



THATCHERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA DEKKERSVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Newsletter 8/2020

NEWSLETTER

Dear member

Whether the Corona pandemic, poor business opportunities and money scarcity is not enough, the TASA received the following query from the Fire Protection Association and subsequently correspondence from Fire Operations in South Africa.

EMAIL FROM THE FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The photos and comments regarding this fire are included in Mr. Engelbrech's letter.

"Hi Elsabie (I hope I heard your name correctly)

I was part of a presentation today held for reps of SAIA (the speaker was: Wynand Engelbrecht)

Can you clarify for me whether the metal sheeting (Marley specifically, or in general if that's what you can talk to) is something that is dangerous for thatch, or is it more the installation that's a fire risk and not the Marley building material?

- Have you seen thatch houses converted like this before?

The speaker said that though he had no scientific evidence, what he has experienced in the field is that these weighty metal sheets, placed over thatch, are increasing the fire risk to thatch buildings.

Do you or your technical team have any thoughts on the matter? Have you guys seen anything of this nature thus far?"

My cell is 079 940 7422 if you need to get in touch with me other than email.

Thank you and Sincere Regards,

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THE THATCHERS ASSOCIATION'S ANSWER

"Good afternoon Renay

Thank you for your enquiry.

Yes the TASA is fully aware of this practice.

What has especially caused the popularity of these tiles is that thatch roof owners whose thatch roofs have been treated with a fire retardant must repeat the treatment every five to seven years at a great cost and the roof must also be serviced before the treatment takes place. In this regard, I refer to inquiries and comments received by owners of thatch roof complexes and large lodges especially during the last two to three years. This forced the TASA to make it a point of discussion during our 2019 Annual General Meeting so that a decision on it could be recorded.

A natural untreated thatch roof can only be serviced and if the roof is thatched with thatch that has been cut to specification, it is only necessary to service the roof only two to three times in its lifespan of between twenty to thirty years. The trend is that the thatch roof owner cannot bear the cost of repeated treatments and to sidestep it, the roof which is in a poor condition most of the time is covered with the tiles.

This practice was discussed in detail during the TASA's Annual General Meeting held on 20 July 2019 and the following decision was made which was passed on to the TASA members.

“3.2 TILES PLACED ON TOP OF THATCH ROOFS”

The next decision has been reached after a detailed discussion during which the focus and purpose of the TASA was discussed, taking into account that some of our members are not only building traditional thatch roofs, but also inter alia install tiles on top of thatched roofs.

- DECISION:**
- a) The TASA will only promote thatch roofs and that all inquiries received are answered to promote and benefit the Thatching Industry.
 - b) Inquiries about other roofing materials will be referred to those Associations and Industries.
 - c) It is recommended that our members who also build other roofs divide their business into two separate units. One for thatching and one for roofing.“

The SANS 10407 (Thatched Roof Construction) specification that is part of the National Building Regulations SANS 10400 covers thatch roofs that are kept in its natural shape. The TASA, which is responsible for the protection and promotion of the Thatching Industry in South Africa, distances itself from any practice that occurs with a thatch roof after a thatch roof has been erected in accordance with SANS 10407 and signed off by an engineer.

The TASA's registered Trade Mark may only be used with respect to traditional thatch roofs built according to SANS 10407 (Thatched Roof Construction) specification.

The TASA will also issue a statement in this regard.”

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM FIRE OPERATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Subsequently correspondence is received from Mr. Engelbrecht of Fire Operations in South Africa which together with photos are attached.

A meeting will be arranged with Mr Engelbrecht to discuss these matters. Our "A Guide to Thatch Construction in South Africa," "Pros and Cons in the Thatching Industry," and the two articles "The Art of Thatching" and "The Backbone of a Thatch Roof" were sent to him for more insight into the Thatching Industry.

Feedback regarding the discussions will be given to our members and we welcome your comments on this matter.



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