



## WIREMAN'S LICENCES FOR FOREIGN PERSONS

Before I begin, let me clarify that the term, 'wireman's licence', is the registration by the Department of Labour of registered persons. It is important to make this quite clear as I received an email from a Member of Parliament reprimanding me for referring to it as a 'wireman's licence'. However, I will use this term as it is still known as a 'wireman's licence' in the industry and because this article is directed at foreign persons who wish to operate in the electrical industry in South Africa.

As we are all aware, times are tough in the electrical industry in South Africa as well as in the rest of Africa and many foreigners are coming to South Africa to look for a better life. This has become evident from the many enquiries I receive from foreigners who wish

to make application with the Department of Labour to become registered persons.

### Registration criteria

The Department of Labour has set out the registration criteria that a person must comply with in order to be registered by the chief inspector as an 'Electrical Tester for Single Phase', 'Installation Electrician' and 'Master Installation Electrician' as defined in the Electrical Installation Regulations, 2009 promulgated by Government Notice R242 of 6 March 2009, and section 4, foreign qualifications, states that "candidates are required to have all their theoretical foreign qualifications evaluated by the South Africa Qualification

Authority (SAQA) and the practical qualifications verified by ESETA accredited providers".

The problem is that when applying, most applicants are stymied when they get to the section of the document that defines the criteria and the applicant then fails to complete the final part of the document and miss the evaluation and verification requirements.

In this article, I will explain the process that all foreign applicants should follow in order to address the criteria of section 4 of the from the Department of Labour brochure (OHS 3/1/5/7/9 Revised March 2014).

Foreign candidates should firstly ensure that they have all their theoretical foreign qualifications evaluated by the South Africa Qualification Authority (SAQA). This is done by going to the SAQA web page on [www.saqa.org.za](http://www.saqa.org.za) (<http://41.193.15.87/dfqeas/user/home>).

### Value chain

The purpose of the evaluation is that foreign qualifications are recognised in terms of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

SAQA performs this function as an integral part of a national recognition value chain. The focus of SAQA's role is on the location of foreign qualifications within the NQF.

Evaluation is a two-phased process by SAQA to firstly, verify foreign qualifications by ensuring the following:

- Issuing bodies are accredited and recognised within the national systems in which they operate.
- Qualifications are legitimately issued by those issuing bodies and part of the national qualifications of that country.
- Qualifications documents are in order and awards claimed by individuals are genuine.
- Compare foreign qualifications with South African qualifications, considering the structure and outcomes of the foreign qualifications, to locate them within the South African NQF.

The second process is for foreign candidates to have all their practical qualifications verified by EWSETA-accredited providers. This requires that candidates check with the EWSETA that has been accredited to conduct evaluations of foreign qualifications. The EWSETA provider then checks the SAQA comparison of the foreign qualifications with South African qualifications and, based on this, the provider would verify that the candidate has the practical abilities linked to the awarded NQF qualification.

### Practical assessment

An example of this would be if SAQA indicated that the foreign qualification is NQF 4 equivalent then the provider would put the candidate through a practical assessment equivalent to a trade test. The purpose of evaluating the qualifications is to ensure that the applicant has the level of knowledge and experience as well as practical ability aligned to the NQF 4 equivalent qualification.

It must be remembered that, in South Africa, we have our own regulations and standards and the function of the EWSETA provider is to ensure that foreign candidates will be able to apply the rules and regulations when they obtain their registration. It is for this reason that the Department of Labour has incorporated section 4 into the requirements of the registration process.

The EWSETA-accredited provider is legally obliged to ensure South African standards and regulations are known by foreign candidates who are applying for registration; and the EWSETA provider will provide a statement of results in a letter addressed to the Department of Labour verifying that the practical skills of the foreign applicant have been evaluated.

During these difficult financial times, it is of critical importance that all electrical work is undertaken by registered contractors and that a registered person has exercised general control over all electrical work and a valid Certificate of Compliance has been issued.

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