

Here's what you need to know about compliance certificates

 By [Adrian Goslett](#)

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Putting a home up for sale takes some preparation on the seller's part as they need to have all of their compliance certificates in order before taking the step of listing their home on the market.



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Here is some guidance as to which certificates sellers will need to obtain to ensure a smooth, hassle-free property transfer process:

Electrical Certificate of Compliance

Legislation stipulates that every homeowner is in possession of a valid Electrical Certificate of Compliance (ECOC) when selling their home. Valid for two years, an ECOC verifies that the electrical work and installation on the property are up to standard in accordance with the regulations required by the South African National Standards. Before the transfer of ownership of a property can happen, the seller will be required to present a valid ECOC.

An electrical certificate will cover the distribution boards, all wiring, as well as earthing and bonding of all metal components, which include antennae and satellite dishes. It will also cover the socket outlets, light switches and all isolators for fixed appliances. However, an electrical certificate will not cover any fixed appliances such as the geyser, stove, motors, fans or underfloor heating.

Before the home is placed on the market, the owner should have it inspected to ensure all electrical elements of the property are installed and working as they should. Any aspect that does not meet the requirements should be removed or fixed.

Electric Fence System of Compliance Certificate

In addition to an Electrical Certificate of Compliance, homeowners who've had electric fencing installed as a security measure will require an Electrical Fence System Compliance Certificate. It must be noted that an ECOC and Electrical Fence System Compliance Certificate are two different documents. The Electrical Machinery Regulations of 2011 issued

under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, places an obligation on the user of an electric fence system to have an electric fence system certificate of compliance. This requirement does not apply if the system was installed before 1 October 2012. As with an ECOC, this certificate is required where any change to the system has been made or where there is a change of ownership of the premises on which the system exists. The electric fence system must be certified by an approved installer, and the certification is valid for two years.

Water installation

In February 2011 the City of Cape Town introduced a new water by-law, which stipulates that a Water Installation Certificate must be provided to the municipality by sellers before transfer. A Water Installation Certificate is an area-specific by-law that only applies to properties sold within Cape Town or where the City of Cape Town holds jurisdiction. Every time the ownership of property changes, a new certificate must be issued.

The intent of this law is to limit water wastage as much as possible, an important issue especially now with the recent water shortages and restrictions. The by-law also protects buyers from latent defect claims and high water bills due to leakages.

This certification checks that the water installation complies with national building regulations. It also ensures that the water meter registers when a tap is open and stops completely when no water is drawn. During the inspection, the inspector will check that rain water is not flowing into the sewerage system and that there is no cross-connection between the potable water supply and any grey water or groundwater system which may be installed.

Although people may assume that the water installation certificate covers all aspects of the plumbing - it does not. A plumbing certificate and water installation certificate differ. A water installation certificate does not cover any leaks on waste or sewer water or drainage.

Gas Certificate of Compliance

On 1 October 2009, Regulation 17 (3) of the Pressure Equipment Regulations (OHS ACT of 1993) came into effect, which states that if a liquid gas appliance has been installed on the property, a Gas Certificate of Conformity is to be issued when there is a change of ownership. This certificate is valid for five years and must be issued by an authorised person who is registered with the Liquified Petroleum Gas Safety Association of Southern Africa (LPGAS).

The gas certificate ensures that gas components are in a safe, working condition and are leak free. It also certifies that the emergency shut-off valves have been installed in the correct positions. For the gas components to pass inspection, they must be correctly positioned in relation to electrical points, and outside cylinders must be the required distance from doors, drains, windows and electrical appliances.

Beetle Infestation Clearance Certificate

Although it is not a mandatory requirement, it has become standard practice that a seller provides the buyer with a beetle

clearance certificate. In fact, in many coastal areas, a beetle clearance certificate has become a written condition in the sales agreement.

Beetle certificates are usually not required for sectional title properties, or where the property is situated inland where beetle/woodborer problems are less common than in coastal areas. Banks and insurance companies will request a certificate on transfer if the home is situated in an area known to be infested.

The beetle clearance certificate is only issued once the property has been inspected for any visible signs of wood destroying insects and deemed to be free of any such insects. The certificate is valid for three to six months.

ABOUT ADRIAN GOSLETT

Adrian Goslett is CEO and regional director of RE/MAX Southern Africa. He joined RE/MAX Southern Africa in 2005 as a franchise development consultant, supporting various regions and offices. Throughout his career at RE/MAX he has held various positions. In 2010, after successfully leading 160 offices and over 1500 agents in six countries through the worst years real estate has ever seen in South Africa in 30 years, Goslett was appointed as CEO of RE/MAX Southern Africa.

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