



ACI/181/14

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Wilko removes non-compliant cable

A non-compliant cable alert by the Approved Cables Initiative (ACI) to retailer Wilko has led the nationwide chain to remove from sale a total of eleven branded loose electrical cable products.

Wilko (previously known as Wilkinson), a British high street retailer with more than 370 stores, was contacted by the ACI earlier this year. It followed the discovery of household power cable marked 'ccc' which does not appear to be a recognised manufacturer's name (a requirement of the relevant cable standards BS 6004 or BS 6500 - now in the BS EN 50525 series) on sale in stores and available to purchase online.

ACI has this year stepped up its campaign and is lobbying for legislative change and to affect policy to fight the growing problem of sub-standard cable imports that could affect public health and safety.

Wilko, having liaised with its UK supplier, 360 Innovation, and Trading Standards, took the decision last month (February) to withdraw the affected products totally from sale. It also chose to review its system of quality appraisal for branded electricals and going forward to treat them as Own Brand products, reviewing and maintaining a library of up-to-date test reports for such products.

The cable, reported as failing to meet the requirements of the British Standards to which it claimed to have been manufactured, were Corelectrics 360 Innovations cable and flex manufactured in China. None of the cable types carried any third party approval mark.

During independent cable testing four samples either failed to meet the requirements of the standard to which they claimed compliance or failed to meet the standard to which the intended design of the cable implied they should comply.

The failures included:

- incorrect marking (wrong harmonised code)
- incorrect marking repeat interval, green/yellow ratio
- excessive conductor resistance.

Following initial testing three further samples of the cables were purchased from Wilko and independently tested to BS 6004:2012 and BS 6004:2000. All samples tested failed against both standards, cable marking and sheath thickness. The packaging claimed compliance to BS 6004.

In addition one of the samples, a 2.5sqmm, 2 core flat twin and earth cable also failed on conductor resistance (copper content). Had this cable been approved by a major UK

approval body it would have resulted in a product recall notice being issued on the manufacturer.

As part of its commitment to delivering legal, safe and fit for purpose products Wilko has arranged for the entire range of products in question to be retested. This process is currently being coordinated in the UK. Wilko is also in the process of mapping out its new quality procedure for such products with the aim of rolling this out across the business as a priority in March.

Peter Smeeth of the ACI said: "Whilst we applaud Wilko's most recent actions we remain concerned about how long these processes can take to put into place, despite having sight of our independent test results. Where public safety is at risk then the ACI believes a retailer's primary objective should be to ensure the offending items are removed from sale immediately and quarantined.

"We are pleased that Trading Standards followed up on this matter quickly but this once again reinforces the reasons for our campaign and call for legislative change so that poor quality cable can be prevented from entering the country in the first place," continued Mr Smeeth.

Dr Melanie Fuller, Head of Quality at Wilko said: "Wilko is extremely proud of the quality of products it sells and as a family-owned and family-orientated business is committed to delivering fit for purpose products 100% of the time. There are times, as with all retailers, when non-compliant products are discovered and in these instances we believe we have robust investigation and remediation processes in place. With our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, we welcome the support of industry bodies such as ACI to drive best practice"

Sarah Houlton, a Trading Standards Team Manager at Nottinghamshire County Council said: "Product safety issues are a high priority for Nottinghamshire County Council and we are working with the full co-operation of both the retailer and the distributor involved to resolve this matter".

The ACI is an established name in the campaign against non-conforming and substandard cables in the UK market. Set up as an industry-wide campaign in 2010 with regulator support, it aims to educate and inform the cable supply industry and other stakeholders of problems encountered with sub-standard, defective and unsafe data, telecom and electric cable.

If you have any concerns regarding sub-standard, defective or faulty cable, the Approved Cables Initiative can be contacted on 0208 946 6978/07973 636688 or you can email info@aci.org.uk . For further information about the ACI campaign visit www.aci.org.uk

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*For further information contact Sally Neary, Acumen Communications. Tel: 01704 834772
Email: sally@acumencommunications.co.uk*