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Public Works for a Better Government

February 10, 2013

The Hon. Deputy Minister Obed Bapela
The Presidency
Union Buildings
Private Bag X1000
Pretoria 0001
Republic of South Africa

Dear Deputy Minister Bapela:

I writing to inform you and President Zuma of the prominent position of the Republic of South Africa in the recent publication of 10,062 public safety standards that are legally mandated by governments around the world. These documents were published on a noncommercial basis in order to promote public education and public safety, equal justice for all, a better informed citizenry, the rule of law, world trade and world peace, as it is the right of all humans to know and speak the laws that govern them.

You may find information about this release and the public safety standards from the Republic of South Africa at the following Internet addresses:

<https://law.resource.org/pub/za/manifest.za.html>
<https://law.resource.org/pub/12tables.html>

The standards from the Republic of South Africa were selected because of the high quality of the standards, and the fact that they are required by law and essential to the public safety. The release includes vital public safety standards such as test methods for water and pollutants, the transport of dangerous goods, the mandatory building codes of South Africa, the use and handling of pesticides, the management of healthcare waste, and the safety of buildings such as homes and schools.

In order to make these documents more accessible to people in South Africa and those wishing to do business in South Africa, we have converted many of the standards into valid HTML documents, suitable for the World Wide Web. It is our intention to continue to transform these documents to make them even more useful to citizens of your country so that they may be aware of legally mandated standards of public safety.

The standards have been published on a noncommercial basis for research, private study, and private use. Our aim is to help people who are attempting to satisfy their constitutional rights to access information under the Promotion to Access of Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) and under Section 26 of the Constitution of the

Republic of South Africa, 1996, which guarantees “everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing.” One cannot ensure that housing is adequate and safe without the ability to consult the legally mandated building codes and other public safety standards. The published public safety standards are the direct result of testing and investigation conducted by a public body and on behalf of a public body, and disclosure of these results is thus obligatory under 42(5)(c) of PAIA.

The ability to read and speak the laws that citizens must obey is a fundamental human right, a basic underpinning of the rule of law. Our modern society is increasingly technical, and documents such as mandatory building codes and safety standards for transport of dangerous goods are some of the most important laws we must know and obey. The work of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) is some of the best in the world and their work saves lives and makes society better. But, it is only when the citizens know about that work that the rule of law can truly keep us safe.

I would welcome your comments and look forward to continuing to expand the legally-mandated public safety standards available to the citizens of the Republic of South Africa.

Best regards,

/signed/
Carl Malamud
Public.Resource.Org