TELIT Cabling Newsletter ©

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Industry Skills Problems Continue!

TITAB over the years has put a lot of effort into national training for telecommunications by developing competencies, assessments and training programs. We have also been an active promoter of national training and improved regulation in as many forums as possible.

Last year, we provided a major submission to the ACMA on the need to improve the CPR system and in particular, increase audits and inspections. The response to around 30 major submissions is still under consideration by the ACMA.

On broader training issues, older cablers and other technical staff will remember that Telstra (Telecom Australia) was for decades the major national trainer, along with several statutory authorities at the state level. Now privatisation has created difficulties for skilling in the telecommunications sector and in the trades/technical area, as no viable replacement was provided as contracting and sub-contacting became the norm.

Contracting cycles do not usually favour certificate-based training programs/qualifications, such as skill sets, which are sometimes not state funded or even readily understood. Telecommunications enterprises are only employing a small number of "telecommunications trainees" while the "electrical" sector has embedded telecommunications in many apprenticeships. However, higher level network and IT technical needs are often not met locally so overseas visa-based staff are being recruited, usually at lower wage levels, which is hardly in the national interest.

As the NBN build program comes to an end next year there will be a pool of labour that could be diverted to other projects. However, this will also involve some retraining which is not always easy for an adult workforce. There will be a growing need for upgrades of customer premises cabling as broadband usage increases. No one knows what the impact of 5G in the mobile network will be and how PoE (Power over Ethernet) will impact building cabling. Training is the "elephant in the room" as the saying goes.

There is an apparent lack of leadership on national training coming from the big telecommunications companies. Telstra is making 7,000 employees redundant, with the CEO advocating wider use of Visas to fill skills gaps, whereas it would be more in the national interest to retrain existing staff.

Telecommunications is a dynamic industry and one of the few where changing technologies and work practices are not picked up in skills maintenance programs/professional development. We also need to learn from other industries when contractors delegate their responsibilities down the line and poor regulation/supervision is allowed.

Some states and territories have improved trades/technical/engineering vocational education and training, however, telecommunications, despite its size and importance is still often neglected.

We will continue to advocate for improved regulation; monitoring of skills and work quality; a national telecommunications training framework and specifically for more inspections and audits in the customer premises area, where the last length of communications cable is as critical for final delivery of services as the most sophisticated network system.

Home Wiring Essentials

Stop press! Exciting news.The Home Wiring Essentials has been updated to reflect the latest in international and national standards. Ok, it is not that exciting but it is important that you are aware of the change.

One of the underpinning standards of the Home Wiring Essentials AS/NZS 3080 has been replaced by AS/NZS11801 part 1 to 6. The reason it is now a 6 part standard is because other existing standards have been incorporated into the 11801 series.

In summary, the changes that impact on the Home Wiring Essentials are:

Old standard	New standard
AS/NZS 3080 Information Technology – Generic cabling for customer premises	AS/NZS11801.1 Information technology generic cabling – general requirements and AS11801.2 Information technology – generic cabling for customer premises – Office premises
AS/NSZ ISO/IEC 15018 Information technology – generic cabling for homes	AS/NZS11801.1 Information technology generic cabling – general requirements and AS11801.4 Information technology – generic cabling for customer premises – Single tenant homes

Under the revised standard you can now use Cat 7 cabling for the distribution of broadcast services instead of coax cabling. The key is the maximum channel length of a Broadcast outlet using Cat 7 cable is 73M unlike coax which is 25M. This is not to be confused with the channel length to a standard telecommunications outlet, which is still 100m.

To get the latest version of the Home Wiring Essentials go to http://registeredcablers.com.au/industry/smart-wired/

Are you an Austel cabler?

Just one simple reminder about terminology. Most cablers correctly refer to themselves as "ACMA Registered Cablers", which is the term the regulator – the ACMA – decided on years ago.

But back in the nineties, cablers were "Austel Licenced Cablers", because the regulator, known as Austel at the time, called it an "Austel licence".

Some cablers still call themselves "Austel licenced", but it's slowly diminishing. So the next time you're introducing yourself, tell them you're an "**ACMA Registered Cabler**".

Telco complaints down but harder to fix

While the number of complaints declined by 21.1 per cent over the past financial year, the TIO report also highlighted 53 "systemic issues" within the industry.

