

Responsible Refrigeration – No 41

Certificates of Conformity (CoC) are an essential part of the Pressure Equipment Regulations. There is an onus on a registered practitioner to issue a CoC for new installations, repairs and maintenance of a refrigeration system or air conditioning unit.

The Regulations also require a Certificate of Manufacture where pressure vessels form part of a system built up on site. These vessels usual form part of larger refrigeration systems. However a certificate of manufacture is required for hermetic compressors used in room air conditioning units as they are classed as pressure vessels in terms of Regulation 2. The reason for this is that the shell is designed to house the compressor and is subject to the system pressures. Open drive and semi hermetic compressors are excluded as they are designed for structural integrity, static and dynamic operational effects of the machine operation. Regulation 17 also mentions the requirement of a Certificate issued by an approved Inspection Authority after completion of an installation where this system falls into a category II or above as defined in the SANS 347 standard. These certificates form part of the overall obligation to provide a complete service to the end user of a refrigeration system where this system is in category II or higher.

The point of a Certificate of Conformity is to confirm that the installation is safe and that the client/user can be confident that the work has been done correctly and is compliant with supplier manuals, codes, standards and regulations.

Those who are not registered with SAQCC Gas and are not able to issue a valid certificate are therefore working and acting illegally.

Those practitioners who are registered and have books with compliant CoC forms available from SARACCA must ensure that they keep their books safe. Therefore contractors must keep track of the CoC books and avoid theft and misuse of certificates. If a certificate is misuse or fraudulently issued then there will be consequences. Only registered SAQCC Gas Practitioners may sign a CoC within his or her competency and registration category. Failure to keep control of the issuing of CoC's could impact your business and reputation as an installer of air conditioning and refrigeration. There would also be serious legal implications for work that has been badly and unsafely done in your name.

Those who are authorised by way of registration with SAQCC Gas to sign CoC's are as follows;

Those who install and maintain room air conditioning units up to a cooling capacity of 18kW (60000Btu/hr.) and are registered as Category A practitioners may sign a CoC.

The category B registered practitioners may sign for all installation and repair work within their area of competency. This could be for an F-gas or Ammonia or Carbon Dioxide type installations.

For refrigeration systems built up on a site where several registered persons are working, one senior mechanic or foreman would take responsibility for commissioning and to sign the CoC.

Looking to the future SAQCC Gas is in a process of developing an internet based Certificate of Conformity format that will be accessed by registered practitioners with a user name and access pin number. The forms can be purchased in batches of 10 on line and then once the work is completed submitted online. At this stage the online access will via a tablet device. It is intended that the system will be operational by early 2019.

The system will allow practitioners to purchase forms individually or the employer contractor can make the purchase on behalf of his mechanics. Anyone whose registration has expired will not be able to access the system to view past issued CoC's or manage the forms in any way.

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