

**Minutes of the 35th Meeting of
the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC)**

Date : 4 October 2017

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)

Mr SIT Wing-hang, Alfred

Dr LIU Hong-fai, Dandy

Mr CHEUNG Ching-yeung

Mr YIP Ping-nam

Mr CHOI Wai-man

Mr TO Wang-kam, Albert

Mr SIN Long-ying

Professor HUNG Yeung-sam

Ms Annie Lai Chui-yi

Mr LOK Kwei-sang, Tandy

Mr CHAN Chor-man, Chapman

Mr YU Chen-on, Emil

Mr WAI Yip-kin

Mr YIU Tak-tai, Boris (Secretary)

In attendance

Mr LAI Hon-chung, Harry Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, EMSD

Mr YAN Man-kit, Andrew Chief Electrical and Mechanical
Engineer/Electricity Legislation (Acting), EMSD

Mr LAM Ping-wai Senior Electrical and Mechanical
Engineer/Electrical Products, EMSD

Mr CHENG Koon-man Senior Electrical and Mechanical
Engineer/Nuclear and Utility Safety, EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Dr CHAN Ka-wing

Mr CHEUNG Hung-kwan

Ms LAM Lee, Alice

Ms NG So-kuen

Ms CHOI Wing-yee, Cornelia

Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed members to the 35th 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 34th Meeting Held on 24 March 2017

3. Members did not raise any amendment to the minutes of the 34th meeting or matters for follow-up. The Chairman stated that the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) had followed up on items 6 and 28 of the minutes of the 34th meeting, and declared the minutes of the 34th meeting confirmed. EMSD would arrange to upload the minutes of meeting on its website for public reference.

Agenda Item 3: Overview of Electrical Safety in 2017 Q1 and Q2 (ESAC Paper 04/2017)

4. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which presented an overview of the regulatory actions and promotional work on electrical safety in 2017 Q1 and Q2. Starting from this meeting, EMSD would give an overview of electricity safety at each meeting.
5. A member appreciated the effort of EMSD in promoting electrical safety messages in kindergartens, primary schools and elderly centres, and suggested that EMSD might step up the promotional and educational work for the public in the housing estates and community halls in various districts.
6. Apart from kindergartens, primary schools and elderly centres, EMSD had also been conducting promotional and educational work for the public

through various channels, e.g. the large-scale event Building Management Week 2017 co-organised by EMSD and other government departments recently. The event, which featured community talks and carnivals etc., aimed to reach out to a wider audience through various types of activities and to provide information on E&M safety to the public. In future, EMSD would continue to strengthen co-operation with other government departments and the trade on the promotional and educational work.

7. A member expressed his wish to know the reason for the significant decrease in the number of inspections in the first two quarters of 2017 compared with that in 2015 and 2016. Besides, the member pointed out that the number of prosecutions in 2017 did not go down with the decrease in the number of inspections but saw an upward trend compared with 2015 and 2016. The member hoped to know the categories of the prosecution cases.
8. The Chairman also stated that according to the documentary information, about 40% of the inspection work was completed at this stage compared with that in 2015 and 2016, and enquired if EMSD would step up inspection in the second half of 2017 so that the number of inspections would be comparable with that in previous years.
9. EMSD responded that in view of the special incidents (e.g. the mini-storage incident) that occurred during the third and fourth quarters of 2016, EMSD had deployed some resources for related follow-up investigations and actions. EMSD expected that in late 2017, the resources could be allocated to the scheduled inspection work, e.g. joint construction site inspections with the Labour Department, and inspections of electrical installations of old buildings. As certain follow-up work and procedures would follow after the inspections, there might not be a direct correlation between the number of prosecutions in the first half of 2017 and the number of inspections in the same period. The rise in the number of prosecutions was mainly attributed to the failure to submit certificates for periodic inspection and testing and the increase in the number of incidents involving damage to underground supply lines in late 2016.
10. A member pointed out that according to the documentary information, the number of prosecutions involving the failure to conduct periodic inspection and testing of fixed electrical installations rose significantly in

- the first half of 2017 compared with the same period in 2016, and hoped to know whether this was related to the new measures taken by EMSD in respect of the issuance of reminders about periodic inspection and testing.
11. EMSD responded that its current law enforcement work for periodic inspection and testing was similar to the practice in the past, i.e. issuance of a reminder letter to the owner about six months before the expiry date of the certificate for periodic inspection and testing, reminding him that the certificate would expire soon and that inspection and testing must be arranged as soon as possible before the expiry date. If the owner had yet to complete periodic inspection and testing on the expiry date, EMSD would issue a statutory letter requesting the owner to submit the certificate for periodic inspection and testing within a specified period of time. However, as members of the public already had some knowledge of the statutory requirements for periodic inspection and testing of fixed electrical installations, the specified period of time allowed by the statutory letter under the current arrangement for submitting the certificate for periodic inspection and testing was shorter than that in the past so as to strengthen law enforcement. This was believed to be the reason for the increase in the number of prosecutions.
 12. The Chairman said he understood that it was the responsibility of owners to carry out periodic inspection, testing and certification for fixed electrical installations in accordance with the requirements of the laws. He suggested that while strengthening law enforcement, EMSD should consider enhancing publicity to owners. Besides, a member enquired about the number of recalcitrant cases amongst the prosecution cases in the first half of 2017.
 13. EMSD responded that there was no relevant analysis at present, but the law enforcement work for periodic inspection and testing had all along been implemented by EMSD through publicity, inspection and prosecution, with prosecution as a last resort. Before initiating prosecution, EMSD would, through various means such as visiting the buildings and providing suitable support to the building owners in collaboration with the Home Affairs Department, encourage the owners to complete periodic inspection and testing.
 14. A member suggested that EMSD might take reference from overseas

practices to evaluate and reward outstanding enterprises in the trade through independent committees and mechanisms, thereby encouraging them to promote household electrical safety. He believed that this could achieve better results.

