

Promise of stainless steel undermined

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There is a rising trend towards carbon steel fabricators moving into the stainless steel area without a proper understanding of the differences. The South African Stainless Steel Development Association (sassda) is fighting to uphold industry standards and be a voice for best practice.



In a tough economy, consumers veer towards the cheapest option and some contractors may be tempted to cut corners. Unfortunately, contractor mistakes cost a fortune, killing profits. While both parties will blame the other, they also often blame the stainless steel material itself.

“Sassda’s role is to uphold an industry standard, provide advocacy and education for its members and the consumer and be a voice for best practice. Our code of conduct provides access to key pointers for contractors and consumers to consider before utilising a so-called ‘expert’ contractor,” says John Tarboton, sassda executive director.

“Stainless steel is a quality product. We understand that mistakes can happen, but it’s the way the member company handles these that sets a quality fabricator apart from the rest. We also appeal to consumers to only make use of industry standard member knowledge and practices to avoid costly mistakes,” continues Tarboton.

Sassda was recently asked to intervene when approached by a disgruntled KwaZuluNatal client unhappy with the construction, installation and workmanship of a balustrade on his upmarket home. Sassda KwaZuluNatal regional manager, Angie Baker, visited the client on site and together with a technical expert, generated a report for further sassda review.

“The job clearly did not comply with the legal requirements of SANS 10400 or SANS 10160, both of which require approval of the design and installation by a suitably qualified professional engineer, which we doubt was done. Quite bluntly, the balustrade was a hazard and dangerous to the safety of the homeowner. We advised that the entire structure be removed, at the fabricator’s cost, and replaced using an experienced balustrade manufacturer,” says Baker.

Providing feedback on his encounter with sassda, the homeowner has since responded saying: “Sassda went out of its way to assist me with this issue. They came to inspect the work that had been done, took photographs and discussed the workmanship with me as to what was right or wrong. They then supplied me with a list of approved stainless steel suppliers in the area with whom I can deal in the future. I appreciate that they stepped in as a watchdog for the industry and assisted me and provided support.”

About sassda

The Southern Africa Stainless Steel Development Association (sassda) has been in existence for more than 50 years and is made up of members that distribute, market, manufacture and fabricate products and services relevant to stainless steel. With 400 members in sub-Saharan Africa, the association provides a platform for its members to collectively promote the sustainable growth and development of the industry, with the main emphasis on stainless steel

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