

DIZ Doepke-Info-Zeitung

The free customer newsletter by Doepke Schaltgeräte GmbH



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Doepke Academy: digital training

Doepke offers webinars as a digital alternative to in-person interaction at trade fairs and seminars

When all trade fairs and in-person training events were cancelled or rescheduled as a response to the coronavirus pandemic, Doepke Schaltgeräte GmbH came up with an alternative. At the end of April, the 'Doepke Academy' rolled out a series of interactive webinars on new products and hot topics.

Training has always been an important aspect of Doepke's corporate portfolio. The sales team, led by Stefan Davids, normally attend trade fairs and events across the whole of Germany, raising awareness of and providing training about protection technology topics. Maintaining this training and CPD programme in the coronavirus era is just one idea behind the 'Doepke Academy', however.



Another important factor is interaction with customers and partners. "New developments are always borne out of feedback from tradespeople and technicians," says Folkert Daniels, Product Marketing Manager and moderator

of the Doepke Academy. "We are pleased to be able to continue exchanging information on a digital platform, even when trade fairs and plant visits are unfortunately out of the question for the time being."

Of course, personal contact is and remains crucial and the sales team is looking forward to holding in-person training sessions and welcoming visitors to the plant soon. That said, it's already become clear that the Doepke Academy has the potential to shift from being just an alternative to developing into an independent channel that constitutes an important part of the Doepke training portfolio, even after the coronavirus threat has abated. The first nine webinars, some of which were organised in collaboration with electrical wholesalers, have already drawn over 500 participants.

You can register for the free webinars on the Doepke website, where an up-to-date training schedule is also published. Recordings of previous webinars can also be found on the website. ■



#doepke4life

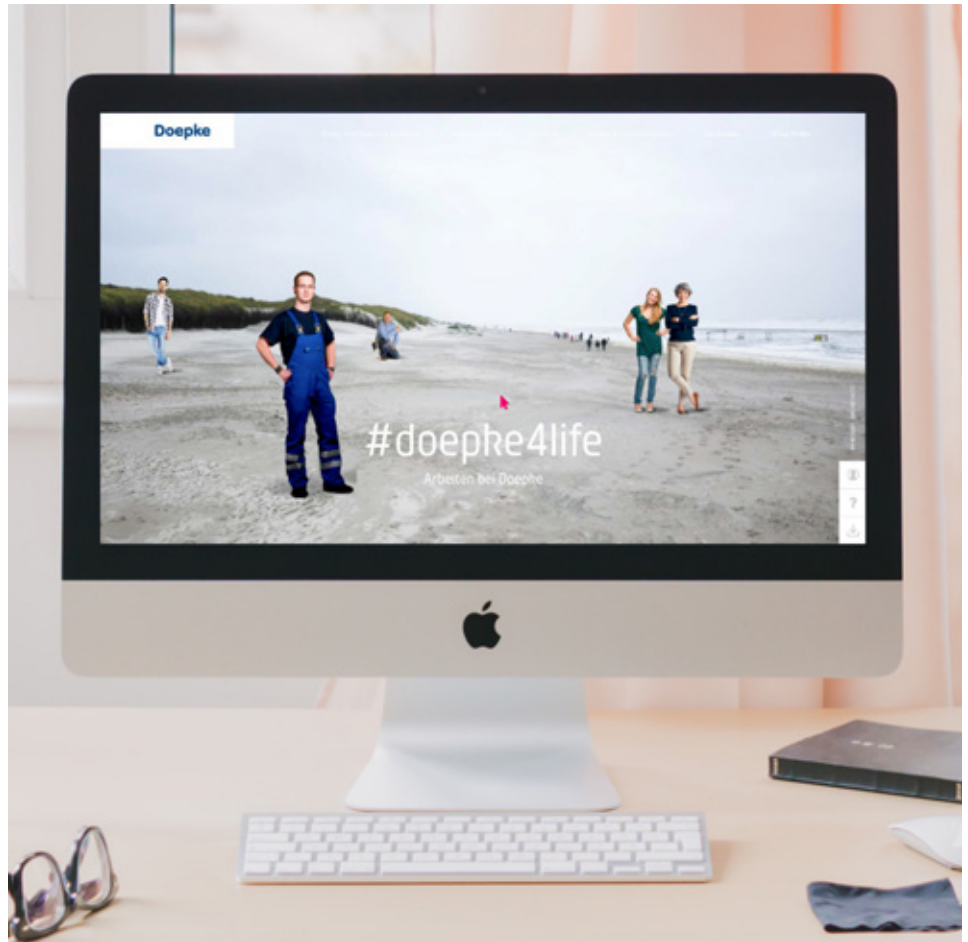
Doepke starts a new recruitment portal

Doepke Schaltgeräte GmbH will soon launch a new recruitment portal on a separate website with the hashtag #doepke4life.

