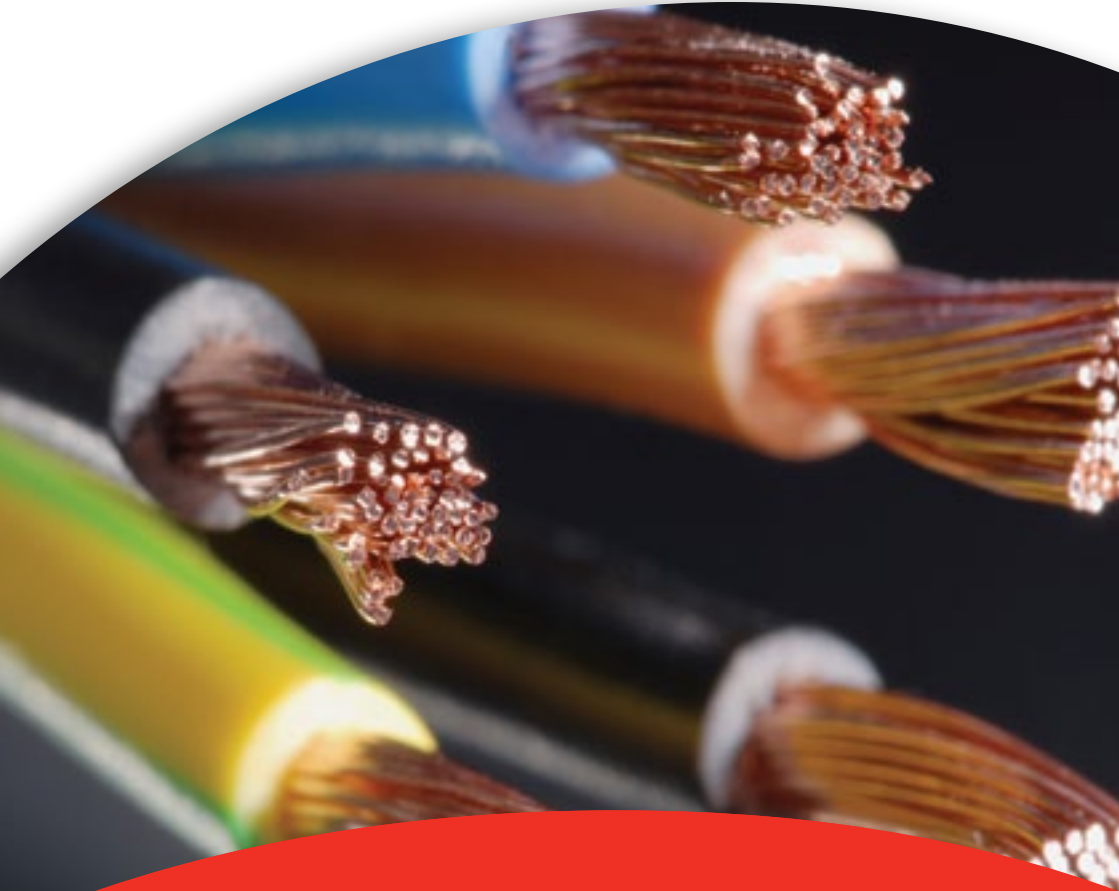


A Campaign for **Safer Cable**





Approved Cables Initiative

In 2010 the Approved Cables Initiative (ACI), an industry-wide working group, launched with a promise to highlight defective cabling.

Campaigning for change within the Electrical Supply Industry and for better cabling choices to be made, investigations have already uncovered many serious examples of defective cable in the market place.

From armoured cables, house wiring and arctic grade flex, to flexible cords, welding and data cables - examples have been found across the industry. And probably most worrying of all have been incidents of defective fire-performance cables, which are used in essential fire alarm wiring in schools, hospitals and other public buildings.

Our aims

Despite this gloomy picture, there is a very clear and simple solution to the problem of cables that are not fit for purpose.

We can all be swayed by a bargain and something that seems cheaper than it really should be - especially in these austere times. And it is here where we have a choice - either to accept or reject the risk of this cheaper cable option.

This choice may be risk free and we may truly have stumbled upon a bargain. It may however be not and it is our choice here that not only impinges upon our lives, but also upon others. Safer choices will provide peace of mind to you and to your customers.

As our targeted campaign continues the ACI has five clear objectives:

- S**top the import of defective cable at our ports and the trading of defective cable
- A**nswer the call and expose those trading in defective cable
- F**urther educate the market place in the dangers of defective cable
- E**ncourage cable manufacturers supplying the UK to adopt better manufacturing practices
- R**ecruit the help of Government to strengthen its legislation against rogue traders

Achievements

Last year the ACI uncovered defective cabling in many guises. Perhaps the most significant incident involved Atlas Kablo cable where it is estimated that around 20 million metres of defective cable had been shipped by the company to UK customers. To date BASEC (British Approvals Service for Cables) has verified the destruction of eight million metres of cable and confirms that a further two million metres is awaiting scrapping. This still leaves many millions of metres of cable unaccounted for and still at large in the market place.

The discovery of some of this cable on sale in two DIY chains earlier this year moved fears on with the knowledge that the cable has been readily available to the general public to purchase, an audience that is less informed about the dangers of such cable.

Affected product was withdrawn from the DIY stores once the issue was brought to the companies' attention yet the distributor that supplied the cable did not put a general public product recall into effect, and therefore the public remains unaware of the issue.

Far from being an isolated incident, contractors paint a similar picture across the country with some distributors choosing to ignore the product recall and are continuing to sell the recalled cable.

The ACI will continue this year to bring such instances to your attention.

What to look for

- Check cable markings and reels for recognised manufacturer's identification and CE Mark
- Never accept cable without known or acceptable markings
- Look for independent third party approval on cables
- Check delivery against purchase order
- Inspect cable at point of delivery
- Maintain records of purchase and delivery
- Commission regular checks and cable inspections



Image: Destruction of defective cables - Image courtesy of BASEC



Adopting safer choices

But what drives this dangerous practice?

The main component in cable is copper, which has steadily increased in price since 2004 and over the past 20 months has doubled. With such a substantial rise in cost it is easy to see why reducing the amount of copper in a cable can produce significant savings and generate healthy profits for those who trade in these defective products. This was first recognised in 2006 by the DTI who issued warnings of the potential dangers of reducing the amount of copper in a cable and not complying with the appropriate British, European or International standards.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) shares the ACI's concerns and is taking a keen interest in its work having been tasked by Business Innovation & Skills to investigate the Electrical Supply Industry (ESI) last year.

Having already followed up on several cases where distributors have imported cable, the HSE believes that potentially dangerous products have entered the supply chain and it has taken appropriate enforcement action. The HSE is actively working with key stakeholders in the supply chain and carrying out visits to wholesalers and distributors to ensure that they understand their obligations and are placing compliant products in the market.

Remember if you sell, supply, or install unsafe cable you are deemed to have contravened Health and Safety regulations, which could void insurances and you could face serious criminal allegations.

The ACI's lobbying campaign also continues as we work to reinforce and change existing legislation to effectively stop defective cabling entering the UK market.

If you have information or concerns about a suspected cable the ACI will test samples and if found to be unsafe details will be passed to relevant industry regulators and legislators. ACI can also provide guidance where appropriate to installers.

Supply chain representative body support includes:
Electrical Distributors Association (EDA), Electrical Contractors Association (ECA), Electrical Safety Council, British Approvals Service for Cables (BASEC), British Cables Association (BCA), Energy Networks Association (ENA), Ascertiva and SELECT.



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