These included pressure sales tactics that result in consumers "obtaining products and services they did not want or understand" and telcos failing to provide consumers with "all product and service usage information".

Unresolved complaints also took longer to resolve in 2018-19, with less than half of escalated complaints closing within 60 days.

Leading advocacy group Consumer Action Law Centre said the data showed an "urgent need for effective regulation and enforcement powers to protect Australians".

"Industry self-regulation is failing to protect Australians," says Consumer Action CEO Gerard Brody said. "It is time for the telecommunications industry to be brought into line with other essential services."

Fake tradesmen/Airtasker

Ringleaders of a qualifications fraud based in New South Wales were jailed in late 2018, following an extensive investigation dating back to 2015.

The scheme issued fake qualifications to tradesmen working in the construction sector, including building, electro technology, gas fitting, air-conditioning and refrigeration and utilised a training organisation called Daily Update PTY LTD trading as Green Skills Australia.

If any of our registered cablers come across individuals who may have qualified under this illegal scheme, they should report them to the ACMA.

It is of real concern that such a scheme should be operational for so long, and, combined with the attitude of Airtasker (they accept no responsibility for checking qualifications or the registration of their listed labour suppliers), presents a real risk to customers and potential losses if litigation involving insurance claims arise in the future.

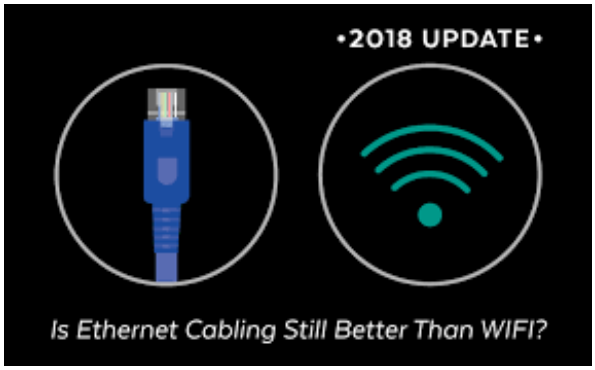
Regarding Airtasker policies, registrars have raised the issue with ACMA, however, it appears that legally, ACMA have few options to enforce Airtasker to check qualifications and registration of their listed labour suppliers.

NECA and the Queensland electrical regulator were successful in prosecuting a case in Queensland recently, resulting in a huge fine for a business operating with unqualified and unregistered electricians, so it appears that at an industry level, we need to report suspicious cases to the regulatory authorities and try to stamp out this practice over time.

Smart wiring or Wi-fi?

(The following article is from Cath Hart, HIA WA Regional Director, The West Australian)

Netflix, YouTube, Spotify. These are all services a lot of us use every day. They also account for a huge portion of internet use. Smart TVs now connect wirelessly to access these services, but with such a huge uptake over a short period of time, it makes you wonder what else could be in store.



The 'internet of things' is evolving, connecting many smart devices such as our fridges, lighting and air-conditioners to help us communicate, stay safe and improve efficiency – both at home and at work. Additionally, artificial intelligence is starting to influence decision-making and make life's little challenges that bit easier. Thanks Siri.

How does this impact on home building? Everything we connect seems to do so seamlessly over wi-fi, leading some to think they can continue to add new technologies with ease as they become available.

However, we don't know how the internet will change, how good the graphics on our games will be and how many photos our friends will bombard us with on Facebook. Wi-fi technology might catch up, but when we bombard the network with lots of devices streaming large amounts of data, it can struggle.

There are options to upgrade your wi-fi system to provide better coverage and security, and to help penetrate our typically Western Australian brick walls and concrete slabs, but to genuinely overcome the issues, smart wiring can be a real value-add in a home.

Smart wiring currently uses Category 6 data cabling, which not only supports volume and speed, but can be used in other ways. Many new smart devices use extra low-voltage DC power that can be transferred through the data cable, and it can provide transfer of signals like HDMI high-definition video from one room to another. Smart wiring in fixed devices can ensure quality of connection and provide flexibility for future uses.

So when you are looking at your new home or renovation, consider what your data needs will be now and think of the many possibilities for the future. Planning your smart wiring with your builder early in the process can ensure you get the internet you need in a practical and affordable way.