The aim is to make Doepke not just a more attractive training company for school-leavers and work-study university students, but also better known as the best employer in East Frisia for highly qualified candidates from the region.

Doepke has experienced rapid growth over the last two years. The company has succeeded in retaining its organic, traditional structures and still pursuing lots of new ideas as well. This has led to a huge creative dynamic in the company, exciting both new and old employees alike. So why shouldn't we market ourselves with this enthusiasm, in order to attract more motivated employees?

The option of proactive arrangement in family-like teams, the prospect of a healthy work-life balance thanks to flexible working time models, modern equipment and support for continuing professional development make Doepke an attractive employer in the long term as well. That's what #doepke4life means. ■



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Doepke and coronavirus

How is the company managing the situation?

Naturally the coronavirus pandemic has affected not just every person individually, but also Doepke and the entire industry. So how is Doepke managing the situation? What action has been taken? And what do its production and supply capabilities look like?

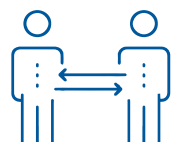
There is good news here: so far Doepke is doing well. Taking all recommended hygiene and social distancing measures into consider-

ation, the company has been able to continue working as usual. Some employees are working from home, but they can still be reached just the same. We are able to meet demand at the moment.

Doepke had previously established a crisis committee in order to be ready with a quick internal response to whatever situation may arise. This committee is now monitoring the current situation closely just as before, ready to respond quickly to any changes and adapt measures where necessary. This approach requires a certain amount of creativity. In individual areas, a temporary alternating shift model was introduced in order to keep employees separated time-wise. Other departments were able to get back on track

after quickly repurposing a production hall. Technical conditions to enable more employees to work from home and facilitate online communication were also quickly optimised, so that webinars and video conferencing with colleagues, customers and partners could take place easily. The 'Doepke Academy' webinar series, which was originally conceived as a substitute for in-person training and trade fairs, has since become so successful that it will be continued even after the coronavirus threat is over (see page 1). The top objective of all of these measures is to protect the health of our employees, customers and partners, stem the spread of the virus and maintain production and supply capabilities.

Of course we do not know the extent to which limitations where transport or delivery are concerned, for example, may affect Doepke as well. Nevertheless, models have been developed that allow us to respond quickly to changes and ensure our consultancy and supply capabilities where possible. As it currently stands, Doepke feels well prepared to face the potential challenges of the coming days and weeks. ■



Retrofitting RCDs in electrical systems

Many electrical installers are currently grappling with the question of whether it is compulsory to retrofit RCDs in electrical systems. Terms like 'grandfathering', 'customer request' and 'risk assessment' come up in these discussions. But what does it all mean? What is compulsory and what isn't? And what potential solutions are there?

Standards

DIN VDE 0100-410 stipulated in binding terms in 2007 that socket outlet circuits up to 20 A operated by laypersons must be protected with a 30 mA RCD for additional personal protection. Until then there had only been recommendations to do so. However, after the transition period ended on 1 February 2009 at the latest, newly installed socket outlet circuits had to be protected with RCDs.

But what about existing systems?

No standards mandate that RCDs must be retrofitted. The system must only meet the requirements valid at the time it was installed. Strictly speaking, this means that under the standard, the system does not need to be retrofitted and is even permitted to be repaired and recommissioned to meet the obsolete criteria from its initial installation. This is true as long as subsequent standards or other regulations do not require systems to be adapted to the current state of the art.

Grandfathering

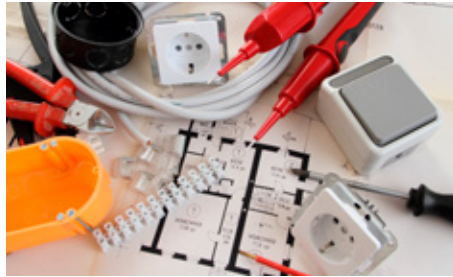
Grandfathering means that an official permit or approval was once issued for a system and remains valid. So in theory the system can remain as it was when the approval was issued, even if safety rules have become more stringent since the system's installation, to the point where the same system would not be approved now, were it a new installation. The grandfather rule comes from the high legal position that the German Constitution affords every owner.

The topic of grandfathering becomes difficult when a system's current condition poses a danger to life and limb or even a threat of property damage. On the one hand, the owner would understandably like to save money and avoid hassle, and could therefore insist that their system falls under the grandfather rule and that retrofitting an RCD is not compulsory. On the other hand, the owner may be considered responsible if someone is injured as a result of the failure to retrofit an RCD. Protection of health and safety always takes precedence over grandfathering.

Another caveat of grandfathering is that it does not apply if the original use of the system as it was at the time approval was issued changes. If the type of use of a property changes, or renovation or refurbishment occurs which goes beyond simple maintenance of the system, then the grandfather rule no longer applies. From this point in time, the current building code requirements apply to the electrical system.

