

PROGRESS ON FOUR CHALLENGING TECHNICAL ISSUES



SAPMA is involved in handling several key technical issues facing the coatings industry, SAPMA Technical Committee chairperson, Bobby Bhugwandin, told the association's annual general meeting in Pretoria.

Bobby's report to the AGM focussed on four on-going issues:

- Dealing with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) regarding registration and labelling;
- Progress in dealings with the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) regarding independent testing;
- The long-standing and challenging dealings with government about lead content in paint; and
- The quest for a recognised Volatile Organic Content (VOC) limit in coatings.

Bobby told the meeting that DAFF is insisting that any paint that makes claims to control the environment with regards to bacteria, yeast, moulds, insects etc should fall within Act 36 of 1947 – and should therefore require registration and labelling. "SAPMA has gained some ground in convincing DAFF that preservatives used for self-preservation of the product does not require registration or labelling. But legislation still decrees that any product claims relating to controlling of organisms in the environment does need registration."

Bobby said the SABS had taken heed of industry's call for independent testing and the gap left by the SABS when it stopped testing product, and the SAPMA Technical Committee was invited to the SABS new paint testing laboratory. SABS seems to have taken us seriously and have invested in the required resources. The labs are in a state of accreditation expected to be finalised by mid-year."

Road marking paints would be among the first paints tested again and SABS is looking into re-certifying older certificates that lapsed in 2015 when the SABS stopped testing. "The recommendation from SAPMA is that certificates that were valid until 2015 should be reinstated. SABS will review and advise a final decision."

The SAPMA Technical Committee remains an active member of the government's "Lead in Paint Committee" and represents the paint manufacturers interests in this upcoming legislation. Several meetings were held during 2018 with a proposed sunset date for the current 600ppm level being 31 December 2019.

“We are most concerned with the proposed labelling and testing components and feel that labelling should only be compulsory for paints that have historically contained lead such as alkyd enamels, Industrial, protective coatings and road marking paints. Decorative water-based paints have been lead-free for almost 40 years and should be exempt from new labelling laws. We have also been informed that current labelling claims such as ‘Lead Free’, ‘Lead Safe’, and ‘No Added Lead” will no longer be allowed and must be replaced with ‘contains <90ppm lead’ – the final wording is still being debated.”

Bobby told the AGM there had been several requests from member companies for guidance on VOC limits for SA manufacturers. South Africa does not have standards for VOCs nor the required accredited laboratories to test and provide independent certification.

“The SAPMA Technical Committee has engaged with the SABS to recommend the adoption of the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) VOC limits. This proposal is being reviewed by the SABS and we have also asked SABS to obtain accreditation for itself for testing VOCs to play the role of an independent accredited testing body,” he added.

Ends

Caption: ‘bhugwandin’:

It’s been a busy and challenging year for SAPMA’s Technical Committee, Bobby Bhhugwandin told the recent SAPMA AGM.