

Minutes of the 49th Meeting of the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee

Date : 4 October 2024
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Rooms A & B, Interactive Learning Centre, 4/F, Electrical and Mechanical Services
Department (EMSD) Headquarters, 3 Kai Shing Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Present

Ir Dr LO Wai-chau, Edward (Chairman)
Mr POON Kwok-ying, Raymond
Miss LEUNG Wai-chun, Karmen
Ms LAU Yuen-yee, Janus
Mr YIP Yun
Ms LAW Mei-ling
Ir HO Kwok-wah
Ms LEE Wing-han, Susanna
Mr CHAU Wing-yee, Philip
Mr CHOI Kan-man
Mr LEUNG Yip-hung
Ms FUNG Tsz-yan, Liza
Ms YU Hoi-kuen
Ms YEE Sau-wah (Secretary)

In attendance

Mr CHAN Pak-cheung Deputy Director / Regulatory Services, EMSD
Mr YIU Tak-tai, Boris Assistant Director / Electricity and Energy Efficiency, EMSD
Mr LEUNG Yiu-hong Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer / Electricity Legislation, EMSD
Mr CHAN Chi-kin Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer / Consumer Installations 1, EMSD
Mr CHU Ka-fai, John Acting Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer / Consumer Installations 2, EMSD
Mr SZE Chung-tak Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer / Electrical Products, EMSD
Mr WONG Tsz-chung Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer / Nuclear and Utility Safety, EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Ir Dr CHAN Fuk-cheung

Ms LO Siu, Lucy
Mr YANG Shi-long
Mr LEE Chuen-cheong
Dr LIU Tao
Professor OR Siu-wing

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Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed members to the 49th meeting of the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC). This was the first meeting of the current-term ESAC, which was comprised of newly appointed and re-appointed members. The Chairman first introduced the members who attended the meeting and then the officers of the EMSD in attendance at the meeting.
2. When briefing members on the meeting arrangement, the Chairman specially reminded them that they had to observe the guidelines on the one-tier reporting system related to the declaration of interests by members of advisory boards and committees. Under the system, 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 should disclose full details of the interests involved accordingly. The interests declared by members would also be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the 48th Meeting held on 29 February 2024

3. The Secretariat had sent the minutes of the 48th meeting (i.e. the last meeting of the former term) to the Chairman and all members of the former term for perusal, and the minutes had been confirmed by the Chairman and all members of the former term. The Secretariat had also sent the minutes of the meeting to the members of the current term by email before this meeting. Members did not propose any amendment to the minutes of the 48th meeting or matters for follow-up. The Chairman declared the minutes of the 48th meeting confirmed. The Secretariat would arrange to upload the minutes of the meeting to the EMSD website for public reference.

Agenda Item 3: Introduction of the Electricity Legislation Division of the EMSD (ESAC Paper 03/2024)

4. The EMSD provided an overview of the responsibilities of the Electricity Legislation Division of the EMSD, as well as the statutory requirements of the Electricity Ordinance (Cap. 406) and its subsidiary regulations.

Agenda Item 4: Overview of Electrical Safety in the First 6 Months of 2024
(ESAC Paper 04/2024)

5. The EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of the enforcement and promotional work of the EMSD on electrical safety in the first 6 months of 2024 and the way forward in the second half of 2024.
6. A member enquired what types of products were mainly involved in the 28 electrical incidents relating to household electrical products, whether electric vehicle (EV) charging equipment was involved, and what the progress of reviewing the power system of the CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) was.
7. The EMSD thanked the member for the question, and stated that, half of the 28 electrical incidents relating to household electrical products involved range hoods, electric fans, air-conditioners and dehumidifiers, while the other half involved other miscellaneous products. EV charging equipment was not involved in these electrical incidents. Regarding the recent electrical incidents of the CLP, the EMSD already completed the process of recruiting an independent consultant in September this year. The consultant was instructed to conduct a comprehensive review of the causes of all voltage dips and power supply interruptions of the CLP that occurred in the past three years as well as the capability of the entire power system to withstand the impact of external factors, and make comprehensive recommendations for the ways to enhance the stability, reliability and resilience of the power supply, with the aim of completing the review and submitting a report by June 2025. The Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services had also invited local experts and scholars to join and establish a Steering Group, supervising the work of the independent consultant and giving advice on the report.
8. A member stated that the EMSD was known to have collaborated closely with the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC). The electrical industry had always been concerned about the safety of household electrical products supplied across the border, and hoped that the EMSD would continue to strengthen co-operation with the GACC and educate the public about

avoiding purchasing unsafe household electrical products across the border. In addition, the member appreciated the EMSD's efforts to intercept the cross-border purchases of unsafe electrical products by identifying users' IP addresses on the platform "Taobao".

- 9 The EMSD thanked the member for the question, and stated that, if anyone purchased household electrical products from cross-border e-commerce platforms or personally brought them through customs into Hong Kong for personal use, the products concerned would fall out of the purview of the Electrical Products (Safety) Regulation given that the products were not supplied in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, in response to the upward trend of cross-border purchases of household electrical products by the public in recent years and to raise the safety awareness of purchasing household electrical products among the public, the EMSD had strengthened public education from various aspects since 2023, such as organising a number of seminars and talks, and disseminating promotional messages and videos on social media platforms to remind the public of paying attention to the safety specifications of household electrical products before purchasing these products. The EMSD also displayed promotional posters at border control points to remind the public of the points to note when purchasing household electrical products across the border. In addition, the EMSD and the GACC established the Cross-border E-commerce Working Group under the Co-operation Arrangement on Electrical and Mechanical Products Safety and Energy Efficiency. The Working Group mainly controlled the risks arising from cross-border e-commerce platforms in both places, which included taking measures such as reporting on unsafe electrical and mechanical (E&M) products supplied from e-commerce platforms and intercepting orders, as well as running promotion and education campaigns for the regulations relating to household E&M products in Hong Kong for the cross-border e-commerce platform industry through various channels.
10. A member wished to know how the EMSD decided on the number of spot checks during the electricity safety inspection exercise in the first six months of 2024. Also, the member enquired whether the EMSD would consider switching to half-year comparisons for reporting the inspection figures; organising some regional activities or inviting KOLs to conduct publicity on the promotional and educational front; and producing short videos for publicity, as it mentioned that it would display promotional posters at various border control ports.

