



Energy Bulletin 2

Electrical Fatalities Cause Concern

During the first half of 1995, there were three electrical fatalities. Whilst these occurrences are tragic for the individuals and their families, they serve as a timely reminder that individuals and industry need to exercise more care and responsibility.

Despite all our knowledge and technology, electricity remains a potentially lethal commodity.

It is important that we remain focused on the safety mechanisms that are in place in the electrical industry:

- Training of new electrical workers is well established and sufficiently flexible that the standards are able to meet today's demands and those of industry in the future. Electrical trainees are required to show competence in a range of on-the-job and off-the-job skills, before qualifying for a licence.
- Manufacturers produce a range of cabling, accessories, equipment, etc such that electrical work can be carried out with relative ease and dexterity.
- Electricity supply authorities have clear obligations to ensure the safety of their facilities, for the benefit of the public, consumers and their own workers.
- Regulatory authorities such as the Office of Energy ensure that news about the latest standards and practices is readily available to all who work in the electrical industry.
- Employers are both required and strongly encouraged to ensure their personnel adopt safe work practices.
- We therefore cannot and will not accept that fatalities are inevitable. They are preventable, providing each of us does his or her part.
- Details of recent electrical fatalities are included in this Bulletin. Please bring these to the attention of others in your organisation.

ALBERT KOENIG

DIRECTOR OF ENERGY SAFETY

Minister Opens Electrex 95 Exhibition

The Minister for Energy, the Hon. Colin Barnett, officially opened the Electrical Development Association's (EDA) product exhibition, Electrex 95, at the Claremont Showgrounds on 17 May 1995.

The Minister complimented members of EDA for the high standard of their displays and spoke briefly of fertile new markets to service the many exciting new developments in Western Australia's energy and mining sector.

The EDA was well pleased with the response to Electrex 95 and looks forward to participating, in conjunction with the Office of Energy, in a series of Electrical Industry Presentations throughout the State later this year (details are provided in this Bulletin).

Electrical Contractor Excellence Awards

The 1995 Electrical Contractor Excellence Awards, sponsored by the Electrical Contractor's Association, will be conducted again this year.

The Electrical Contractor Excellence Awards recognise the achievements of excellence in the provision of service and/or product by a member of the Electrical Contractor's Association. The Awards are also intended as a means to gain recognition of peers and the broader industry.

The Awards are held in conjunction with a similar event conducted by the National Electrical Contractor's Association.

This year, the Office of Energy is pleased to be directly associated with the awards. The Office of Energy is sponsoring a new category "small contractors, with 10 or less employees".

It is important that this field of electrical work be recognised for its contribution to electrical work in general. Competition is steep in this field and work standards are invariably under pressure. In addition, the contractor deals directly with consumers and quality of work and service are key issues.

The winners of each category will be announced at the Association's Excellence Awards Presentation night on 2 September 1995.

Safety of Electrical Appliances

One of the purposes of the Electricity Act 1945 is to minimise the risk of electric shock or fire. It seeks to achieve this by prohibiting the sale of certain electrical appliances unless they have been approved by an Australian Regulatory Authority. In WA, the Office of Energy is the approving authority.

The Electricity Act Regulations 1947 empower the Director of Energy Safety to prescribe the types of appliances which are to be subject to the Approvals

System. These are generally household types, such as electric toasters and electric irons. The list of "prescribed" electrical appliances is published in the Government Gazette from time to time.

Persons who sell or hire these "prescribed" appliances can only do so if the appliances bear an approval number. The manufacturers of the appliances can only mark their appliances with an approval number if a production sample is firstly submitted to the Office of Energy, for approval. Approval will only be given if the appliance complies with the Australian Standard Approval and Test Specification which has been published for that type of appliance. Compliance must be evidenced by an independent testing laboratory by way of a Test Report which details the results of tests which have been conducted in accordance with the Australian Standard.

Certificate of Approval

On submission of an appropriate application form to the Office of Energy, together with a sample of the appliance and a complying Test Report from a Testing Laboratory, a Certificate of Approval may be issued by the Director. A fee of between \$300 and \$600 is payable for the approval service depending on the type of appliance. The Certificate of Approval for that particular appliance is valid for five years from the date of issue.

Although each Australian State or Territory is responsible for its own approval system, there is ongoing liaison between all States to ensure that uniformity is maintained and wasteful disparity between States is avoided. A Certificate of Approval which is issued in any one State or Territory is therefore applicable and acceptable throughout Australia.

