

Compliance... Not an option

Once upon a time... there was a NZ lighting retailer who direct imported luminaires. But they did not understand their responsibilities, and proved to be unwilling to meet their obligations... and then it all turned sour.

Lighting Council New Zealand regularly receives enquiries and complaints from contractors and the general public regarding inadequate or unsafe lighting products. A real and recent NZ case study starkly highlights a range of product safety and compliance inadequacies that can result, and what can go wrong.

THE HOMEOWNER

A homeowner of a new-build house purchased a high value decorative lighting pendant from a lighting importer/retail store. By the way, not a LCNZ member company.

THE ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

The homeowner's electrical contractor suspected that the luminaire had non-compliant product marking as well as non-compliant product earthing. As a third party supplied electrical product the contractor rightly requested to sight SDoC compliance documentation before proceeding with installation of the luminaire.

THE FAULTY COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTATION

After ongoing prompting and waiting an SDoC was received from the supplier.

The SDoC declaration form provided was grossly in error. The form contained:

- Incorrect product model number
- Incorrect product test organisation
- Incorrect product standard citation
- Incomplete product standard citation
- False citation of product conformity organisation
- No authorised manager name and position
- No test reports

Junk Doc - not SDoC!

RETURN FOR REFUND

Needless to say, the luminaire was not installed and the customer returned the product for a refund as it was not in compliance with NZ safety regulations and not fit for purpose. No refund was granted. The supplier solution offered was to have 'their' electrical contractor install the product.

DISPUTES TRIBUNAL

The homeowner lodged a complaint with the Disputes Tribunal of NZ. The supplier then agreed to grant a refund but only if the Disputes Tribunal complaint was first withdrawn. The homeowner declined to withdraw. Standoff.

THE END IS NIGH

The lighting supplier company is now out of business and in liquidation.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is not uncommon to see luminaire SDoCs that are inadequate, incorrect, false or misleading. Such self-declarations of conformity are only as good as the competence and integrity of the company behind them.

USING A TRUSTED SUPPLIER

As always, the reliability and stability of the lighting supplier company is paramount. Established and competent suppliers have a reputation to protect and will have a firm grip on their compliance responsibilities. Should there be any product performance issues, quick and fair resolution will be their prime concern.

LCNZ is the industry association for lighting manufacturing and importing companies in New Zealand.

www.lightingcouncil.org.nz

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