

Energy

BULLETIN

Office of **ENERGY WA**

Technical & Safety Division

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Energy Efficiency Labelling

The well known star rating system became mandatory as of 18 April 1997.

It is now compulsory to display the "star rating" labelling on all new refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes dryers, washing machines and domestic air conditioners being sold, advertised or displayed for sale or hire.

The label informs consumers about how much electricity could generally be expected to be used during a year, to allow the running costs of comparative appliances to be gauged.

The energy efficiency of the appliances is an important consideration, both to the reduction in greenhouse gases and the overall cost to the consumer.

The star rating enables consumers to factor the cost of energy into their purchasing decisions, to make choices on more than the up front cost and to be aware that the benefits and savings made by using less electricity can often far outweigh any additional purchase cost.

Retailers who display these items without the star system are liable to fines of up to \$20,000.

Electricity Supply Regulation

Following the cessation of SECWA on 1 January 1995, gaps in the regulation of the supply industry have existed. There is a need to ensure the safety of the public, consumers and the energy workers. Similarly, tariff consumers need independent statutory protection in respect of the quality and reliability of energy supplied, and metering accuracy.

A set of draft regulations has been developed and public input invited. It is to the benefit of consumers that wide consultation occurs, so the opportunity was taken to seek the widest possible comment and in particular any comment from the intended beneficiaries - the public.

The draft will be finalised in light of the comment received and further consultations will be held with the contributors where appropriate, prior to recommending the proposed regulations to the Minister.

We will advise of progress with these regulations in a future Bulletin.

KEVAN MCGILL

DEPUTY DIRECTOR ENERGY SAFETY

Mandatory Requirements for Contractors Cutting Trees Near Powerlines

Requirements for those engaged in vegetation control near power lines became mandatory on 1 December 1996 by the proclamation of Regulation 316A of the Electricity Act Regulations 1947.

Summary of Regulation 316A

Regulation 316A applies if:

- any worker, tool or vehicle needs to enter the “danger zone” of a live overhead power line to cut trees or vegetation; or
- trees or vegetation that are within the “danger zone” need to be cut.

The “danger zone” of an overhead power line is:

- the area above a power line; and
- closer than 3 metres to power lines up to and including 33,000 volts; or
- closer than 6 metres to power lines over 33,000 volts.

Any worker carrying out or assisting to carry out vegetation control work for payment or reward must:

- be properly trained by an approved training authority (or have linework training deemed satisfactory by the Director of Energy Safety); and
- comply with the “Code of Practice for Personnel Electrical Safety for Vegetation Control Work Near Live Powerlines” when doing the work.

The approved training authorities are the Tree Guild of WA Inc. and Western Power.

Summary of the Code of Practice

The Code of Practice details the necessary electrical safety requirements for vegetation control work including:

(a) Details of:

- Training and training courses;
- The skills required by workers to carry out vegetation control work.

(b) The minimum requirements for:

- Equipment such as insulated tools, elevating work platforms;
- General electrical safety for vegetation control work;

- The number of trained workers at a work site;
- Work briefings prior to work commencing;
- The control of vegetation near power lines;
- The limit of approach distances for particular types of power lines for workers, tools and elevating work platforms;
- The vegetation clearance distances for particular types of power lines;
- Working from elevating work platforms, in trees (“climbing”) or from wood and fibreglass ladders.

(c) The prohibiting of certain work methods, such as:

- Working above bare high voltage conductors;
- Working directly from aluminium and metal ladders;
- Working directly from any type of ladder near high voltage conductors.

The Code also sets minimum training and work requirements for carrying out vegetation control work using specialised work techniques. Failure to comply with the Code may result in penalties of up to \$5,000 for individuals and \$20,000 for a body corporate.

General Safety Requirements

The electrical safety requirements of the Code must be used in conjunction with other general work place safety requirements, eg, WorkSafe WA requirements, traffic management provisions, fire protection, etc. Particular attention should be paid to the prevention of falls and using the safest possible work methods. For vegetation control work this means that elevating work platforms should be used wherever possible. Contact WorkSafe WA for more details of general safety requirements.

For further information about this article, please contact Terry Corfield, Principal Engineer Electricity Supply, Office of Energy, telephone 08 9422 5286.

Copies of the Code of Practice are available at a cost of \$30.00 from our Licensing Office, telephone 08 9422 5252.

Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) Mandatory From 1997

Since 1 January 1997, a wide range of electrical and electronic products have been required to comply with Australian Standards for electromagnetic compatibility (EMC).

Products which must comply are those which were first offered for sale after 1 January 1997. These requirements are enforced by the Spectrum Management Agency (which is to merge with AUSTEL, to form a new regulator, the Australian Communications Authority, or ACA, after 1 July 1997).

