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electrical news

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Battle won in war against counterfeits

HARSH sentences were imposed on two Johannesburg businesses after the entities were convicted under Section 2(2) read with Section 19 of the Counterfeit Goods Act in the Specialised Commercial Crime Court in Johannesburg on June 4.

Magistrate Brian Nemavhidi handed down a R20 000 fine to Wirelec Industries cc, an electrical retailer, with a further R30 000 suspended for five years on condition that it is not convicted of a similar offence. Micromatica 900 (Pty) Ltd was fined R50 000 with a further R100 000 suspended for five years – also on condition that it is not convicted of a similar offence.

Wirelec Industries cc had been found in possession of 25 counterfeit CBI- earth leakage devices during a raid conducted by the Department of Trade and Industries (dti) on 5 December, 2011. During the period March 2011 to November 2011 Micromatica sold of 500 CBI-branded earth leakage devices to Wirelec Industries cc.

Apology

In addition to the hefty fines, the companies also agreed to issue a public apology to be placed in two national newspapers.

Magistrate Nemavhidi stressed that the suspended sentences would serve as a "constant reminder" to the companies that their conduct had been "unacceptable". He said that when considering what sentence he should impose on the accused, he took into account that both companies had "volunteered information" about the counterfeit products, had "cooperated" with authorities and had "gone out of their way to negotiate with the complainant". He said he had also considered that both companies had shown remorse.

The magistrate spoke out strongly against counterfeit electrical products saying that they posed "a threat to life, limb and property" and cautioned that the "huge difference in price between counterfeit goods and genuine articles" should serve as a warning to potential buyers that "something is amiss".

It is believed that CBI-electric : low voltage obtained information about the counterfeit products. After the company had purchased products from Wirelec, it was confirmed that these products were indeed counterfeits by tests, which were conducted at the premises of CBI-electric : low voltage – the only private testing facility of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

Significant step

The convictions and harsh sentences have been described as a "significant step towards guaranteeing only genuine products are going into low voltage installations". It is hoped that these convictions will give other

manufacturers of electrical products the incentive to pursue and prosecute those who infringe intellectual property rights and deal in counterfeit goods. "A lot of time and money is spent on research and development and making sure that our products are safe and conform to standards. Therefore, it is essential that counterfeit goods are kept off the shelves as they pose a huge risk to the end-user and place people in potentially fatal environments," says Andrew Dickson, senior engineer at CBI-electric : low voltage.

CHINT

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Farewell to James Baker

James Charles Baker - 28 July 1948 to 3 June 2014



IT was with great sadness that the electrical industry bid farewell to another of its stalwarts. James Baker passed away in Alberton after a short illness.

He played a major role in the ECA(SA), the Electrical Contracting Board (ECB), the Electrical Registration and Inspection Council (ERIC) and also served on several SABS committees as a representative of the Electrical Switchgear Association of South Africa (ESASA), devoting his working life to

the industry that he loved. Friend and colleague for 42 years, Tony McDonald of the ECB, says the electrical industry owes an extreme debt of gratitude to James for his dedication and commitment to the industry for over four decades.

"James worked tirelessly towards the improvement of the electrical industry and there are many people who are going to miss him. He set a fine example, which will be hard to follow."

He leaves his wife Susanne, sons Derrick and Charles, daughters Marileze and Carla, sons and daughter in-laws Sean, Eddy and Bonita and five grandchildren, his brother Frank and twin sisters Zonja and Sandra.

Copper theft exposé



COPPER theft costs the South African economy about R5-billion every year and it affects everyone. The theft of just one metre of copper cable has catastrophic consequences for commerce and industry – traffic comes to a standstill, trains are stopped in their tracks, communications are disrupted and entire suburbs are without power for days...

Read Erika van Zyl's special report on this high priority crime on pages 12 and 13...

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