

**Minutes of the 28th Meeting of
the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC)**

Date : 21 March 2014
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. CHAN Fan
Ms. WAN Siu-ling, Emily
Mr. YU Chen-on, Emil
Mr. LOK Tat-hong, Howard
Mr. LOK Kwei-sang, Tandy
Mr. WAT Hon-keung
Mr. WONG Chi-ming, Rover
Mr. MAK Chi-leung
Mr. TO Wang-kam, Albert
Dr. LO Wai-chau, Edward
Mr. CHAN Chor-man, Chapman
Ms. LAM Lee, Alice
Dr. LIU Hong-fai, Dandy
Dr. CHAI Ngai-chiu, Sunny
Mr. YIP Ping-nam
Mr. CHAN Shui-ching (Secretary)

In attendance

Mr. WOO Kin-ming	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. YIU Tak-tai, Boris	E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. LEE Chi-leung, Eric	E&M Engineer, EMSD
Mr. CHAN Wing-yip, John	E&M Engineer, EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Professor HUNG Yeung-sam
Mr. CHAN Loong, Geoffrey

Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed members to the 28th 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 incorporated in the minutes of meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Confirmation of Minutes of the 27th Meeting held on 27 September 2013

3. Members did not raise any amendment to the minutes of the 27th meeting. The Chairman declared the minutes of the 27th meeting confirmed. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) would arrange to upload the minutes of meeting on its website for public reference.

Agenda Item 3: Overview of Fixed Electrical Installation Incidents (ESAC Paper 1/2014)

4. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which gave an overview of the specific measures taken by EMSD to enhance the safety of fixed electrical installations, the review of fixed electrical installation incidents as well as measures to forestall the occurrence of similar incidents.
5. A member asked EMSD to provide information and statistics to the Committee on disciplinary actions taken against registered electrical contractors (RECs) and registered electrical workers (REWs).
6. EMSD remarked that information on disciplinary actions had been posted on the EMSD website. A summary listing out the relevant information and statistics would also be provided for members' reference. (Note: A summary of information was forwarded to members via email on 10 April.)
7. A member suggested that EMSD could collaborate with District Councils to step up publicity and education to further reduce electrical incidents.
8. EMSD remarked that it had been promoting electrical safety

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among the general public through attending meetings of district fire safety committees. It would continue with the relevant promotion work.

9. A member asked whether electrical incidents had shown an upward trend between 2010 and 2013 and what measures had been taken by EMSD to address the situation.
10. EMSD stated that a slight increase in the number of incidents in recent years was attributable to the conduction of more electrical work arising from an increase in construction projects. EMSD had enhanced the promotion of electrical safety, such as by launching a series of promotion activities with the trade in late 2012. It would continue to explore new ways to step up the publicity work.
11. A member noted that equipment failure and poor contact were the two main causes of electrical incidents in 2013. He would like to know the main causes of incidents in the other years. He suggested that EMSD could consider incorporating new requirements when drawing up the new code of practice (CoP) or periodic test certificate with a view to reducing incidents caused by equipment failure and poor contact.
12. According to the relevant information provided by EMSD, the percentages of electrical incidents caused by equipment failure and poor contact were 33% and 28% respectively in 2012. EMSD would communicate with the trade and consider incorporating the relevant safety guidelines when drawing up the new CoP.
13. The Chairman requested EMSD to brief members on the progress of review of the CoP at the meeting.
14. EMSD reported that the Working Group for Reviewing the Code of Practice had convened two meetings since its formation. Different views, including the views raised by this Committee, were being solicited and consolidated for further deliberation.
15. A member suggested that a regular re-assessment mechanism for registration as REWs should be put in place to prevent slippage in technical standards of REWs.
16. EMSD stated that it had always been taking a cautious approach in handling the applications for registration as REWs. Applicants should possess the relevant qualifications and working experience, and all REWs had to comply with legal obligations. Apart from causing safety risks, non-compliance with statutory requirements might constitute a breach of law. EMSD would

definitely follow up as appropriate (such as taking disciplinary action, etc.) if irregularities by REWs were identified. It would also continue to enhance its work in publicity and education and implement the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme so as to ensure the technical standards of REWs.

17. EMSD considered that from the number of electrical installations to the number of REWs, the standard of electrical safety in Hong Kong was high. However, EMSD would continue to solicit members' views on issues related to training for REWs, licensing and the CPD Scheme, etc. It would also continue to collaborate with trade unions and trade associations to conduct training and publicity and education, and took enforcement actions against non-compliance incidents. It was hoped that electrical incidents in Hong Kong could continue to decrease through the adoption of multi-pronged strategies.

Agenda Item 4: Overview of Continuing Professional Development Scheme for Registered Electrical Workers (ESAC Paper 2/2014)

18. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which presented an overview on the implementation of the CPD Scheme for REWs.
19. A member hoped that EMSD could strengthen the CPD training provided at EMSD Customer Services Office when conducting the review of the CPD Scheme.
20. EMSD remarked that it was open-minded on the review of the CPD Scheme. Members' views were being solicited and consolidated at the present stage and concrete proposals would be put forward in due course.

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Agenda Item 5: Overview of Electrical Safety in 2013 (ESAC Paper 3/2014)

21. EMSD briefed members on the above paper, which presented an overview of the electrical safety performance, publicity and education activities in Hong Kong in 2013.
22. A member asked whether the electrical product tests conducted by EMSD in collaboration with the Consumer Council covered, apart from product safety, items like product functions as well, and whether the tests were carried out by laboratories under EMSD.
23. EMSD explained that its emphasis was on electrical product safety, while the concerns of the Consumer Council were more

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wide-ranging, including, for example, product functions, etc. Product tests were carried out by accredited laboratories.