Products that were offered for sale before 1 January 1997 may continue to be sold unmodified until 1 January 1999.

The Regulatory Compliance Mark (RCM) or C-Tick mark are used to identify products that comply with Australian Standards for EMC.



*Regulatory
Compliance Mark*



C Tick

For further information, please contact David Brumfield, Radiocommunications Standards Team, Spectrum Management Agency, telephone (06) 256 5520.

Minerals and Energy Week 1997

Minerals and Energy Week 1997 was held throughout Western Australia between 17 and 23 March 1997. The event aimed to provide the people of WA with first hand information about WA's minerals and energy industry.

Activities surrounding Minerals and Energy Week included exhibitions, walking tours, competitions, fine art, keynote speakers, school tours, live entertainment and safety demonstrations.

The Office of Energy was proud to be a major sponsor of Minerals and Energy Week 1997. As part of the activities surrounding the Week, the Office of Energy presented a display at the Forrest Place exhibition. The theme of the

Office's stand was "Be energy smart - use energy safely and efficiently".

In conjunction with the display, the Office of Energy conducted a competition for school children. Students were invited to identify the unsafe or inefficient practices depicted on a large mural and then submit their responses into a competition to win a Sony PlayStation.

The winner of the competition was 12 year old Catherine Shambrook of Thornlie.

Safety Approval of Electrical Appliances

Readers may recall an article in Energy Bulletin No. 2 issued in August 1995 regarding safety approval of electrical appliances. The article outlined how the risk of shock or fire from unsafe electrical appliances is minimised by prohibiting the sale of certain ("prescribed") types of electrical appliances unless they have been approved by the Director of Energy Safety or one of the other States' regulatory authorities.

On 28 January 1997 the Director of Energy Safety declared by notice in Government Gazette No. 14 that the list of prescribed appliances is now that which is published in Appendix E4 of Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4417.2:1996 "Marking of electrical products to indicate compliance with regulations, Part 2: Specific requirements for electrical safety regulatory applications".

The notice also specified that television receivers are deemed to be prescribed appliances in WA from 1 July 1997 onwards. This is due to serious safety concerns arising from fires attributed to TV set failures. There are provisions to permit the sale of existing stocks subject to certain conditions.

Copies of the Standard are available from Standards Australia or our Licensing Office.

For enquiries on articles in this Energy Bulletin, please contact Harry Hills, Office of Energy:

Telephone 08 9422 5208

Facsimile 08 9422 5244

The Technical Services Branch

In Energy Bulletin No. 6, we introduced the electrical staff of our Technical Services Branch of the Technical & Safety Division, Office of Energy.

The Technical Services Branch also includes staff who deal specifically with matters pertaining to gas supply and usage. The responsibilities of those staff are outlined below.

Principal Engineer Gas Supply

Principal Engineer Geoff Wood is responsible for the technical and safety regulation of gas supply, including:

- the standards to be observed in providing, maintaining and developing gas supply infrastructure (eg. distribution systems, pressure and flow controls);
- the quality of natural and LP gases;
- accuracy of gas metering;
- liquid fuel shortage emergency planning.

Principal Engineer Gas Installations & Appliances

Principal Engineer Mel Stokes has the following regulatory responsibilities:

- dealing with technical/safety issues and standards associated with consumers' gas installations of all sizes including domestic, commercial, recreational, automotive and industrial;
- providing technical guidance and policy advice in relation to gas inspection (particularly Type B appliances) and gas fitter licensing.

Senior Engineer Gas

Kim Wong directly supports the activities of the Principal Engineer Gas Installations & Appliances. Kim also assists the Principal Engineer Gas Supply.

Kim has specific responsibilities in relation to:

- gas appliance approvals;
- assessment of technical submissions for large industrial gas fired plant;
- detailed planning for coping with liquid fuel shortage emergencies;
- guidance to inspectors on specific approval issues.

Gas Regulatory Officer

Under the direction of the Principal Engineer Gas Installations & Appliances, Gas Regulatory Officer David Hartley:

- provides technical support to Regulatory Services Branch in respect of gas fitter licensing;
- liaises with training organisations in relation to gas fitter training and reviews course contents and structures;
- provides advice to large gas users regarding matters relating to gas fitting;
- reviews the performance of gas fitters in response to inspector's reports and recommends appropriate actions.

These Branch members keep abreast of national developments in their respective fields. The Principal Engineers liaise closely with their interstate counterparts and industry bodies such as the Australian Gas Association, the Gas Technical Regulators Committee and Standards Australia.



Deputy Director Energy Safety Kevan McGill (second from right) with (back row, left to right) Senior Engineer Gas Kim Wong, Gas Regulatory Officer David Hartley and (seated, left to right) Principal Engineer Gas Installations & Appliances Mel Stokes and Principal Engineer Gas Supply Geoff Wood