11. The EMSD thanked the member for the questions, and stated that it would actively consider switching to half-year comparisons for reporting the inspection figures. In addition, the EMSD would base the frequency of inspections on the electrical safety risks at the locations, and adjust according to actual needs. For example, following the electrical accidents of the power companies that occurred last year, the EMSD had increased the frequency of inspections of the power companies' related facilities. The EMSD had always attached great importance to publicity efforts. In the past few years, it had conducted publicity campaigns on the Internet, television, radio, etc.; produced posters, brochures, Electricity News, etc.; held community lectures, seminars and carnivals; and participated in volunteer teams to promote electricity safety among the public and the electrical industry. Besides, the EMSD would invite KOLs to promote the Electricity News upon publication. Recently, the EMSD, together with the Home Affairs Department, had visited residents of Tung Tau Estate in Wong Tai Sin to promote electricity safety. The EMSD would also produce promotional videos and upload them to social media platforms such as Facebook, IG and YouTube. In December this year, the EMSD's official WeChat account would be officially launched. It was believed that this move would further enhance the publicity effect on electricity safety. The EMSD would continue to explore the use of other publicity methods to enhance the electricity safety awareness of the public and the electrical industry.

12. A member wished to know why the number of prosecutions in the whole year of 2023 was 302, but the number of prosecutions in the first six months of 2024 was only 99.

13. The EMSD thanked the member for the question, and stated that most of the prosecution cases involved owners of fixed electrical installations in buildings who failed to submit periodic test certificates within the time specified by the EMSD. If the concerned building had formed an owners' corporation, which failed to submit the periodic test certificate within the specified time, the owners' corporation would become the sole target for prosecution. However, if no owners' corporation was established in the building, all owners of the residential units in that building would become the target for prosecution, and the number of prosecutions would increase significantly due to the large number of owners of residential units being charged. Therefore, the prosecution figures of the EMSD would fluctuate depending on whether the buildings being prosecuted had an

owners' corporation, as well as the numbers of units and owners in the buildings. According to the latest data, the prosecution figures in the whole year of 2024 should be similar to those in 2023.

14. A member stated that a fire broke out on a construction site when a worker used a non-original battery to charge a portable tool. The member hoped that the EMSD would consider promoting the use of original batteries for portable tools among the electrical industry.
15. The EMSD thanked the member for the question and stated that it would follow up on the matters.
[Post-meeting notes: The EMSD held a meeting with the Hong Kong Electrical Contractors' Association Limited (HKECA) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) on 6 November 2024 to discuss matters requiring attention to the safety of charging portable tools on construction sites. The EMSD would provide relevant safety information for the Development Bureau, HKECA and CIC, and disseminate safety tips for charging portable tools among the electrical industry through different channels, including advice on using original batteries and avoiding overnight charging.]
16. A member asked whether the fluctuations in prosecution figures in recent years were attributed to the epidemic.
17. The EMSD thanked the member for the question, and stated that during the epidemic, as residents encountered practical difficulties in arranging regular building inspections, the EMSD adopted more flexible approaches to taking law enforcement actions, and the number of prosecutions during the epidemic decreased consequently. As society returned to normal, the number of prosecutions had gradually increased.

Agenda Item 5: Analysis of Registered Electrical Workers (ESAC Paper 05/2024)

18. The EMSD introduced the above document to all members, which provided an overview of the statutory requirements for registered electrical workers (REWs), the number of REWs, their age distribution, course information, and publicity efforts to attract new blood to the trade.

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19. A member enquired about the number of new applicants for becoming Grade A, Grade B and Grade C REWs and the pass rate of the trade tests.
20. The EMSD thanked the member for the question, and stated that in the past five years, the number of new applications for becoming REWs had remained roughly the same, with an average of about 2 500 to 3 000 applications each year. The pass rate of the trade test was about 50%.
21. A member enquired whether electrical workers would continue to work in the electrical industry if they failed the trade test, and whether this would lead to talent loss. Besides, the member enquired about the trades in which REWs were generally engaged.
22. The EMSD thanked the member for the question, and stated that electrical workers who failed the trade test would generally continue to sit for it until they passed. A pass rate of approximately 50% was an appropriate indicator to maintain the rigor of the test, ensuring that REWs who passed the test had a certain degree of electrical knowledge and safety awareness. At present, REWs were engaged in a wide range of trades, including working on construction sites, participating in building renovation works, and carrying out maintenance works of building facilities.
23. A member enquired whether there was an upper age limit for applying to become an REW, and whether the EMSD imposed special application requirements for older persons (e.g. in terms of vision).
24. The EMSD thanked the member for the question, and stated that there was no upper age limit for applying to become an REW. REWs aged 65 and above mainly belonged to Grade B and Grade C, engaging in supervisory work. Another member also added that according to data from the electrical industry, REWs aged 65 and above were a minority.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

25. No other business was raised by members.

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26. The Chairman thanked members for their attendance and adjourned the meeting. The Secretariat would further inform members of the date, time and venue of the next meeting. Like this meeting, the Secretariat would dispatch the prepared information papers to all members by email before the next meeting for their reference.