

Explaining Electrical Fence Certificates

-A Quick Q & A

WHEN IS AN ELECTRICAL FENCE COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE (EFCC) REQUIRED?

South African law requires that an electric fence certificate is obtained when you sell your house to ensure that the installation is safe and compliant. An installation that wasn't properly installed is hazardous, and the property owner might be held responsible in the case of an injury connected to the electrical fence.

When there is a change in ownership after 1 October 2012, an EFCC will be required. Even when there wasn't a change of ownership, but the fence was altered after 1 October 2012, the EFCC will be compulsory.

WHAT IS THE COST OF OBTAINING AN EFCC?

The fee of the inspection of the fence will be determined by certain aspects, while an electrical fence inspector will issue a certificate free of charge if the fence is compliant with legislation.

If the fence doesn't comply, the inspector will quote you on the necessary repairs. An appointment for the repairs to be done will be arranged if you have accepted the quotation.

WHAT IS CHECKED DURING INSPECTION?

Fences that were constructed before 1 December 2012:

The EFCC ensures that the fence is in working order; that it cannot be touched accidentally; and that it is compliant with legislation. Electrical fence owners can make sure that their fence is in good working order by means of general maintenance.

Usually, maintenance entails the clearing of the fence of vegetation that may cause high-voltage pulses or that may hinder the fence's effectiveness. Maintenance also includes the tightening of wires and the fixing of broken parts in the fence.

Fences that were constructed after 1 December 2012:

Electrical fences constructed after 1 December 2012, should comply with the Electrical Security Installations Regulations, which accounts for the following:

- **Wall height:** A minimum wall height (1.5m) of private property must be secured.
- **Brackets:** Upright brackets are allowed and there are no height restrictions.
- **Angled brackets:** The brackets are allowed to be angled at a maximum of 45 degrees, provided that they are on the inside of the wall.
- **Neighbours:** Brackets may only be angled into your neighbour's property if they have given you permission to do so.
- **Hazard:** Electrical fences should not cause any electrical hazard or entanglement to persons or animals.
- **Barbed/razor wire:** Barbed/razor wire may not be electrified by means of an energiser.
- **Warning signs:** Yellow warning signs must be used to indicate the electrical fencing if it was constructed along a public road/pathway.
- **Electrified gates:** Must be able to open and close without receiving a shock.
- **Distance between posts:** A maximum of 3m between posts will be allowed.
- **Earth spike:** Should be installed every 30m.
- **Conductors:** Must be terminated correctly.

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WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF AN EFCC?

Regulation 12(4) of the Electrical Machinery Regulations (promulgated in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 181 of 1993) governs the legal requirements of an EFCC.

An EFCC is separate from the Electrical Compliance Certificate (ECC). Only an accredited person (accredited by the Department of Labour) may issue an EFCC.

HOW LONG IS AN EFCC VALID FOR?

Legislation does not specify for how long the certificate will be valid for. An EFCC may be passed on from the previous owner to the new owner, provided that no amendments were made to the fence after the certificate was issued.

Usually, the certificate will be valid for two years after the date it was issued.

HOW CAN ONE OBTAIN AN EFCC?

Legislation does not specify if it is the responsibility of the buyer or the seller to obtain the EFCC; the parties must come up with an agreement regarding this matter.

A clause can, however, be included in the sale agreement to relieve the seller of the obligation to get certification and to place the responsibility on the buyer to make sure that the fence is certified at his/her cost.