

Energy

BULLETIN

Office of **ENERGY WA**

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Safety Guidelines for the Electricity Supply Industry

Readers will be aware from earlier articles in this publication that I am concerned about the ongoing absence of technical and safety regulation for the electricity supply industry (ESI) in WA.

Such regulation would ensure:

- the safety of the public and energy workers in the vicinity of the suppliers' network facilities and systems; and
- that energy supplies conform with acceptable standards of quality, reliability and metering.

Some of the electricity supply businesses in the State including Western Power have continued to oppose the various proposals this Office has put forward. I had been hopeful that our latest efforts in July this year would bring about some practical outcomes, but this was not the case.

The Minister for Energy has now agreed to a new Working Party to develop the proposed *Electricity Supply Regulations*. It will probably be late 1999 or early 2000 when these Regulations will be ready for implementation, as it is expected they will need to await the availability of the new national ESI safety Code, to be prepared by mid 1999.

I have therefore decided, in accordance with s.33AA of the *Electricity Act 1945*, to issue some guidelines to provide advice to the ESI on what are acceptable minimum standards for electrical safety, while this work on the proposed Regulations takes place. The guidelines are about acceptable safe work practices in the ESI, based largely on a code of practice used in NSW. The guidelines are not able to deal with supply standards and a further article in this edition of the Bulletin provides more information on the subject.



ALBERT KOENIG
DIRECTOR OF ENERGY SAFETY

Draft Guidelines Issued for Electricity Transmission and Distribution Work

Readers will be aware from articles in earlier Energy Bulletins (and this edition's leading article) that the Office of Energy has been endeavouring for some considerable time to develop suitable supply regulations under the *Electricity Act 1945*.

Negotiations with the electricity suppliers on the proposed *Electricity Supply Regulations* have been going on for some two and a half years, without success. More recently, the Chamber of Minerals & Energy, representing the suppliers' interests, proposed a further working party for developing the *Electricity Supply Regulations*. The Minister for Energy has agreed to this further effort. However, as the Electricity Supply Association of Australia (ESAA) and electrical regulators represented by the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC) have recently agreed to produce a national Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) safety code, the design of regulations for WA will need to await the national code, expected to be available mid 1999. The preparation of regulations by the working party will then probably require a further six months.

As described in the lead article, the Director of Energy Safety is concerned about the delay with regard to the *Electricity Supply Regulations* and has therefore decided in the meantime to exercise the powers provided under s.33AA of the *Electricity Act 1945*, to issue a set of "Guidelines for Electricity Transmission and Distribution Work". Although this is a measure well short of regulations, the Guidelines will provide useful guidance about acceptable safe work practices in the ESI.

A special edition of the Energy Bulletin, which further describes the rationale behind the publication of the Guidelines and details them in the form of a draft, has been sent to supply authorities, independent power producers and other major ESI stakeholder for comment. A final set of Guidelines will be issued once any comments received have been reviewed.

The attention of industry is also drawn to the requirement that all electrical accidents must be reported as set out in Regulation 63 of the

Electricity (Licensing) Regulations 1991. It has become evident that some persons, including some supply authorities, are not complying with this requirement. Industry is advised that this regulation must be complied with and organisational arrangements should be made as necessary.

In addition, personnel should be made aware that Regulation 63A of the *Electricity (Licensing) Regulations 1991* states that a person shall not do anything to hinder or obstruct an accident investigation.

Accident reports made to the Office of Energy should be via the Office of Energy's freecall (24 hour) number 1800 678 198. Any queries on accident reporting should be directed to the Office of Energy's Electrical Inspection Branch by telephoning (08) 9422 5261, during office hours.

For enquiries on this article, please contact Principal Engineer Electricity Supply, Terry Corfield, telephone 08 9422 5286.

Office of Energy Website

In the previous edition of Energy Bulletin, we notified readers about the forthcoming Office of Energy website. Unfortunately, the site was not available by the time we had planned.

We apologise to those who tried to access the site.

The site is now on line and readers are invited to visit the site to obtain information about the Office of Energy, the business of the Office and the energy industry generally. Many of the Office's publications are available on-line and the Annual Report 1998 should be accessible in early December 1998.

We hope that the information on the site will be of interest to readers.

