

GUIDANCE NOTES – Faulty Cables

Background

There has been a significant increase in the number of faulty products coming onto the market in recent times.

We are contacted by traders, cablemakers and end users with examples of faulty or non-compliant cable, and this only highlights the severe dangers of buying and installing cables which lack independent third party approval.

The problem is getting worse and we would urge installers especially to only use cabling that is BASEC approved.

Our Guidance

A common misunderstanding is thinking that a cable is actually compliant or BASEC approved just because it claims to be produced to a certain standard. We emphasise this is not the case.

Only cable marked “BASEC” is BASEC approved and has demonstrated its compliance to the required standard. Cables marked with the standard number only should be treated with caution.

We have witnessed similar problems in recent years with rising copper prices and have advised wholesalers and contractors to be aware that some unscrupulous producers – including importers of cable – may be tempted to cut corners and use less copper in the manufacturing process.

Drawing down the diameter of the copper wire too much has the effect of reducing conductivity, and cables with insufficient conductivity may overheat and cause fire or reduce the level of safety against electrical shock.

More recently we have also seen the use of materials other than pure copper, such as steel wire, copper-coated aluminium or badly recycled copper in cables.

The problems don't stop here, though. As we investigate some of these inferior products, often from overseas suppliers, we have discovered some have incorrect cable construction and materials used, and in some instances they have poor fire performance.

In Summary

Unfortunately, it is not until cables are installed, tested or used that this issue comes to light and by then it can be too late to avoid the enormous costs of rectifying the situation.

BASEC-approved manufacturers recognise quality and safety and this should be seen as a sign of assurance for contractors and wholesalers.

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