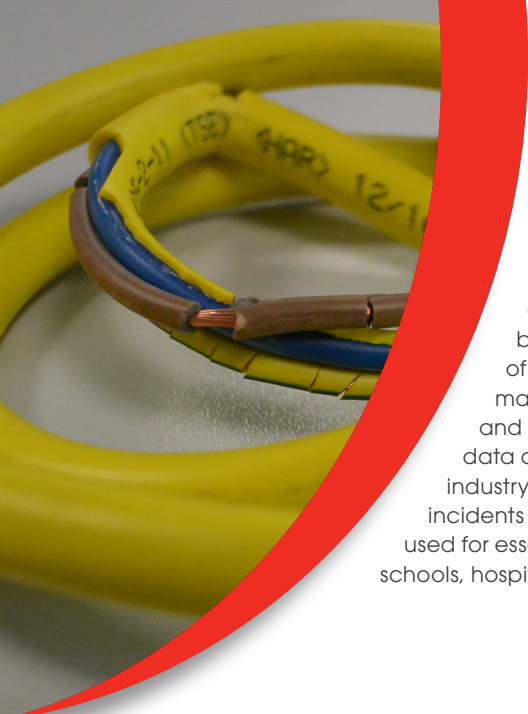


A Campaign for **Safer Cable**





Approved Cables Initiative

The Approved Cables Initiative (ACI) was launched in 2010 with a promise to highlight defective cable in the UK electrical supply chain. Working across the industry, the ACI campaigns for change and for better cabling choices to be made. Investigations conducted by ACI have uncovered many serious examples of unsafe, substandard or 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 for essential safety purposes such as fire alarm wiring in schools, hospitals and other public and residential 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 – don't sell them, and don't use them.

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

Choosing a cheap cable may appear risk free. It is sometimes possible to truly stumble upon a bargain. But it is not easy to spot the defective cable that will cause serious problems for your customer, and for you. Choices made may impinge upon peoples' lives and livelihoods, including your own. 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

The ACI has 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 and on into the supply chain. Only about half of this was recovered and destroyed - by product recall standards a good result - but it still left many millions of metres of cable unaccounted for, at large in the market place. The discovery later of some of this cable on sale in two DIY chains moved fears on with the knowledge that the cable had 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. Despite the risks, the distributor that supplied the cable did not put out a general product recall, and therefore the public remained unaware of the issue.

Construction sites can be hazardous places, so when ACI found seriously defective arctic grade cable being sold for use with power tools and site lighting, this was immediately brought to the attention of the authorities. The cable was fake, being made of aluminium rather than copper, presenting a serious risk of overheating and fire.

Another flexible cable was found to have been manufactured incorrectly, allowing live strands to emerge through the sheath, a clear risk of electric shock.

The recent introduction of new requirements for cables under the Construction Products Regulation has revealed more problems, from false claims of performance to incorrect specifications.

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 – is it what was ordered
- Inspect cable at point of delivery – is it in good condition and carry the branding expected
- Maintain records of purchase and delivery
- Commission regular checks and cable inspections – ensure that final testing is done



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 few years has been volatile in price. 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 by Government in 2006, when they 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 UK's regulators, Local Authority Trading Standards and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), share the ACI's concerns and take a keen interest in its work and encourage suppliers of cable to understand their obligations and only place fully compliant cable on the market. Several cases have been followed up by regulators, with importers and distributors of defective cable have been taken to task for their actions.

Remember if you make, sell, supply, or install unsafe cable you may be deemed to have contravened Health and Safety regulations. This could result in the voiding of insurances and you could face serious criminal allegations.

The ACI's campaign continues as we work to reinforce, support and where possible 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 provide information and support, and test samples. If found to be unsafe, details will be passed to relevant industry regulators and legislators. ACI can also provide guidance where appropriate to wholesalers, installers and consumers.

The Approved Cables Initiative maintains industry contacts with:

Electrical Distributors Association (EDA), Electrical Contractors Association (ECA), SELECT, Electrical Safety First, British Cables Association (BCA), Energy Networks Association (ENA), LABC, NICEIC, NAPIT, JIB with other trade bodies with parallel interests in safe and complaint products including BEAMA, GAMBICA, LIA and the ElecTech Council, and with relevant certification bodies and test houses. ACI also links with organisations across Europe and internationally, to share best practices and to help highlight areas causing concern.



Please contact us on:

Tel: 01296 631707 **Mob:** 07976 206324

Email: info@aci.org.uk

For further information about the

ACI campaign visit www.aci.org.uk