RE-ROLLED GUARDRAILS THE HIDDEN DANGERS



The Trade Association for companies manufacturing and supplying road traffic safety devices & related products within South Africa

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SANS 1350 Compliant Guardrail

Guardrails are one of the most critical safety features on our roads. They are designed, manufactured, and tested to strict standards to ensure they perform as intended in a collision — protecting drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. Any alteration to that design or structure puts lives at risk.

One particularly dangerous practice is the re-rolling of guardrails. At first glance, re-rolling may appear to be a way to salvage or reuse steel, but this process seriously compromises safety and is illegal in South Africa.

Why Re-Rolling is a Problem?

Loss of Original Properties

Steel that has been deformed and reformed is unlikely to retain its original strength and impact-resistance properties. Guardrails are specifically engineered for safety; re-rolling disrupts these characteristics.

Compromised Galvanising

Guardrails are galvanised to prevent corrosion. Re-rolling damages this protective coating, leaving the steel vulnerable to rust and weakening over time.

Material Thinning and Elongation

Re-rolling can stretch and thin the steel in places, creating weak points along the length of the rail. These inconsistencies can cause unpredictable failures in collisions.

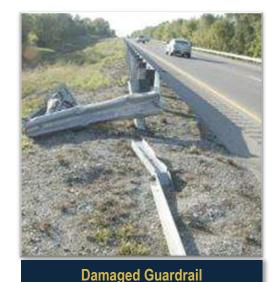
Failure to Meet Standards

Even if tested, re-rolled guardrails are unlikely to meet the stringent standards required for road safety in South Africa.

LEGAL REQUIREMENT

The COTO Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Works for South African Road Authorities explicitly prohibits re-rolling of guardrails: "Damaged guardrails should not be used or retrofitted. Re-rolling of guardrails shall not be permitted." 11.4.7.3b, COTO 11.4)

This means that using re-rolled guardrails is not only unsafe but also illegal, reinforcing the responsibility of contractors and authorities to only use compliant, accredited systems.



Liability and Safety Risk

Endorsing or using re-rolled guardrails carries enormous liability. Should a failure occur, the responsibility falls directly on those who authorised or installed the non-compliant product. More importantly, the risk is borne by road users, whose lives depend on these safety systems.

Conclusion

Road safety is non-negotiable. The dangers of re-rolling guardrails far outweigh any perceived benefits. Beyond being unsafe, the practice is illegal under South African standards. Only properly manufactured, accredited, and compliant guardrails should be installed on roads — because every life saved counts.