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Issue 15 of ELECTRON contained an announcement on the Government decision relating to changes to agencies aimed at improving and streamlining building and housing services to the public.

One change announced was that the Electrical Workers Licensing Group would move from the Ministry of Economic Development to the Department of Building and Housing.

On 1 September 2006 the move takes place and a news release on the move appears in this issue of ELECTRON.

The second series of reported accidents to registered electrical workers and trainees commences in this issue of ELECTRON.

The Commerce Select Committee has reported back on the Energy Safety Review Bill and further information on the status of the Bill is in this issue of ELECTRON.



John Sickels
Registrar/Group Manager
EWLG

The Board has produced teaching guidelines for electricians, electrical service technician handbooks and a safety refresher course for practising licences. Details of the Board's initiatives are also in this issue of ELECTRON.

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DENNIS ARTHUR AMISS

Dennis Amiss who was recently reappointed to the Board for a second term passed away on 16 June 2006.

Dennis has been actively involved in the industry over many years and was particularly interested in the electrical servicing sector of the industry.

Dennis had for many years represented the electrical servicing sector on a number of Government committees and working groups and made a much valued contribution to the Board.

Our deepest condolences go out to Elizabeth and the Amiss family.



Safety • Competency

ELECTRON is published by the Electrical Workers Licensing Group, the service unit of the Ministry of Economic Development for the Electrical Workers Registration Board. If you have any enquiries or comments on this newsletter please contact:

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EWLG to move smoothly into Department of Building and Housing

The September 1 transfer of the Electrical Workers Licensing Group to the Department of Building and Housing is the latest step in strengthening building and housing services to the industry and the public.

The Licensing Group, currently part of the Ministry of Economic Development, provides registration and complaints assessment services to the Electrical Workers Registration Board, and is responsible for certifying the ongoing competency of about 38,000 registered electrical and electronic workers.

"It might have a relatively low profile, but this is a very significant organisation playing a very significant role in a large industry," Andrew Hearn, General Manager, Building and Housing Sector Policy, at the Department of Building and Housing, said. He said EWLG was a "natural fit" with the Department, complementing previous realignments such as the integration of Building Industry Authority staff into the Department, and the development of occupational licensing for building practitioners.

"The government is essentially bringing together related and linked responsibilities and tasks," he said.

John Sickels, Licensing Group Manager, said the first priority was to achieve a seamless transition.

"There are two key components here," he said.

"First, we are ensuring that electrical and electronic workers have their registration licensing processes continue in exactly the same fashion. Indeed, the same staff will be processing the same forms in the same way. I expect it to be a very smooth transition," Mr Sickels said.

"And secondly, the public will still be able to make complaints about electricians in exactly the same way as before."

He said the smoothness of the process was greatly assisted by all contact details remaining the same.

"We're changing our home, so to speak, but it is very much business as usual in terms of what we do and the services we offer," he said.

The EWLG has a staff of 14 and an operating budget of \$3.6 million.

The task now is making the move and informing EWLG's key stakeholders – the 38,000 workers in the industry and the public.

Andrew Hearn said the shift was occurring at an exciting time in the whole building and construction sector, of which many electrical workers are a key part.

"Important initiatives have been announced by the Minister for Building Issues in recent months, designed to create a better coordinated, more responsive, more capable sector.

"One key to that is having related tasks and functions aligned within one department. We are delighted to be welcoming the Electrical Workers Licensing Group on board," he said.

John Sickels said there would be real benefits for the organisation in being located within the Department of Building and Housing.

Accidents

The Energy Safety Service recently published its latest summary of reported accidents.

As part of the Board's strategic goal to make all information available the Board is continuing to reproduce the summary of reported accidents that relate to registered electrical workers and trainees in this and future issues of ELECTRON.

The Board wishes to advise that any conclusions related to the accidents reported in ELECTRON are conclusions of the Energy Safety Service.

The following reported accidents are the first in the new series.

Accident 22 – Electric shock and burns

A trainee electrician received an electric shock while preparing to pull a cable through a switchboard. The trainee's right hand made contact with a live terminal as the trainee tried to feed the cable into the back of the live switchboard.

The trainee received a severe electric shock and a burn as a result of the accident.

Accident 23 – Broken leg

A line mechanic suffered a broken leg when the concrete pole the line mechanic was working on fell over.

The line mechanic was belted to an isolated and earthed 11,000 volt pole while replacing a cross arm.

Although the pole was stayed from both sides, it toppled when the conductors were released from the cross arm.

An investigation revealed that the pole may have been damaged when it was originally installed over thirty years previously.

Moisture had entered a crack in the pole below the ground and rusted the reinforcing rods allowing the pole to fail.

