works and unsafe working procedures in a pamphlet for distribution to the trade each year so that practitioners could draw their lessons.
30. EMSD replied that it strongly agreed with the suggestion put forward by the member. EMSD currently publicise the more common reasons for non-compliance and non-compliance incidents of a more serious nature for the information of trade practitioners via the internet, periodicals distributed to the trade or Continuing Professional Development courses, hoping they could be vigilant against non-compliance.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

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31. A member observed that hotels in Singapore were allowed the flexibility to install socket outlets of various specifications to suit the needs of visitors. He enquired whether Hong Kong could look into the feasibility of following this practice.
32. EMSD responded that the subject was discussed with members of the hotel industry several years ago. EMSD considered it more feasible for hotels to provide visitors with adaptable cords, which could be used for different kinds of electronic products and chargers. One end of the cord was a 13A plug. There were socket holes at the other end, suitable for different kinds of electronic products and chargers in compliance with internationally recognised standards.
33. A member said that he actually found in his hotel room in UK socket outlets of various national standards. He remarked that it was probably due to a new regulation being in force in the UK, which could be discussed during the review of the CoP.
34. EMSD stated in response that it was open on the review of the CoP and would study the issues raised by members during the review. EMSD had to ensure that the CoP complied with the statutory requirements. It also emphasized that safety should not be compromised for flexibility. EMSD
35. A member agreed with EMSD that it was essential to keep an open mind on the review of the CoP while upholding safety as the top priority. He was of the view that hotels should not give up the prevailing 13A socket outlets for the sake of providing more choices.
36. This was echoed by another member who likewise did not agree that regulations on socket outlets should be relaxed, from the safety point of view. However, if a special "adaptor" suitable for other national standards could be developed in Hong Kong to work with 13A socket outlets, it could be provided to visitors in hotels and bring convenience to exhibitors participating in exhibitions in Hong Kong.
37. The Chairman remarked that EMSD would study the issues raised by members during the review of the CoP.

Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

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