

CERTIFICATION OF PLASTIC PIPES

There seems to be a lot of misconception about the certification of products generally, and plastic pipe in particular. When drawing up tender specifications, it is often unclear whether to stipulate SABS or SATAs certified pipes. According to Jan Venter, CEO of SAPPMA, however, they are both legally entitled to certify products and should therefore both be accepted in tender documents.

“In the local plastic pipe industry at the moment, the two most prominent accreditation bodies are the SABS (South African Bureau of Standards) and SATAS (South African Technical Auditing Service). Locally produced plastic pipes are manufactured in accordance with national standards, which generally are based on ISO standards. The custodian of these standards is the South African National Standards (SANS) Authority, which is part of the SABS. It is important to note that certification of a manufacturer's pipes and fittings can be done by any organisation that accredited by SANAS (South African National Accreditation System). For this reason, we are aiming to educate municipalities that plastic pipes bearing either the SABS or SATAs logos are acceptable, as they are both accredited by SANAS,” Venter explains.

The purpose of SAPPMA is to create consumer confidence within the plastic pipe Industry and to promote the production and use of high quality plastic pipes and pipes systems that meet SANS or ISO quality standards. Only SAPPMA members are allowed to use the SAPPMA logo on their pipes as proof that their pipes have been independently sampled, tested and verified to meet these quality standards.

“In an effort to clearly differentiate SAPPMA members from non-members, we have recently decided to increase the intensity, and in some cases also the frequency, of factory audits. During these audits (which can either take place announced or unannounced), a SAPPMA quality inspector takes pipe samples which are sent away for independent testing. Tests include checking for recycled content, internal pressure test, stress crack resistance, resistance to Rapid Crack Propagation, Melt Flow Index (MFI) etc. It is one of the prerequisites to being a SAPPMA member to allow these factory visits and for independent testing to be done on their products,” Venter says. Only members who are in compliance and whose products meet the SANS or ISO standard, are allowed to bear the SAPPMA mark or quality - alongside either the SABS or SATA logos.

“We have established strong, longstanding relationships with the certification bodies who increasingly supportive of our efforts. It would be impossible for us to do our job effectively without their valuable role in testing and certifying the products we send to them. We will be taking a closer look at the issues of quality, certification, planning and maintenance of pipelines during our annual PIPES XII Conference that will be taking place later this year in Johannesburg, and encourage local municipalities to attend in order to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge to make well-informed, educated decisions about vitally important infrastructure,” Venter concludes.

For more information about SAPPMA, the PIPES XII conference or for general plastic pipe queries, please contact SAPPMA via email at admin@sappma.co.za or visit their website (www.sappma.co.za)