Certificate of Suitability

Another safety service is also available from the Office of Energy. It is available to manufacturers or importers of electrical articles which are not of the "prescribed" type. Applicants may request the Office of Energy to issue a Certificate of Suitability for their appliance. The process is basically the same as for a Certificate of Approval for a prescribed article, except that it is a voluntary, not mandatory, system. Manufacturers or importers often choose this service to ensure that the products they manufacture can be offered for sale with the added protection of a safety certificate. This can often be of advantage as an additional positive selling feature.

Many members of the public may be either unaware of the compulsory approval process, or take it for granted that all electrical appliances which are sold must be safe. So in the interests of public safety, everybody in the electrical industry should let their customers know about the safety approval system, and to look for an approval number.

If you would like to know more about the appliance safety approvals system, please call the Licensing Office on (09) 422 5252 and we will send you an information kit, free of charge.

**For enquiries on articles in this Bulletin please contact Peter Domasz,
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Efficiency and Performance of Electrical Appliances

Star Rating Labelling

Many major household electrical appliances for sale in Western Australia will be required to display special energy efficiency labelling as a part of plans for new legislation soon to be introduced in Parliament.

The Minister for Energy, the Hon. Colin Barnett, has announced the introduction of a system requiring the compulsory display of special "star rating" labelling on all new refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes dryers, washing machines and air conditioners being sold, advertised or displayed for sale or hire.

The star rating label system is an important guide to allow consumers to compare the energy efficiency and performance of an appliance against other similar models and brands. This will bring WA in line with most other States.

The star rating system uses one to six stars to display the overall energy efficiency of an appliance, based on uniform testing under Australian Standards. The more stars displayed, the more efficient the appliance.

The star rating system allows consumers to clearly compare the performance of the products, to make choices based on more than the up-front cost and to be ultimately aware that the benefits and savings made by using less electricity can often far outweigh the difference in the purchase price.

As an example, a 437 litre fridge, receiving a four-star rating could cost \$1000. After taking into consideration that this model would use about 810 kilowatt hours of electricity a year, it was expected to cost about \$100 annually to operate.

Another fridge, a slightly larger size, may have a price tag of \$100 less but has been rated with two stars. The star rating label shows that it uses 1370 kilowatt hours of electricity a year and based on the current price of domestic electricity, it would cost almost \$170 a year to operate.

Hence, the first fridge would prove to be far more efficient and, despite it costing \$100 more to purchase, could save the consumer almost \$70 (or 40 per cent) a year throughout its life.

An energy efficient medium sized fridge could generally save almost \$500 in running costs over 10 years.

New regulations are expected to be in place by January 1996. They will be administered by the Office of Energy.

As part of the regulations, fines of up to \$20,000 will apply if retail outlets fail to display the labels on required appliances.

Minimum Energy Performance Standards

In another related initiative, the Australian State Governments have agreed to the introduction of mandatory Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) for refrigerators, freezers and electric storage water heaters.

MEPS are expected to be fully operational by 1998 and have the potential to significantly reduce appliance energy consumption. This will in turn limit greenhouse gas emissions.

The running costs consumers pay over the life of these appliances will also be reduced.

More details on this initiative will be provided in the future.

Electrical Industry Presentations

The Office of Energy, in conjunction with the Electrical Development Association, has arranged a series of Electrical Industry Presentations to be held throughout the State, to advise personnel of important changes and issues within the electrical industry.

Key personnel from the Office of Energy will give presentations and will be pleased to discuss issues related to:

- electrical installation and inspection matters
- licensing of electrical contractors/workers
- appliance approvals/efficiencies
- electricity supply authorities

The Electrical Development Association will present a Mini-Electrex, with interesting displays of their products and services.

An invitation is extended to electrical industry personnel, including supervisors, contractors, apprentices and other electrical workers, to attend one of these presentations.

The proposed program for these events follows:

- 26 September
Karratha
Tambrey Centre
- 28 September

Port Hedland
Matt Dans Cultural Centre

- 3 October
Sorrento
Sorrento Quay Function Centre
- 5 October
Cannington
White House Reception Centre
- 9 November
Geraldton
Entertainment Centre
- 23 November
Bunbury
Lighthouse Inn Beach Resort
- 30 November
Kalgoorlie
WMC Conference Centre

If you would like to attend one of these presentations, please telephone Burnetta at the Office of Energy on (09) 422 5293 and advise:

- which venue
- names of those attending
- contact phone number.

Attendances need to be confirmed one week prior to the respective Presentation, for catering purposes.