A combination of smart wiring and good wi-fi will provide a reliable and convenient network that can help keep your home at the edge of technological advances.

Industry code – Update

Currently there is an Industry Code still in operation which dates back to the days of the Howard Government and Senator Allston as the Minister. It is still operational up to the time of replacement with a new code and for some time now a drafting committee made up of registrars and the International Copper Association of Australia have been working on an update.

A revised version was presented to ACMA in late 2018 for consideration and for a variety of legalistic reasons the ADTIA - the industry association taking responsibility for revision of the code - have taken a decision to treat the new version as a voluntary code, managed by industry itself, rather than with a formal ACMA role.

A draft revised version will be sent to the Board of the ADTIA shortly for consideration and there may be a need for further industry consultation later, although the revised draft is virtually the same as that already circulated to a large number of industry stakeholders, where comments were returned and included.

The code applies only to enterprises involved in cabling and does not impact directly on registered cablers. The code is really a marketing tool to enable the "good guys" to distinguish themselves from the "cowboys" in the industry.

Signatories will of course be expected to adhere to mandatory requirements such as the wiring rules, along with a range of other criteria such as:

- maintenance of quality systems;
- having a continuing professional development or skills management program in place which can be provided by a number of options;
- maintaining cabling work documentation;
- industry body affiliation and
- there is a provision for third party references on customer satisfaction, technical competence and contractual performance.

A points system will be used and enterprises can operate self-assessment with random checking by a representative committee. On completion of the process registrars will be promoting the code as part of our push to ensure quality installations.

Prevention of falls

This article provides employers and employees with information on preventing falls in construction

We're focusing on falls

WorkSafe inspectors are visiting construction sites across Victoria to ensure that fall risks are being controlled.

Why the visits?

Falls remain one of the leading causes of death and serious injury in Victoria's construction sector:

- Over the past 10 years there have been 17 construction workers killed due to falls
- Over the past 5 years more than 6400 construction workers have needed workers' compensation for serious injuries from a fall: many of these injuries have been life-changing

WorkSafe inspectors routinely identify breaches and take enforcement action where fall risks are not controlled.

Common construction fall hazards

Fall incidents are often associated with:

- Working on or near unprotected edges(eg while installing formwork)
- Using unsafe or incomplete scaffolds
- Using inappropriate ladders or unsafe ladder use
- Falling from roofs or through fragile roofs or skylights
- Falling from trucks or plant
- Falling through stair-voids
- Falling into holes, pits or shafts

Duty to control risk

Where there is a risk of a fall less than two metres employers must:

- So far as reasonably practicable eliminate risks to health and safety, for example any risk associated with a fall at the workplace
- If elimination of the risk is not reasonably practicable, the risk must be reduced, so far as is reasonably practicable

Where there is a risk of a fall of more than two metres employers and the self employed persons must:

- Comply with the specific prevention of falls requirements
- Follow specific high risk construction work (HRCW) duties including the duty to prepare and follow a safe work method statement (SWMS)

Control of risk for prevention of falls above 2 metres

- Eliminate the risk. Eg. do all the work on the ground or from a solid construction
- Reduce remaining risk by using a passive fall prevention device. Eg. scaffolds, perimeter screens, guardrails, safety mesh or elevating work platforms
- Reduce remaining risk by using a work-positioning system. Eg. travel systems or industrial rope-access systems
- Reduce remaining risk by using fall-arrest systems. Eg. catch platforms or fall arrest-harness systems
- Reduce remaining risk by using a ladder or administrative controls. Ladders are not suitable for long duration or high force tasks. Record keeping duties apply for administrative-only controls.

Contact Information

Training Products

To order TITAB products go to www.titab.com.au or call TITAB on 03 9631 0800

Training Package Information

www.training.gov.au

nbn ™

www.nbnco.com.au

Communications Alliance

www.commsalliance.com.au

Wiring Rules AS/CA SOO9:2013

ACMA

www.acma.gov.au

1300 850 115

info@acma.gov.au

Standards Australia

www.standards.org.au

Underground Cable Locations

www.1100.com.au

A2A and Network Boundary Issues

www.telstra.com.au/smartcommunity/mybuilder.html

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