

**Minutes of the 31st Meeting of
the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC)**

Date : 18 September 2015
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Room 7102, 7/F, EMSD Headquarters, 3 Kai Shing Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Present

Mr CHUNG Fuk-wai, Simon (Chairman)
Ms WAN Siu-ling, Emily
Mr YU Chen-on, Emil
Mr WAT Hon-keung
Mr CHEUNG Hung-kwan
Mr CHOI Wai-man
Mr LIN Jian-hui
Mr TO Wang-kam, Albert
Professor HUNG Yeung-sam
Mr CHAN Chor-man, Chapman
Dr LIU Hong-fai, Dandy
Mr YIP Ping-nam
Ms NG So-kuen
Mr YIU Tak-tai, Boris (Secretary)

In attendance

Mr SIT Wing-hang, Alfred	Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, EMSD
Mr LAI Hon-chung, Harry	Assistant Director/Electricity and Energy Efficiency, EMSD
Mr HO Wing-yiu	Chief E&M Engineer/Electricity Legislation, EMSD
Mr HO Chi-chung	E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr CHUNG Siu-lun	E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr NG Hin-yeung, Kenneth	E&M Engineer, EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Mr CHAN Fan
Mr LOK Tat-hong, Howard
Mr LOK Kwei-sang, Tandy
Dr CHAN Ka-wing
Ms LAM Lee, Alice
Dr CHAI Ngai-chiu, Sunny

Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed members to the 31st 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 observe 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 participation in the discussion of an agenda item, he/she must disclose full details of the interests involved accordingly. The interests declared would be recorded in the minutes of meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Confirmation of Minutes of the 30th Meeting Held on 20 March 2015

3. Members did not raise any amendment to the minutes of the 30th meeting. The Chairman declared the minutes of the 30th meeting confirmed. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) would arrange to upload the minutes of meeting on its website for public reference.
4. With regard to the follow-up to items 22 and 23 of the minutes of the 30th meeting, EMSD reported to the member concerned that his suggestion had been passed to the Working Group for Reviewing the Code of Practice for the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations for deliberation. The Working Group decided that the newly revised information on electrical wiring work in the British Standard BS 7671 would be incorporated in the new edition of the Code of Practice.

Agenda Item 3: Periodic Inspection, Testing and Certification Work for Fixed Electrical Installations (ESAC Paper 3/2015)

5. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which provided members with a summary of the current position and new initiatives in relation to the periodic inspection, testing and certification (PITC) work for fixed electrical installations.
6. A member asked if there were only 3 000 buildings with approved loading not exceeding 100A and enquired about the number of buildings with approved loading exceeding 100A which required PITC.
7. EMSD stated in response that, according to its record, "the number of about 3 000 buildings" referred to that of old buildings with approved loading not exceeding 100A and higher electrical safety risk, and the number of buildings with approved loading exceeding 100A or those requiring PITC by law was about 26 000.
8. A member enquired when the new initiative to scrap the second reminder letter as mentioned in the paper would be officially implemented.
9. EMSD stated that it was necessary to conduct related preparatory work, e.g. amending the content of the reminder letter, before the new initiative was implemented. If the work went smoothly, the new initiative was expected to be launched at the end of the year.

10. A member enquired about the adequacy of manpower resources for the implementation of the new initiative.
11. EMSD stated in response that, under the current arrangements, EMSD would issue a first reminder letter to the owner nine months before the expiry date of PITC. If the owner failed to complete PITC work by the expiry date of PITC, EMSD would issue a second reminder letter to the owner. Meanwhile, EMSD would make use of different channels, e.g. contact by telephone, visits to buildings, and participation in meetings convened by buildings, to explain the requirements of the law to owners. EMSD would also work with the Home Affairs Department (HAD) in providing appropriate support to building owners. As the legislation regarding PITC had been in place for years, owners and the trade should have gained adequate experience and developed a mutual collaboration approach for completing PITC work. That was why EMSD had suggested that it should scrap the second reminder letter so as to make better use of the resources available in the community and at the same time allow owners to fulfil their statutory duties in a more proactive manner.
12. A member raised that whether it was premature to issue the reminder letter to the owner nine months before the expiry date of PITC as the owner might easily neglect the letter. In addition, the member suggested that EMSD could consider uploading on its website a list of buildings, of which the PITC would soon expire or had expired, to keep owners informed of the status so that they would arrange PITC work.
13. EMSD stated in response that the issuance of reminder letters to owners was a more direct and effective way to remind them to complete PITC work in accordance with the requirements of the law. In addition, taking into account that owners needed sufficient time for co-ordination, inviting quotations, tendering, conducting inspection and testing, and arranging maintenance work after inspection and testing, EMSD considered the existing practice of issuing a reminder letter nine months before the expiry date to be appropriate.
14. A member opined that the issuance of reminder letters to owners was appropriate and important in promoting law compliance and avoiding expenses on prosecution actions. He then expressed the wish to know the reasons and considerations for the new initiative to scrap the second reminder letter. Another member suggested that EMSD could consider issuing the second reminder letter one month before the expiry date to owners who failed to submit periodic test certificates, with the aim of reducing prosecution cases arising from late PITC.
15. EMSD thanked members for their suggestions and agreed that prosecution actions would be the last resort for law enforcement. Therefore, EMSD had always attached great importance to publicity work promoting law compliance. EMSD pointed out that the practice of issuing reminder letters to owners was not a legal requirement, and that it had promoted and explained the requirements of the law to building owners through different channels, and provided them with necessary support in collaboration with HAD. The objective of the above arrangements initiated by EMSD was precisely to promote law compliance. The implementation of the above law enforcement arrangements had thus far proved effective, with the number of cases involving failure to conduct PITC on time showing a decrease in recent years. It was against this