The Office of Energy site address is:

www.energy.wa.gov.au

Code of Practice for the Sale of Electrical Installation Products to the Public

The Office of Energy is continually seeking innovative ways to enhance electrical safety and reduce electrical accidents in the community.

We are therefore pleased to announce the introduction of a "Code of Practice for the Sale of Electrical Installation Products to the Public".

The introduction of the Code follows on from our successful 1996 electrical safety public awareness campaign "The Hazards of Doing Your Own Electrical Work" which focused on the dangers and illegality of unlicensed people installing certain electrical products, instead of using a licensed electrical contractor.

The Code provides credible support to licensed electrical contractors by discouraging do-it-yourself electrical installation activities.

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to sellers on how to better inform their customers to use only licensed electrical contractors to install electrical installation products that they sell.

It is a recommendation of the Code that when electrical installation products such as electrical cable and electrical accessories are sold, sales staff should warn customers that the products must only be installed by a licensed electrical contractor. Other requirements include:

- the packaging of the products to carry a prominent label;
- the provision of warning posters on display shelves for the products when sold in bulk;
- prominent warning notice being displayed on advertisements for the products; and
- when sales staff are requested to provide instructions on how to install the products, they should only advise customers of the need to have a licensed electrical contractor install the products.

The Code, which was developed in conjunction with the Retail Traders Association, will be distributed to all major retailing outlets and electrical wholesalers for their adoption.

It is expected that other States will apply the Code following its acceptance by the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council.

Copies of the Code can be obtained from our Leederville Office by telephoning 08 9422 5255.



Senior Engineer Ian George discussing aspects of the "Code of Practice for the Sale of Electrical Installation Products to the Public" with representatives from the retailing industry

Trade Alert - Faulty Lighting Capacitors

ATCO Controls has advised of reports regarding the operational failure of capacitors installed in light fittings. Investigations have shown that specific production batches of ATCO 'CP' type lighting capacitors may include faulty dielectric film material.

A small number of capacitors have failed in a destructive manner. Failures such as these can cause damage within a luminaire before the electricity supply is interrupted.

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Details of the affected capacitors are:

- ATCO CP type
- 250 volt rated
- Production batch numbers - 20/94 to 32/96

Since July 1996, ATCO has been working with the lighting industry in Australia and New Zealand to identify suspect installations. Where failures have occurred in installations, inspections have been conducted by ATCO.

Electricians who discover an installation containing ATCO CP type lighting capacitors from the stated batches should contact ATCO for advice regarding an inspection.

The RCM (Regulatory Compliance Mark)

Readers may recall previous articles published in Energy Bulletins No. 2 (August 1995) and No. 7 (May 1997) regarding arrangements for the safety approval of electrical appliances.

Further to these arrangements, the Director of Energy Safety has confirmed by notice in the *Government Gazette* dated 16 October 1998 that he recognises the following persons as competent for approval of electrical appliances:

- Standards Australia and its subsidiaries; and
- the Secretary of Commerce, New Zealand.

The Director also confirmed in the notice that he recognises the following marking of appliances to indicate their approval:

- marking in accordance with Standards Australia and its subsidiaries' Electrical Safety Type Test Scheme and Electrical Safety Standards Mark Scheme;
- marking in compliance with Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4417:1996 *Marking of electrical products to indicate compliance with regulations* (by using the mark commonly referred to as the Regulatory Compliance Mark, or RCM); and
- marking as required by the Ministry of Commerce, New Zealand.

1999 WA Energy Efficiency Awards - Nominations

Each year, the Office of Energy hosts the WA Energy Efficiency Awards on behalf of the Government of Western Australia.

The Awards acknowledge the efforts and achievements of industries, businesses, government agencies and community groups in energy use and management as well as the utilisation of renewable energy.

The Awards focus attention on the contributions being made by Western Australians in leading the way towards more efficient and sustainable growth. They also help to further the adoption of new technologies and wide acceptance of best practice.

The Office of Energy is now encouraging businesses, companies and organisations to nominate for the 1999 WA Energy Efficiency Awards.

If you are a consulting engineer, contractor or equipment manufacturer that has been working in the area of improving the efficiency of energy consumption, whether on a small or large project, you could be a candidate for the Awards. Nominations for the Awards close on 31 March 1999.

For further information, please contact Brett Cummings, Office of Energy, telephone 08 9327 1477.

Alternative formats of the Energy Bulletin may be available to meet the needs of people with disabilities

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