

SafeNet Thought for the Day

26th of May 2017

“Toolbox Talk” – Employees duty 6

We often think that health and safety in the workplace is solely the responsibility of the employer. Section 14 and 15 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 do however impose certain duties on employees. Failure to comply with these duties could result in an employee being held liable or even be prosecuted by the Department of Labour. In this Safety Thought we will discuss one of these duties.

EMPLOYEE DUTY 6

Section 15 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 states - *“No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with, damage or misuse anything which is provided in the interest of health or safety”*. It is clear from above-mentioned legal requirement that it is illegal for employees to bypass, misuse or remove safety equipment such as machine guards and micro switches. The same would apply to personal protective equipment such as safety boots and / or overalls.

A typical example will be the photo attached which shows water boots which were cut into sandals. The equipment was bought by the company and therefore belongs to the company. There is no difference between the water boots issued to staff and other machines used on the premises. Employees are not allowed to damage machinery and will therefore not be allowed to damage safety equipment.

