

Cables and the Construction Products Directive (CPD) – August 2010

Summary

Preparation has begun for new cable standards under the CPD. Until these have been completed, certification for cables under the CPD is not possible. Under the envisaged timetable, local use of the Construction Products Directive (CPD) for cables should start some time in 2012.

CENELEC (The European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) is actively working – with the full support of the industry partner Europacable (of which BCA is a member) - to develop the product standard (hEN) and other supporting standards, such as new test methods, for cables installed in constructions as regards their reaction to fire. The target for completion of these standards is the end of 2011. Industry is working to adopt the new test methods to be used so that the markets can be provided with CPD classified cables.

Member States can start to include Euroclassification for cables in their current construction regulations, and notify the bodies who will issue product certification. Some Member States, including UK, may choose not to include the classification in regulations, but the market is free to adopt this improved safety regime.

BCA and its members are committed to assisting this implementation, either within regulations or at market level, which we believe will bring greater clarity for the performance levels of products and consequently contribute to the greater safety of people and goods in the event of fire.

Background

Electrical cables obtained a European classification for their Reaction-to-Fire (*) performance in 2006. The decision n.2006/751/CE was published in the EC Official Journal on 27th October 2006.

* The response of a product in contributing by its own decomposition to a fire to which it is exposed

The cables are grouped into 7 classes, A, B1, B2, C, D, E and F. Their fire propagation properties, measured by heat release and flame spread, are the main classification criteria. Smoke emission and acidity are considered as additional classification criteria.

New standards for CPD Classification

In May 2009, the European Commission issued Mandate M/443 to CENELEC to develop the hEN to make CE marking of cables under the CPD possible. Supporting standards, such as new test methods, are included within the mandate and will follow concurrent schedules with the hEN.

CENELEC accepted the mandate and presented a working plan to submit an hEN draft on Reaction of Cables to Fire for public enquiry by end 2010. The approved hEN is likely to be published in the EC Official Journal by 2012.

Path to CE marking under the CPD

After the publication of the hEN in the EC Official Journal, any regulation referring to Euroclassification will become operational. It is expected that by that time the Attestation of Conformity System and the local supporting organisation will be ready in each member state.

The authorities will, where appropriate, incorporate the classification into their regulations indicating which class is mandatory in a particular construction. In these regulated applications, only cables certified and CE marked according with the CPD can be used.

From now (August 2010) until the time of publication of the mandated hEN mentioned above, it is not possible to issue any certification for CE marking in accordance with the CPD for cables. Any “CPD approved” reference on cables is incorrect and misleading.

We will inform all interested parties on the progress of implementation via this site, and by other appropriate means.

UK national contact: British Cables Association www.bcauk.org

European contact: Europacable www.europacable.com or www.safety-during-fire.com