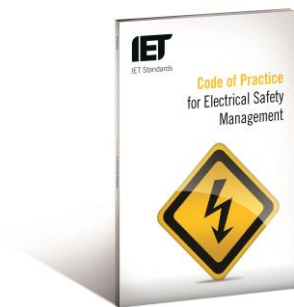


Electrical safety management event

Amy Walker reports on the recent *Code of Practice for Electrical Safety Management* seminar.

The fourth (and final) event in a series of seminars on the *Code of Practice for Electrical Safety Management* was held recently in the Strand Palace Hotel in central London. Since it was published in September 2013, the team behind the book has presented this event at various locations around the country and have now returned to the venue of their original seminar.



This Code of Practice not only highlights the dangers of working with electricity but also how to mitigate the risks. It is designed to be used internationally – there is no reference to any specific legislation. The principles can be applied anywhere in the world and used by anyone, whether or not you are an electrical engineer. This Code of Practice will help people and organisations identify the areas in which they need to improve to ensure the safety of all people working on a broad range of sites.

Three of the four lead contributors to the Code of Practice were speakers at the event:

- Bill Bates BEng(Hons) DMS CEng FIEE, who was a principal electrical inspector with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for 20 years, spoke about some of the incidents he had investigated during his time with HSE, highlighting, at times graphically, just why electrical safety management should be a priority on all sites.
- Terry Keenan MSc BSc(Hons) CEng FIEE, director for Prescient Associates Ltd, spoke about the importance of reducing risks in the workplace.
- Paul Bicheno BSc(Hons) MIET, project manager from the IET, took us through how to most effectively use the guidance and self-assessment criteria provided in the Code of Practice.

What I took away from the seminar was that there are many ways in which electricity can cause serious injury or death – not all of which are appreciated even by electrically trained workers. These include shocks, burns, explosions, falls, fires and injuries sustained from unexpected start-ups of machinery (caused by poor operational processes and procedures) etc. What was particularly poignant is that, with proper measures in place, many of these accidents are entirely preventable.

The event included a very interactive session, with the audience contributing on each topic – voicing their concerns and opinions. Some of the main points that were brought up were the definition of ‘competent person’ and the rules about the approach to using PPE in the US vs those in Europe when working on or near exposed live electrical equipment. Also discussed was how it would be helpful to have a community made up of people and organisations who are trying to improve their electrical safety management.

There is no doubt that this is an extremely important topic and this seminar made it clear that there needs to be a higher awareness of electrical safety management activities, by non-electrical as well as electrically trained staff, but just as crucially, managers and directors/owners who are ultimately held to account in the case of a serious incident in their organisation.

The *Code of Practice for Electrical Safety Management* focuses on identifying a broad range of good practice activities that need to be taken into account to ensure an organisation and the workforce can have an effective approach to managing their risks associated with the electrical system. For further information on this Code of Practice please visit the [IET website](#).

Should you wish to increase your knowledge in this area, have a look at the IET's course on [Electrical Safety Management – A practical course for managing risks associated with an electrical system](#). The course is running 4-5 November 2015 at the IET Birmingham, Austin Court.