

PS and ICC-marked cement assure safe construction

The Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Product Standards (DTI-BPS) once again reminds the public to be vigilant and buy only cement with the Philippine Standard (PS) or Import Commodity Clearance (ICC) mark to ensure safe and quality construction works this summer season.

DTI-BPS Director Jesus L. Motoomull states, "The onset of dry period in the country signals the peak of construction activities nationwide, thus, the Bureau advises consumers to be very cautious with the cement they use in concrete construction works at their homes."

"Only those BPS-certified cement are reliable and safe for construction use for these products have passed stringent tests and inspections based on relevant standards prior its sale," stresses Director Motoomull.

DTI regulates critical construction products such as cement not only to protect the interests of businesses but more importantly to safeguard consumers' welfare. Through the DTI-BPS Product Certification Scheme, manufacturers and importers are required to have their products tested based on the specific Philippine National Standard (PNS) at the BPS Testing Center or any DTI-accredited or recognized laboratory prior its sale or distribution.

Only those manufacturers and importers whose products comply with the quality and safety requirements of the PNS are issued with the PS License and ICC certificate, respectively. These manufacturers and importers are then authorized to affix the PS and ICC marks on their products to guide consumers in choosing quality and safe products.

Aside from looking for the PS or ICC marks when buying cement, consumers should also check if the cement bag is properly labeled with the name and type of cement (Portland or Pozzolan), name and address of manufacturer/importer, brand, trade name and recognized trade mark, net mass in kg, the country of manufacture, manufacturing date, and the number of the particular shipment and batch identification number for imported cement. Moreover, cement bags have color bands for consumers to easily distinguish each type of cement, such as red band for Portland cement, green band for Pozzolan Type P, and three yellow stripes band for Pozzolan Type 1P.

Portland cement, as defined in the standard, is a hydraulic cement produced by pulverizing Portland-cement clinker and usually contains calcium sulfate. The five types of Portland cement are manufactured to meet different physical and chemical requirements for specific purposes. Type I is suitable for all uses where special properties specified for any other type are not required. Type II is used when moderate sulfate resistance or moderate heat of hydration is desired, like in structures of considerable mass, such as large piers and heavy retaining walls. Type III is used when high-early strength is desired. Type IV is used when a low heat of hydration is desired, such as massive structures where the temperature rise resulting from heat generated during curing is a critical factor. Type V, the last type, is used when high sulfate resistance is desired.

On the other hand, Pozzolan cement is defined as a hydraulic cement consisting of an intimate and uniform blend of Portland cement and fine pozzolan. It has two types namely, Type P, which is used in general concrete construction where high strength at early ages not required, and Type 1P, which is used for general concrete construction.

Director Motoomull explains, "Construction materials such as cement, plywood, steel bars, wire nails, steel pipes, water pipes, sanitary wares, flat glass, etc., which are commonly used in building houses, offices, schools, roads and other infrastructure, are just some of the critical products regulated by the Department for they greatly affect life, property and health."

"Thus, we are urging the public to be vigilant and demand for quality products to get their hard-earned money's worth and more importantly, to avoid the hazards posed by substandard critical construction and building materials," stresses Director Motoomull.

DTI-BPS conducts intensive enforcement operations nationwide, in support of the regular market monitoring activities of the Regional and Provincial Offices, to check conformance of manufacturers and importers to the requirements of the relevant standard and other related-trade laws.

DTI enjoins the buying public to patronize only PS and ICC-marked products in the market. Consumers can report or file a complaint against substandard products through DTI's consumer hotline (751-3330), text DTI <space> message and send to 2920 for Globe and Smart subscribers and 2384 for Sun subscribers, e-mail address (cwb-trcp@dti.gov.ph), or visit DTI at Trade and Industry Bldg., #361 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City. bps