Accident 24 – Burns

An electrician drilled a hole to provide mounting for a replacement contactor on a switchboard.

The electrician then inserted a screwdriver in the hole to check the distance to the back panel of the switchboard and the screwdriver contacted a live busbar.

The contact between the screwdriver and the busbar caused a flashover from which the electrician received burns to the arm.

Results of Disciplinary Hearings

Creating a shock hazard by transposing supply conductors

A complaint was laid against Monty Hunia Rihari (LM 2498), a Line Mechanic from Auckland, by an industry body. The complaint alleged Mr Rihari transposed phase and neutral conductors while transferring supply conductors to a new pole. A young boy subsequently received an electric shock from an exterior water tap on the affected property.

The Board considered the complaint and found Mr Rihari guilty of disciplinary offences in that he:

- Carried out prescribed electrical work in an incompetent manner; and
- Contravened regulations 69 and 69A of the Electricity Regulations 1997 by creating an installation that was not electrically safe because of the risk of electric shock; and
- Negligently created a risk to life and limb by transposing phase and neutral supply conductors.

The Board fined Mr Rihari \$2,250 and ordered him to pay costs of \$1,500.

Shock hazard undetected during testing

A complaint was laid against Tainui Thomas Kingi (LM 1741), a Line Mechanic from Auckland, by an industry body. The complaint alleged Mr Kingi failed to ensure correct polarity while testing transferred supply conductors. A young boy subsequently received an electric shock from an exterior water tap on the affected property.

The Board considered the complaint and found Mr Kingi guilty of disciplinary offences in that he:

- Contravened regulation 37 of the Electricity Regulations 1997 by failing to test to ensure correct polarity; and
- Negligently created a risk to life and limb by failing, while testing, to identify and remedy transposed phase and neutral supply conductors.

The Board fined Mr Kingi \$2,000 and ordered him to pay costs of \$750.

Doing work an electrical service technician is not authorised to do

A complaint was laid against an electrical service technician by a homeowner (also an electrical service technician).

The complaint alleged the electrical service technician completed the installation of air conditioning in an unworkmanlike manner and failed to provide a Certificate of Compliance.

The work included extending an existing sub-circuit through a wall and installing an isolator.

The Board considered the complaint and found the electrical service technician guilty of disciplinary offences in that he:

- Carried out work in an unsatisfactory manner by making a join between TPS cable and flexible cables without any means of stress relief. Doing that contravened clauses 3.9.1 and 3.7.2.7 of AS/NZS 3000:2000; and
- Contravened regulation 69, through regulation 87(1)(f), of the Electricity Regulations 1997 by failing to securely anchor conduit into a fitting; and

- Failed to ensure his work was tested and certified by an electrician; and
- Did prescribed electrical work an electrical service technician is not authorised to do without the appropriate supervision.

The Board fined the electrical service technician \$1,850 and ordered the electrical service technician to pay costs of \$1,500.

The Board did not direct the electrical service technician's name and location to be published.

Comment

An electrical service technician registration does not authorise a worker to extend sub-circuits, and specifically excludes the installation of conductors.

Late Certificate of Compliance, no Practising Licence

A complaint was laid against Jeremy Brader (E 19793), an electrician from Mt Maunganui, by a homeowner.

The complaint alleged the Mr Brader had connected the earth terminal of an external socket outlet directly to an earth electrode and failed to adequately protect cables.

The Board considered the complaint and found Mr Brader guilty of disciplinary offences in that he:

- Contravened section 95 of the Electricity Act 1992 by working while not being the current holder of a practising licence; and
- Contravened regulation 39 of the Electricity Regulations 1997 by failing to issue a Certificate of Compliance within one day of the completion of the work.

The Board restricted Mr Brader's registration, requiring him to provide copies of all his Certificates of Compliance to the Registrar for audit, and fined him \$500. The Board ordered Mr Brader to pay costs of \$750.

No Practising Licence

A complaint was laid against an electrician from the Bay of Islands by a property owner.

The complaint alleged the electrician had failed to provide a Certificate of Compliance.

During the Complaints Assessment Committee process it was discovered the electrician's safety training had expired and that the electrician had not renewed his practising licence.

The electrician was responsible for supervising a Provisional Licence holder.

The Board considered the complaint and found the electrician guilty of a disciplinary offence in that the electrician:

- Contravened section 95 of the Electricity Act 1992 by carrying out prescribed electrical work while not being the holder of a current practising licence or current safety training.

The Board fined the electrician \$1,000 and ordered the electrician to pay costs of \$1,500.

The Board did not direct the electrician's name to be published.

Comment

The Board advises electrical workers that if a complaint is laid against you, this will result in your practising licence and safety training being scrutinised. Lack of either practising licence or safety training will result in you appearing before the Board in relation to those matters irrespective of other issues.