24. A member remarked in this connection that according to his observation, the media reports on the Consumer Council test results of individual electrical products might give the public the impression that EMSD was offering advice on product functions as well. He hoped that EMSD would reflect this to the Consumer Council. He also worried that individual laboratories might be partial towards certain products in their tests, and therefore suggested that due caution should be exercised with a view to selecting the more independent laboratories for conducting product tests.
25. EMSD stated in response that since energy efficiency was one of its work areas, the department would pay attention to the energy efficiency performance of electrical products at the same time. Nevertheless, EMSD would communicate with the Consumer Council to achieve better indication of division of labour between the two parties in respect of product tests.
26. A member noticed that the number of incidents involving damaged underground cables at works sites had decreased in 2013, and that was attributed to the effective and efficient publicity efforts and enforcement actions of EMSD. He praised EMSD for doing a good job in ensuring workers' safety on one hand and preventing power disruptions on the other.
27. A member asked EMSD whether there was a specific timetable for updating the safety guidelines for electrical products.
28. EMSD stated that generally the guidelines were updated approximately every five years.
29. A member pointed out that the Ocean Park and Disneyland were patronised by many young people, and suggested that EMSD should distribute publicity leaflets at the two venues. He also enquired whether the 2-pin plugs for electric shavers conformed to the legal requirements of Hong Kong, and suggested that EMSD should discuss with the suppliers of electric shavers about adding an adaptor for the Hong Kong market so that they could be used on 13A 3-pin socket outlets.
30. The Chairman responded that he believed EMSD would consider the member's suggestion of distributing publicity leaflets at the Ocean Park and Disneyland.
31. EMSD pointed out that the 2-pin plugs that came with the electric

shavers conformed to the legal requirements of Hong Kong. This type of 2-pin plug was of a design generally adopted internationally for use with 2-pin bathroom socket outlets equipped with built-in isolating transformers. Adaptors for this type of 2-pin plug were available in the international market. Whether suppliers of electric shavers would provide adaptors for products sold in the Hong Kong market should be a matter for the suppliers and the market.

32. A member agreed that as adaptors for 2-pin plugs of electric shavers were available in the market, suppliers of electric shavers should not be required to provide adaptors specifically for the Hong Kong market.
33. A member observed that the existing CoP allowed for the installation of 13A socket outlets in bathrooms. Hence, there was a considerable decrease in the number of 2-pin electric shaver socket outlets installed. With regard to the discussion at the last meeting on whether socket outlets of other national standards could be installed in Hong Kong, the organisation he represented was very concerned about how suitable protection could be provided for such socket outlets. Their views had been submitted to EMSD for consideration when revising the CoP. The member also asked in what way could regulation be exercised by the government on electrical products that were supplied through the internet; and, to forestall any negative impact or risk of electrical incidents, what regulations were in place to prevent electrical workers from installing electrical products not conforming to safety requirements but were available on the internet.
34. EMSD stated that suppliers on the internet might have cross-boundary operations, but the legislation of Hong Kong could not be enforced outside Hong Kong. Therefore, the way to deal with the situation was mainly through publicity and education. In addition, RECs and REWs were obliged to reject requests for installing electrical products not up to safety requirements; otherwise they might become legally liable for improper installation of electrical products.
35. A member enquired about the follow-up action to be taken by EMSD if an REC or REW was found to have installed for the public electrical products not up to safety requirements and which were bought through the internet. He further asked whether the REC or REW concerned would become legally liable in the event of an electrical incident.
36. EMSD explained in response that the difficulty involved in cross-

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boundary law enforcement resulting from internet transactions was a global issue. However, buying electrical products through the internet was a matter of consumer choice. In carrying out installation and testing work, RECs and REWs should ensure that the electrical products and installations were safe for use and compliant with the legal requirements. EMSD would follow up on different cases to find out whether there was any contravention of the CoP or legal requirements, and take enforcement action accordingly.

37. A member said that he would relay the above response by EMSD to members of his organisation, so that they could have a clear understanding of the responsibilities that should be borne by RECs or REWs.
38. EMSD stated in conclusion that if RECs or REWs were aware that an electrical product or installation did not meet the safety requirements, they should ask the owner of the concerned product or installation to replace it.
39. A member suggested that to cope with changing technology and circumstances, the regulation of the electrical trade might need to be reviewed and regulatory rules updated in a timely and comprehensive way.
40. The Chairman noted that to his knowledge, EMSD was conducting reviews and updates on various matters, such as the review on the CoP.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

41. A member observed that the trade was recently arguing over the validity of the manufacture certificate of a particular brand of fire retardant cable. He asked if EMSD could give advice on this issue.
42. EMSD briefly stated that under the Electricity Ordinance, a certificate of safety compliance in respect of an electrical product must be provided by the supplier. As the issue raised by the member involved technical details, EMSD would arrange a meeting with the organisation concerned to follow it up separately. EMSD
43. A member asked EMSD to provide information on the latest number of REWs and their age distribution.
44. EMSD would provide the relevant information to members after the meeting. (Note: The relevant information was forwarded to members via email on 10 April.) EMSD

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45. Since this was the last meeting before the expiry of the current term of the Committee, Mr. CHAN Fan, Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services, thanked all members on behalf of the department for their contribution to the enhancement of electrical safety, especially the following outgoing members: Mr. WONG Chi-ming, Mr. CHAN Loong, Mr. MAK Chi-leung and Dr. LO Wai-chau.
46. The Chairman thanked members for their attendance and adjourned the meeting.