



# THATCHERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA DEKKERSVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Newsletter 7/2008  
31 October 2008

## NEWSLETTER



**John Smith**  
**National Chairman**

### ASTM E108 TEST METHOD FOR FIRE RETARDANT PRODUCTS

A Working Group was established by the SABS to investigate the method used for testing fire retardant products and to adapt the method to RSA circumstances. At a meeting on the 28 October 2008 at the SABS, it was decided to consider the replacement of the ASTM E 108 test method with that of the NFPA256 as adopted by the USA Bureau of Standards

TASA representatives are Messrs John Smith (National Chairman) Abrie Visagie (Former National Chairman), Hennie van Rensburg (National Deputy Chairman) and Terry Wilson (Thatch –it). They are all bona fide thatch contractors.

The weathering of treated thatch roofs especially the rotting of thatch on the southern sides will receive special attention. **Fire retardant products are at present not tested for the effect it has on the life expectancy of thatch roofs. Only the fire retardation longevity aspect is tested.** The test period for the weathering of test panels can be reduced from 7 years to 4.5 months.

A special workshop will be held by Mr. Kobus Strydom at his fire laboratory on the CSIR campus during the AGM of 15 and 16 May 2009. He will then explain and demonstrate how the ASTM E108 test is executed. Panels exposed to the product weathering test will also be displayed.

### SANS 10400-T, SANS 10400-L AND SANS 2001-CR3:2008

It is expected that the SANS 10407 (Thatched Roof Construction) specification will be withdrawn when the new Building Regulations, SANS 10400 is promulgated early next year.

Structures will be included in SANS 10400 “L” (Roofs). Fire, in the “T” section of the new SANS 10400. The rest will be found in the SANS 2001-CR3 2008.

The above documents are included for your comments. SANS10400 and SANS 2001-CR3 2008 are out for public comment if you have any concerns please let us know. TASA’s reply and recommendations must be submitted to the Technical Committee before 3 December 2008

As all the specifications (after 10400 is promulgated) appears in different sections of this document. TASA has obtained permission from the SABS to compile and distribute a Working Document for thatch contractors which will also serve as a Guideline for Accreditation.

## VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION / CERTIFICATION

The concept document has been discussed at the different regional meetings. It will be tabled on the AGM for approval and implementation.

Accreditation is aimed at the protection of members, to promote employment and to pre-qualify members for potential contracts. Accreditation **confirms that a member is capable and qualified to fulfill his contractual obligations successfully. It provides a form of surety to banks and clients alike.**

Accreditation is conferred only upon TASA members. On resignation or cancellation of membership, accreditation is recalled. Accreditation by TASA only will be recognized.

## COMPLAINTS

Numerous complaints have been received of bad workmanship and corruption. Quotes are often below cost resulting in roofs not being completed. These complaints have been against non members of TASA.

As a result of the above Banks, Municipalities and Insurance Companies are now calling for TASA membership as a prerequisite.

Stricter requirements for membership have been introduced and members are urged to maintain their membership of TASA

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the seven new members that joined TASA lately. Gauteng has increased membership with one. North West and Western Cape increased with three each.

## NATIONAL THATCH ROOF CONSTRUCTION COMPETITION

The above competition is extended to include professional Engineers, Architects and University students. You are encouraged to motivate the professionals involved in your projects / contracts to participate.

## ARTICLES IN MAGAZINES

The magazines SA Timber Homes & Projects and SA Roofing contain colourful pictures about TASA as well as articles submitted by TASA members. The former magazine is available on the shelves early November. SA Roofing is available on their website [www.saroofting.co.za](http://www.saroofting.co.za). It is also possible to subscribe. Some of the articles are also available on the TASA website.

## NEW POLYPROPYLENE TWINE

Due to the excessive heat Thatch contractors in the North West region use mainly black UV Treated polypropylene twine. There are however contractors that use **any ordinary black twine**. Apparently roofs cannot be serviced when any black twine *or sisal twine* is used. These twines weather in a short period of time.

Mr Hennie van Rensburg (Chairman: North West) together with manufacturers developed polypropylene twine. This twine is being tested and will possibly be on the market soon.



**The twine in the photo has not the correct colour.**

The twine has a unique colour in order to distinguish it from other twine. It has a mix of green, yellow and brown (the only twine on the market with this colour combination). These colours combine with the thatch reed and laths on the inside of the roof. The twine is UV treated and contains a fire retarding substance. The breaking strain is approximately 42 kg and because of the treatment non stretchable. The packaging will also be clearly marked: "for thatch roof usage" Further information will be provided as soon as tests are completed.

## **TIPS**

### **Thatch Rolls.**

This is an alternative to beam filling with mortar. It could be successfully used in timber frame houses. It is airtight. The construction is also relatively simple.

All you need is:

#### ***Materials:***

Fencing staples

Sisal Tar Twine

Sisal Rope

Thatch Grass

Nails (To secure rope)

#### ***Tools:***

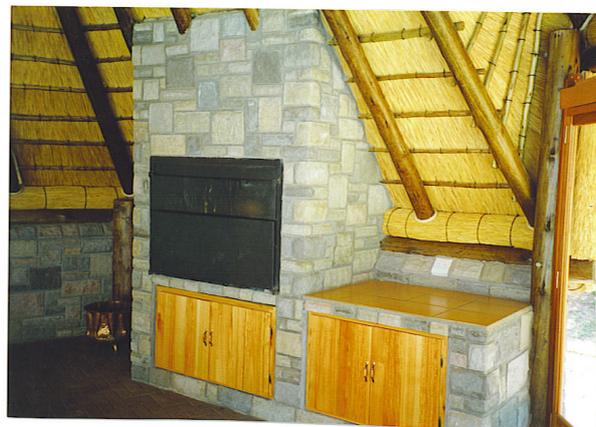
Hammer

Garden Executer (To cut thatch to size)

#### ***Method***

Nail Staples into ring beam spaced evenly between rafters allowing small gap to thread twine through staples and then around lath. Place thatch to form roll. Tie twine tightly, cut excess twine. Pull twine around to conceal knots behind lath.

Cut rope to size and nail around rafter for any further queries please feel free to contact the writer.



### **Twine tension test**

All Thatchers thatch to varying densities and can be controlled by a simple hook scale test.

#### ***Method***

Hook around twine pull until twine parts from lath and take reading. The tension should be greater than 8 kilograms.

The above test should be performed soon after completion of a roof after all scaffold poles have been removed.



The above were contributed by John Smith of Biggarsberg Thatchers. For further details contact writer at 083 270 3826 or 034 6511664 for more information.

Kind regards

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