backdrop that, upon review, EMSD had recommended the second reminder be scrapped, on the one hand to encourage owners to take the first reminder more seriously, and on the other hand avoid giving owners the false impression that they could procrastinate the periodic inspection until the second reminder was received. EMSD further remarked that it would review the implementation of the new initiative from time to time during the trial period, and would target the owners, especially those of "three nil" buildings, who failed to complete PITC even when the expiry date was approaching, by strengthening the existing associated support measures, such as contact by phone, visits to buildings and collaboration with HAD to provide the owners with suitable assistance and support regarding arrangement of PITC.

16. Representative of HAD added that the Government had attached paramount importance to the management and safety issues of buildings. In order to help owners of "three nil" buildings address the building management issues, HAD launched the Building Management Professional Advisory Service Scheme in 2011. The two professional property management companies engaged under the Scheme would provide professional advisory service for the participating building owners, helping them form owners' corporations or other residents' organisations and carry out building maintenance works. In view of the remarkable results of the Scheme, HAD launched Phase 2 of the Scheme in April 2014 to provide service to the owners and residents of a further 1 200 private buildings for three years. In addition, to help old buildings with low rateable values to improve building management, HAD had since 2012 launched the Subsidy for Owners' Corporations of Old Buildings for the Community Care Fund, with items covered including PITC for electrical installations. Representative of HAD stated that there had been good communication and collaboration between EMSD and HAD in handling cases of buildings with management problems.

Agenda Item 4: Enhancing Cost-effectiveness of Electrical Safety Promotion (ESAC Paper 4/2015)

17. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of existing electrical safety promotion activities as well as various new initiatives to enhance the cost-effectiveness of publicity work.
18. A member stated that he found the font size of the text on EMSD's website too small when he browsed the information on it with his smart phone and suggested making improvements in this regard. Another member suggested developing mobile applications to facilitate browsing of the information using mobile phones.
19. EMSD thanked the members for their views and would continue to explore new promotion channels for disseminating electrical safety messages to the public. EMSD also took the opportunity to thank all members and trade stakeholders for their efforts in promoting electrical safety over the years.

Agenda Item 5: An Update on the Enforcement of the Electricity Supply Lines (Protection) Regulation (ESAC Paper 5/2015)

20. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which presented an update on the enforcement of the Electricity Supply Lines (Protection) Regulation EMSD

- including enforcement work, incident analysis and planned improvement actions.
21. The Chairman enquired whether EMSD kept a record of under-performing contractors.
 22. EMSD stated in response that information in this regard was kept for analysis and follow-up purposes, such as organising safety talks for under-performing contractors and conducting follow-up inspections.
 23. A member noted that according to paragraph 9 of the paper, there were 153 incidents which mainly involved the use of mechanical excavator and hand held power tool that caused damage to underground power cables. He enquired whether operators of mechanical excavators and hand held power tools were required to possess the qualification of a competent person to ensure that they had the relevant knowledge.
 24. EMSD stated that competent persons referred to approved professionals conducting underground cable detection but not operators of mechanical excavators and hand held power tools. According to the Code of Practice on Working near Electricity Supply Lines, a competent person shall submit to the person in charge of a works site a report on the alignment and depth of the underground cables to ensure that the workers there maintained a safety clearance from the electricity supply lines when working, thereby protecting the electricity supply lines and preventing accidents. In addition, EMSD had been organising safety talks and seminars for trade members including target contractors so that competent persons could do a more effective job in conducting cable detection and providing relevant underground cable information to persons in charge of works sites, and that management staff of works sites could have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the information provided by competent persons, thereby protecting electricity supply lines and preventing the workers from facing unnecessary risks and hazards.
 25. A member remarked that EMSD's work on protecting electricity supply lines had helped ensure the quality and stability of the power supply service and gave protection for the daily lives of the public and the economy. The member opined that the rate of cable damage incidents occurred during trial hole excavation as mentioned in paragraph 8 of the paper was a bit high and suggested that publicity and education efforts in this regard should be strengthened.
 26. EMSD thanked the member for his suggestion and stated that cable damage incidents occurred during trial hole excavation were mostly accidental. EMSD would continue to strengthen publicity and education efforts in this regard.
 27. A member enquired whether the underground cable damage incidents were all caused by manual excavation or building settlement and whether the underground cables were protected.
 28. EMSD stated that, according to past experience, underground cable damage incidents were all caused by the carrying out of works rather than building settlement and the underground cables were given appropriate mechanical protection.

29. A member pointed out that ensuring the proper functioning and accuracy of detection equipment was also very important to underground cable detection.
30. EMSD thanked the member for his suggestion and would continue with the monitoring and publicity work so as to enhance the quality of underground cable detection conducted and reports prepared by competent persons.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

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