



# NEWS

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## BASEC issues Spec Check alert

The need to ensure the correct specification of cables for major projects has reached a critical point as a series of new industry regulations and legislation come into force, warns the British Approvals Service for Cables.

The implementation of the 17th Edition of the IEE Wiring Regulations means design and specification changes for many types of installation.

This change will also be subject to the new Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act which came into force in April, and means that individuals could ultimately be held responsible if anything goes wrong such as an electrocution or a fire which results in a death.

Dr Jeremy Hodge, Chief Executive of BASEC, says that getting the specification right in the first place and following it through to installation is increasingly important - especially for major projects such as those for the 2012 Olympics - where safety, quality and handover on time are crucial.

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Now the independent cables body is issuing a six-point Spec Check initiative for specifiers and installers who may be in any doubt.

Dr Hodge said: "For any size of project, the last piece of news a contractor or specifier wants is that cabling has to be stripped out because the system is not working properly, there is a safety implication or the wrong cable has been installed."

"There are specific deadlines on many major projects, and delays can be very costly to all concerned, both financially and in terms of image. National pride will be at stake on prestige projects connected with the Olympics, and there is going to be no room for error or delay.

"Also, with more and more projects using advanced computational engineering approaches, strict adherence to specification becomes ever more critical."

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

Dr Hodge says BASEC's six-point Spec Check for specifiers and installers seeks to provide a framework to reduce the risk.

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1. Get the installation design right. Good installation design reveals the technical specification for each circuit on the mode of use, accessories, current loading, physical protection needs, fire and smoke performance, operating temperature, future expansion, and other factors, which then should be used to specify the cables themselves. If uncertain, contact your professional or trade body or inspectorate.

2. Get the cable specification right. From the circuit specification, the cables should be specified by reference to the standard number and table / type (e.g., BS 6724 Table 8) or the European harmonised type (e.g., H05VV-F), and then by nominal size and the number of cores. Specify BASEC approved to ensure that the cables comply with the standard. Avoid only specifying brands or trademarks at this stage, to permit the greatest flexibility in procurement.

3. Communicate specification. Use one of the standard specification packages or forms usable by quantity surveyors and procurement specialists. Instruct your procurement department to buy approved cable - not just the cheapest available. Delegating procurement down to sub-contractors is an area to watch closely. Make sure the cable specification is cascaded down the sub-contractor chain by including reference to the specifications in contracts. BASEC-approved certified brands and trade mark preferences might be included here.

4. Check application of the spec. When changes are proposed make sure these are signed off by the designer to ensure continuing compliance with the design rules. Review bills of materials and sub-contractors' proposals. Reject any specifications which are not set out technically in the form originally communicated. More...

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5. Check product on delivery. This is important for both installer and client. When cable arrives on site check more specifically what has been purchased for you and inspect the product. Is it what was specified? Make sure records of purchases and deliveries are kept so that what has been installed can be checked against what has been purchased, and against the specification.

6. Final check. Commissioning tests and inspections are the last opportunity to enforce the specification. Make sure these are rigorously carried out and if problems are found check what is installed against the original specification again, including brands and trade marks if used. If there are problems found with or questions are raised about a cable, don't automatically strip out the cable, but seek advice. If necessary get the cable tested - BASEC can provide advice in such circumstances.

By detailed examination of manufacturers' production processes and controls, and rigorous testing, BASEC ensures that cable products meet appropriate national, European and international standards.

As well as assisting with advice on problem cables, BASEC also offers a free-of-charge service for installers and end users when questions about a BASEC approved cable emerge.

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**Editor's Notes:**

BASEC is the recognised leader in product certification services for electrical cables, data/signal cables and ancillary products. Through its teams of highly skilled engineers and auditors who possess extensive in-depth commercial and industrial experience, BASEC has a reputation for professional and rigorous assessment processes which ultimately lead to the issuing of BASEC's highly respected certification.

In addition, BASEC offers auditing for Process Capability in cable making, Certificates of Assessed Design for innovative cable products and independent testing and reporting in the event of disputes.

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