

# **THE JOINT ACCEPTANCE SCHEME FOR WATER SERVICES INSTALLATION COMPONENTS (JASWIC)**

## **PREAMBLE**

Before JASWIC was formed in the early 1980's, most of the various town and city by-laws required approval, normally from the Town Engineer, before certain plumbing components could be installed. This meant that suppliers had to take the whole stock of the applicable fittings to the Waterworks/Wastewater Depots where they would be put through a rudimentary test and were then stamped with the municipality's approval mark. This caused considerable supply delays. In addition, the requirements often differed from one municipal area to the next, making it very difficult for the suppliers and the installers to get it right and still carry on sustainable businesses. The JASWIC arrangement did away with that problematic process.

Today most water by-laws still require that the plumbing materials used in their area of jurisdiction be listed on their schedule of approved products. Very few, if any, Local Authorities maintain their own schedules and they rather subscribe to the JASWIC Acceptance Schedule to fulfill that function of their own by-laws. Some refer to it directly in the wording of the by-laws, others by means of council resolutions, etc.

## **PURPOSE**

The committee was formed at its inception by the Water Engineers of the major municipalities, primarily to establish and maintain the acceptance list based on product compliance to the relevant South African Bureau of Standard specification (now referred to as the South African National Standards), and where there were no current SABS / SANS standards, compliance would be to an interim JASWIC "requirement" specification. Secondly, the committee had to create and maintain these JASWIC "R" requirement specifications from drafts submitted by applicants along with other supporting and similar national or international standards as reference guides to the committee. Thirdly, the committee would advise the SABS technical and sub committees where there were shortcomings in current standards, and on the development of the interim JASWIC "R" standards into full SABS / SANS standards in terms of the Standards Act (Act 29 of 1983). Lastly, it would serve as a forum to discuss other matters that impact upon product and installation standards.

Previously the acceptance process of new and renewal applications was dealt with primarily by the JASWIC Secretary. These applications are now being processed by a sub-committee that meets once a month in Pretoria, consisting in the main of Gauteng committee members, ie Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, Joburg Water, SABS, IOPSA, with others as co-opted. This sub-committee's recommendations are presented to the Executive Committee for ratification and final approval.

## **FINANCING**

The participating member's own expenses (travel and accommodation) are covered by their representative organizations, while the host Authority covers the secretarial and venue costs. The application and renewal fees are used to cover the administration costs.

## **COMPOSITION**

The committee members are nominated by their participating Authorities and Associations. The following organizations are represented on the committee:

**Water Service Providers:** Tshwane (Pretoria); Ekurhuleni (East Joburg); Joburg Water; Ethekewini (Durban); Buffalo City (East London); Nelson Mandela (Port Elizabeth); Cape Town; Sol Plaatje (Kimberley).

**Associations and Government Bodies:** South African Bureau of Standards (SABS); Water Research Commission (WRC); Institute of Plumbing of South Africa (IOPSA);

## **STANDARDS**

The committee works very closely with the SABS, since the acceptance standards for components to be listed have always been the SABS / SANS standards where these exist. The SABS has been a permanent committee member and as such reports regularly on the progress of the development of Standards, as well as on the results of their compliance inspections which may affect the status of products on the JASWIC acceptance schedule. New interim JASWIC "R" specifications are no longer drafted and developed by JASWIC, and full compliance with a current South African National Standard is a requirement to be accepted for the purposes of JASWIC listing.

JASWIC is represented on various SABS Technical Committees and Sub-committees dealing with National Standards and Codes of Practice for plumbing, water supply and sanitation related components and systems. SABS Commercial, who performs the inspections and tests on SABS Mark bearing products, also carry out the contracted inspections and testing of JASWIC listed components. JASWIC and SABS are therefore very inter-dependent in this system, and often fulfill healthy internal checks and balances functions on each other's activities.

## **SABS MARK OR JASWIC INSPECTION CONTRACT**

The best on-site product compliance identification is the SABS mark, which is placed on the product itself. This ensures that Building Control Officers, inspectors, purchasers etc have the assurance that the product complies with the National Standard.

Some manufacturers / importers may not elect to be Mark holders since it may not, inter alia, suit the size of their operation or the volumes of product they intend selling. Although the procedure for JASWIC listing is less stringent than that for SABS Mark holders, JASWIC listed components are still subject to regular testing and inspection by the SABS to the applicable SANS Standard. This therefore ensures that a reasonable standard of quality and working life of water installation components is maintained, whatever their source. In addition, the list of accepted products maintained by JASWIC is used by many municipalities as a valuable source of information for various water practitioners ranging from engineers and architects to artisans employed to carry out water and sanitation installations. Mark holders may also have their products listed if they so wish.

JASWIC do not wish to dictate how the applicants have to conduct their businesses and the JASWIC contract system is a workable alternative to have a measure of assurance that minimum standards are being maintained.

## **JASWIC ENFORCEMENT**

From the foregoing, it must be clear that “enforcement” of standards is not and has never been the role of JASWIC nor was the committee ever given the power to do so. The only Authorities invested with powers of enforcement in the building/plumbing industry are those conferred by various acts of parliament, such as The National Building Regulations Act, The Occupational Health and Safety Act, The Water Services Act, The Local Authorities Act etc, to which all affected residents of the country are subject. Therefore all concerned parties in our industries have the responsibility to acquaint themselves with those laws, regulations and by-laws that relate to their activities. These also empower various officials to enforce the by-laws in the course of their duties, such as the Building Control Officer, the Water Inspector, the OHS Inspector, the Fire Department Inspector etc, and so concerned members in the industry should therefore first establish which official has the power to act on the particular law, by-law or regulation that has been contravened. For the most part, enforcement of standards on building sites resort under the jurisdiction of the Local Authorities. If these Authorities lack the capacity to pick up contraventions in the normal course of their duties and concerned members of the industry on the other hand are aware of these contraventions, it is obviously in their interests to report these to the relevant authorities, and follow through up the authority ladder until corrective action has been taken, like removal and/or rectification of non-compliant products or installations.

JASWIC can only act when misrepresentations or fraudulent claims of current JASWIC acceptance listing are brought to their attention. This action (after verification of the facts) takes the form of notification to cease the offensive practice, and if no corrective action is forthcoming, the committee may have no choice but to advise the Industry and the Local Authorities (directly and/or through the media) to be aware of the situation. It will obviously not be in the offender's interests to continue.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

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