Energy Safety Review Bill

Issue 21 of ELECTRON contained an article on the major features of the Energy Safety Review Bill relating to electrical workers.

Present status of the Bill

The report from the Commerce Select Committee on the Bill has now been completed and, together with the Bill as reported, is publicly available.

The Commerce Select Committee has divided off parts 5 to 8 (and relevant schedules) of the Bill as introduced and those parts will be reported on separately as the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Bill.

The report on the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Bill is due on 8 August 2006.

The Commerce Select Committee has commented as follows:

"Recommendation – The Commerce Committee has examined the Energy Safety Review Bill and recommends that it be passed with the amendments shown.

As introduced, this bill contained eight parts. We have divided Parts 5 to 8 and Schedules 2 and 3 from this bill, and will report on these separately as the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Bill.

The delay in reporting on these provisions is to allow the completion of a ministerial review of the relationship between the Plumbing, Gasfitting, and Drainlaying Industry Training Organisation and the

Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board, and to allow time for additional consultation with the sector.

Parts 1 to 4 of the bill, which we report here, amend the Electricity Act 1992, the Gas Act 1992, the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, and the Ministry of Energy (Abolition) Act 1989.”

Teaching Guidelines

In issue 27 of ELECTRON it was reported that the Board had approved the release of amended electrician level teaching guidelines for final comment.

The Board has considered all comments received and final electrician level teaching guidelines will now be forwarded to all persons/ organisations who have contracts for the delivery of training and examination services.

Electrical Service Technician Handbooks

Following submissions from the servicing sector of the industry the Board has produced handbooks for electrical service technicians Level “A” and Level “B”.

The Board considers that the handbooks will assist the servicing sector of the industry and is in line with the Board’s strategic goal to make all information available.

In producing the new handbooks the Board has agreed that the industry may well provide valuable comment which should be taken into account.

The Board has therefore further agreed to the draft of the handbooks being placed on the Board’s web site for four months and for people and/or organisations to be given the opportunity to comment on the content of the documents.

The Board would appreciate receiving any comments on the documents by 30 November 2006. Comments should be sent to:

The Registrar
Electrical Workers Registration Board
PO Box 10156
WELLINGTON

Practising Licence Refresher Course

In issue 23 of ELECTRON the industry was advised of the Board’s decisions in relation to practising licence refresher courses.

The Board has developed its own practising licence refresher course which training providers can use either as their tuition course, or as a guide for alternative tuition courses to satisfy the prerequisite tuition requirements for the issue of Board practicing licences. The Board’s practising licence refresher course is available for viewing

on the Board’s website at www.ewrb.govt.nz

The Board has listed on the Board’s website the names and contact details of those training providers who have satisfied the criteria for a provider of the new refresher course.

2006/2007 Practising Licence Renewal

All 2005/06 Practising Licences for electrical workers have now expired.

At the date of print, 74% of Registered Electrical Workers have renewed their practising licences.

If you do not have a current 2007 practising licence and you are carrying out prescribed electrical work for reward then you are working in breach of Section 95 of the Electricity Act 1992.

The Board is now taking a stronger stance towards registered electrical workers who practice without a current practising licence.

An average fine of \$750.00 plus average costs of \$1,500.00, together with publication of the workers name are the likely minimum penalties that the Board will impose, therefore it is vital that you apply for a current practising licence as soon as possible.

The fastest way to process your renewal is through the use of the online services at <http://www.ewr.govt.nz>

Auditing of Registered Electrical Workers

One of the functions of the Board is to ensure the ongoing competence of registered electrical workers.

To assist with achieving the ongoing competence function the Board has an objective to undertake three thousand audits of work carried out under the Certificate of Compliance programme by 30 June 2007. As such the Board has re-introduced the programme it previously used to sample check work certified in accordance with regulations 39 and 41 of the Electricity Regulations 1997.

The Board is presently writing to randomly selected electrical workers requesting the return of Certificates of Compliance which have been recorded as being purchased.

The Board's request for the return of Certificates of Compliance is made in accordance with regulations 40(6) and 42(4) of the Electricity Regulations 1997.

To assist with the reconciliation of Certificate of Compliance electrical workers are being asked to return them within 20 working days from the date of request.

The Board may not conduct audits on all work identified on Certificates of Compliance requested however if work is selected from certificates you return you will be advised before any auditing is commenced as will the person for whom the work was carried out. You will also be given the opportunity to be present when any selected work is audited and you will be advised of the outcome. Generic results of all audits that are carried out will be reported in ELECTRON newsletter.

The audit of any work identified on Certificates of Compliance will be carried out by electrical inspectors appointed by the Board.



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