



## GENERAL SAFETY PRINCIPLES AND THE CERTIFICATION OF EXISTING INSTALLATIONS

**D**URING the course of last year, I wrote two columns dealing with the concept of 'reasonably safe' – and this is a subject that needs special consideration and understanding by Registered Persons when dealing with the certification of existing electrical installations.

It is undeniable that there is a need for understanding the methodology behind the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 (the Act), with particular reference to the Electrical Installation Regulations (EIR). The 'safety' concept, as prescribed by the EIR, is entrenched within the Act and has specific reference to the issuing of certificates of compliance (CoCs).

The issue here is two-fold. In reviewing the legal responsibility and regulations, one must firstly refer to the EIR, Regulation 9(2) c (i):

### **"Issuing of certificate of compliance"**

9. (2) A registered person may issue a certificate of compliance accompanied by the required test report only after having satisfied himself or herself by means of an inspection and test that

(c) an electrical installation referred to in paragraph (b), to which extensions or alterations have been effected, that

(i) the existing part of the electrical installation complies with the general safety principles of such standard and is reasonably safe ..."

Having discussed the issue of "reasonably safe" in my previous columns, it is also clear that in order to meet the requirement of "reasonably safe", it is also prescribed that the "general safety principles of such standard" must be complied with. The standard, with particular reference to low voltage installations that is the subject of this column, is SANS 10142-1- the Wiring of Premises.

It is indeed these very "general safety principles" that seem to have become inconsequential over the years and to which very little attention is actually given when issuing CoCs. This is the reason that I will spend some time refreshing Registered Persons' understanding of these principles in the context of the

declarations signed by such Registered Persons.

### **"Certificate of Compliance"**

I, a registered person, declare that I have personally carried out the inspection and testing of the electrical installation described in the attached test report as per the requirements of:

(b) Electrical installation regulations (9(2)(b) (existing electrical installation) and deem the electrical installation to be reasonably safe when properly used..." and

### **The Test Report**

I, being the person responsible for the INSPECTION AND TESTING of the electrical installation, particulars of which are described in section 3 of this form, CERTIFY that the INSPECTION AND TESTING were done in accordance with this part of SANS 10142, that the results obtained and reflected on this report are correct and indicate for an installation that existed before the publication of this part of SANS 10142, that the installation complies with the general safety principles of this Standard and is reasonably safe ..."

In understanding the legal requirements then, what are the "general safety principles" that are referred to? Here one needs to consult with the incorporated standard SANS 10142-1 and, in particular, Clause 5 of the standard. We see here that Clause 5 is titled 'Fundamental Requirements' and contains the "general safety principles applicable to electrical installations" (Note 1). It is appropriate to mention here that these general safety principles apply equally to new, altered or temporary electrical installations.

In reviewing this clause, one sees that there are a number of sub clauses, each dealing with a specific aspect of safety and forming part of the 'general safety principles'.

At this point it should be clear that the legislative requirement for "reasonably safe", as discussed in previous columns, has a very close relationship with the general safety principles contained in the incorporated standard, SANS 10142-1.

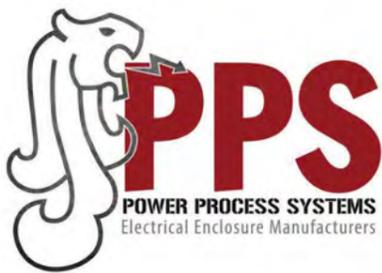
Over the next few months, I am going to discuss these 'general safety principles' in some detail in the context of issuing CoCs for existing installations, where legal liability may arise due to the fact that a false declaration was made when attesting to the 'compliance' of an electrical installation where scant regard was given to the 'general safety principles'.

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