15. EMSD thanked the member for his views and agreed that publicity and education could help enhance electrical safety in Hong Kong, and hence reducing potential safety hazards. As far as electrical products were concerned, any electrical products sold in Hong Kong must be tested and comply with the relevant safety standards before they could be sold in Hong Kong. Similarly, for fixed electrical installations, only those in the trade who had relevant experience, capabilities and expertise could provide services in Hong Kong. This practice was in fact a professional recognition of those distinguished members in the trade as well as quality electrical products. EMSD believed that the purpose of this year's "Outstanding Registered Electrical Worker Awards Scheme", namely to commend those outstanding registered electrical workers, coincided with the views expressed by the member.
16. A member said that online shopping had been very popular in recent years, which involved trading of electrical products. Given that no serious incident arising from electrical products purchased online had happened so far and that EMSD's inspections on Internet sites mainly covered local websites, the member wished to know EMSD's response measures in this respect for ensuring that electrical products getting into Hong Kong from foreign places complied with the safety requirements of Hong Kong.
17. The Chairman added that given the numerous channels for obtaining electrical products due to advances in technology, it was worth considering seriously how to ensure the safety of electrical products getting into Hong Kong from foreign places.
18. EMSD responded that domestic electrical products supplied in Hong Kong were regulated by the existing Electrical Products (Safety) Regulation. If there was evidence that any person had contravened the regulation, EMSD would take enforcement action. In view of the fact that many electrical products were made by Mainland manufacturers in recent years, EMSD held regular meetings on the safety of electrical products with the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine

of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) in the hope of regulating the electrical product manufacturers as well as monitoring the safety of electrical products at source with the assistance of AQSIQ.

19. A member said that most electrical products purchased through websites in the Mainland (e.g. lighting fittings) had attained the relevant certifications and complied with the regulations of the Mainland. However, the products might not necessarily comply with the requirements of the laws of Hong Kong. In view of this, the member suggested that EMSD might, by means of publicity, remind the trade and the public that before purchasing electrical products from outside Hong Kong or on the website, they must know and confirm that the products were in compliance with the requirements of the laws of Hong Kong so as to reduce the risk of accidents when in use.
20. EMSD thanked the member and agreed with his views.

Agenda Item 4: Review of the Code of Practice (CoP) on Working near Electricity Supply Lines (ESAC Paper 05/2017)

21. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which provided members with an update on the latest development of the review of the CoP on Working near Electricity Supply Lines, including the major proposed amendments in the first draft of the third edition of the CoP, progress of the working group meetings and the way forward.
22. A member thanked EMSD for reviewing and revising the CoP, widely adopting the views of the trade and adding more illustrations to the proposed amendments in the CoP to explain the new requirements. The member hoped that EMSD would continue to strengthen promotional and educational work in this respect in future so as to minimise electrical accidents caused by damage to underground supply lines.
23. EMSD added that the inclusion of more illustrations in the CoP was mainly attributable to the opinion of frontline workers, and hoped that the illustrations and text descriptions could facilitate the understanding of the requirements of the CoP by frontline workers.

24. The Chairman enquired about the estimated time for finalisation and publication of the CoP.
25. EMSD responded that the CoP was expected to be finalised and published in early 2018.

Agenda Item 5: Any Other Business

26. A member pointed out that there was reference to the meaning of the term "switching operation" earlier in Electricity News, which mentioned that the process of turning off and restarting a switching device could be carried out by non-electrical workers. However, in the course of conducting electrical work, especially in the case of site operation, tripping might happen to some switching devices such as residual current circuit-breakers. If anyone could restart these devices, then it might pose potential safety hazards to electrical workers working on the circuits concerned. He hoped EMSD could clarify the matter.
27. EMSD responded that since "switching operation" was not electrical work, there was no requirement that only registered electrical workers could turn off or restart switching devices. EMSD had already provided relevant supplementary information in Electricity News, reminding readers that in case a switching device could not be restarted successfully, the circuit must be checked and repaired by a registered electrical worker before restarting the switching device. Moreover, the new edition of the Code of Practice for the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations stipulated that circuit breakers should be equipped with lockable function and that the electrical workers keeping the keys were responsible for restarting the circuit breakers upon completion of work. It was hoped that this safety culture could help improve the safety of electrical work. Regarding the views given by the member, EMSD would discuss and examine with him after the meeting.
28. No other business was raised by members.
29. The Chairman thanked members for attending the meeting. Members would be informed of the date, time and venue of the next meeting in due course.