The operator of an electrical system should therefore be very careful when claiming exemption under the grandfather rule. In each case a risk assessment must be conducted as

long as the system is not for purely private use. The current DIN VDE 0100-410:2018-10 standard, in the meantime, stipulates that lighting circuits in residences and socket outlet circuits up to 32 A – not just socket outlet circuits up to 20 A as before – require protection by 30 mA RCDs.



An adequate risk assessment includes the following components: all relevant risks, the associated potential consequences, the actions required to prevent injury and damage, and the effectiveness of these actions.

Protection of health and safety

Operators of electrical systems should have an overview of their system. They must be aware of any possible danger and take action in light of this knowledge to fully protect their system. If damage or injury occurs and it is discovered that an owner or operator did not ensure adequate fuse protection for their system,

they may be held liable for the consequences. Protection of health and safety should always be top priority.

Technical solutions

Which technical solutions are sensible for retrofitting a system with RCDs depends very much on the individual system. In principle there is the option of installing a four-pole residual current circuit-breaker with downstream miniature circuit-breakers. Or you can use a residual current operated circuit-breaker with integral overcurrent protection (RCBO), which combines RCD protection with miniature circuit-breaker protection in one device. The third option is to use socket outlets with residual current operated devices. In this case, the RCD is integrated in the socket outlet. Depending on the state of the system in question, a combination of these three options may be sensible.

When it comes to the RCDs themselves, the owner or operator has final say and must decide what type is required. For example, a type A or A KV is a good option for LED lighting, type F is used for devices with single-phase frequency converters, such as washing machines, and in certain other cases, type B is also needed. An electrician should be consulted in any case to help determine which measures are required. ■



Our electrical finds

Be it cable chaos, a curious installation or even ‘chindogu’ – the electrical curiosities we encounter have one thing in common: they are out of the ordinary and catch our eye. Chindogu, by the way, is Japanese and means ‘unusual tool’. The term refers to inventions that the world doesn’t really need but finds very amusing. We want to make you stare in amazement, shake your head or laugh out loud by sharing our favourite electrical finds with you in this regular feature.

Like many electricians, Hartmut Peschke has a small collection of photos of electrical installations with some, shall we say, ‘creative tweaking’. He discovered this intriguing installation in Georgia’s capital city, Tbilisi, in 2013. Many thanks to Hartmut for submitting this example.



Photo: Hartmut Peschke

Do you have an entertaining electrical find to show us? If so, please take a photo of it and send it to us at:

kommunikation@doepke.de

Important: we can only consider photos that you have taken yourself. ■

Pinni #StaysAtHome

These days life is subject to a lot of restrictions. In an era of travel advisories and social distancing, Pinni is very happy to stay home in beautiful East Frisia. There’s still an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors here. You don’t need a face mask and social distancing is not difficult when the nearest person is still far away. That said, Pinni is also happy to return to some normality in day-to-day life. After all, he’s still the Doepke trade fair mascot and can’t wait to get back to the hustle and bustle again. ■



Doepke UK and Doepke Middle East – not just subsidiaries

Under the title ‘Doepke UK and Doepke Middle East – not just subsidiaries’, we handed out face masks to friends and colleagues in the respective locations. We wanted to show our special connection and solidarity with our companies abroad.

Doepke employees (and significant others) sewed more than 500 face masks to be distributed to colleagues in all plants. This way the small, individual details could be looked after, even as ‘broad’ and ‘sweeping’ measures were being implemented throughout the company.

The Middle East and especially the United Kingdom are suffering greatly from the pandemic and the associated rules. There are still strict restrictions on personal contact and significant intrusions on daily life.

Work is only possible under difficult conditions and thanks to the extraordinary flexibility of colleagues.

So, we at Doepke are sticking together. In Germany, in Europe and worldwide! ■



by Stefan Eilerts



Reinforcement for standardisation



Alongside this main responsibilities, Jörn Janssen will now be involved in the development of standards. He is already represented in three DKE (German Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information

Technologies) working committees concerning DC networks and decentralised power supplied. Both of these topics are future-oriented and it is already clear that there is enough space for Doepke’s core competence of ‘The safest way to use electricity’ in these areas. Jörn is working with our colleague Günter Grünebast and so we are doubling our capacity for their important work.

We wish Jörn much enjoyment in this new task and much success in bringing his expertise to the world of standardisation. ■

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QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

*Life’s wisdom lies
in taking out
the unimportant things.*

Chinese proverb

DATES/NOTES

Due to continuously changing developments concerning the coronavirus, many events are still currently cancelled or postponed.

However, we now offer webinars on various topics.

An up-to-date training schedule and recordings of previous webinars can be found on our website:

www.doepke.de