

BCA Member Companies only

1 Construction Products Regulation (CPR)

Apart from the issues reported from Task Force “CPR Implementation”, the following matters should be noted:

- a) The practical work associated with the Europacable (ECBL) project aimed at identifying the causes of variability of test results in the EN 50399 test has been completed. An initial analysis of the data has been made, but some additional and more comprehensive work is needed before a final report can be issued. In the meantime, no details will be shared with members as it is recognized that any information at this stage to any party involved bears the risk of being incomplete at best. It would also be counter-productive to the excellent relationship and cooperation now established with Notified Bodies (NBs).

After the finalization of the report the steps should be:

- o to develop recommendations to SH02 WG 10 (NBs) and CENELEC TC20 WG10 for improvements to the EN 50399 standard;
- o to verify the improvements in manufacturers' laboratories;
- o to propose that NBs verify the improvements in their laboratories as well, and to propose that they should introduce some form of supervision of NBs/peer review.

In addition an offer will be made to advise the group of NBs on training, possibly with the involvement of Europacable experts.

- b) Background work is ongoing prior to making contact with EC about the future of the work on standards for Resistance to Fire. Discussions are to be held with CECAPI (European trade body for Cable Management Systems), as well as with certain key bodies in CEN and CENELEC. These would be to prepare the ground for an eventual discontinuation of the work.

There are now two countries within ECBL (Italy and Spain) that support the view that cables with an intended usage for circuit integrity (resistance to fire) are allowed to have a Declaration of Performance and CE marking under CPR for reaction to fire. All others recognise their exclusion via the scope of EN 50575. This scope could eventually be changed should the formal work on resistance to fire be abandoned, but this is not likely in the near future.

- c) The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has conducted a survey relating to the review of The Building Regulations and Approved Document B. This has been motivated by the work of Dame Judith Hackitt, and the realisation that desk-top studies of cladding materials may have been inappropriate or misleading in respect of fire safety. On the recommendation of the Implementation Task Force, BCA gave a limited general response, but noted that the very wide ranges of sizes and types of cables often necessitated the use of EXAP rules and equivalent in order to avoid disproportionate testing.

2 Grenfell Tower

The final report from Dame Judith Hackitt has been widely seen and circulated (C 3777). It can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-final-report>

Many of the general recommendations relate to the complexity of the existing regulatory framework and its associated guidance and therefore seek a future with a more focussed level of responsibilities. The term “Systems Approach” is used more than once, and a key objective is to remove, or at least greatly reduce, those places where a component part of a building is seen as an isolated and independent entity.

The underlying emphasis is undeniably based on the cladding and its retrospective application to Grenfell Tower. Cables are mentioned only once. In Appendix E “Competence” there is a list in the sub-section “Engineering” of fire safety products which includes “fire cables and control systems”. This is in the context of giving examples for active and passive fire safety elements. Nevertheless Chapter 7 “Products” of the main report covers many things which may impact upon cables in the future. These include:

- Limitations on Desk-top studies (EXAP rules for instance);
- Necessity of improvements to identification, marking, labelling and traceability, though those products under CPR are noted as having a good coverage;
- Recognition that re-testing is as important as initial testing. Some hints of a 3 year maximum validity are included;
- Need for much more effective market surveillance;
- Pressure to ensure continuous improvements to standards in the fire safety area.

All members are recommended to read Chapter 7 with a view to promoting any specific actions, or participation in joint actions, that may seem appropriate for the industry.

3 BSI and Brexit

BSI's position for post-BREXIT was reported in the Spring Newsletter and has not changed. BCA attended the recent BSI AGM, where both the CEO and the Director of Standards acknowledged that industry was strongly supportive of the need to retain the fullest possible level of membership in CEN and CENELEC. The exact details remain to be finalised.

In the related sphere of certification and testing, BSI's position as a Notified Body under certain EU Directives, will be affected, as will BASEC's. In order to retain access to existing clients, BSI will use its office in the Netherlands to operate its NB responsibilities.

4 BS 7671 – Wiring Regulations

The 18th edition of BS 7671 (the IET Wiring Regulations) is due to be published on Monday 2nd July 2018. In practice it may be available on the previous Friday. There will be a transition period such that its provisions will come into effect on 1st January 2019.

Work has already started on a 1st amendment, in particular to look at nearly 400 comments that were set aside during the development phase of the new edition. These will include many relating to the controversial move towards the inclusion of a major part relating to Energy Efficiency. BCA's request to include a review of fire safety aspects has been accepted in principle, and an initial appraisal study will take place in September.

5 Standards news

Amongst recent standards publications have been the following:

IEC 60331 - Tests for electric cables under fire conditions – circuit integrity

(NOTE: This comprises new editions of Parts 1, 2 and 3 which cover respectively 1) cables with diameters greater than 20 mm, 2) those with diameters up to and including 20 mm, and 3) cables in metal enclosures. It is planned to adopt Part 2 only as a CENELEC EN.)

IEC 60754-3 – Test on gases evolved during combustion of materials from cables – Part 3: Detection of low level of halogen content by ion chromatography

(NOTE: This new part of IEC 60754 is intended to allow the measurement of halogens down to lower limits than with the existing methods in Parts 1 and 2 of the standard. It is planned to adopt it as CENELEC EN.)

IEC 61238-1 - Compression and mechanical connectors for power cables

(NOTE: This splits the existing single standard into 3 sub-parts covering LV (2 sub-parts) and MV (one sub-part). It is planned to adopt these in CENELEC in place of the existing single part EN. A 4th sub-part for HV types in under development.)

Significant on-going work includes:

EN 50288 - Multi-element metallic cables used in analogue and digital communication and control

(NOTE: Work has now started within the ECBL Digital Team on the complete revision of Part 1 to Part 12.2 inclusive of this series of standards).

6 ESSAC

A brief introduction was given in the Autumn 2017 Technical Newsletter (C 3741) to the formation of ESSAC, being the Electrotechnical Standardization Strategic Advisory Council. It has replaced the former British Electrotechnical Committee (BEC) as the formal strategic body in BSI covering our side of industry.

It has now had two full meetings, and has identified certain standards-related actions, with “High”, “Medium” and “Low” priority ratings. Those in the “High” category relate to two topics, namely a) BREXIT, and b) the Systems Approach to standards, especially at IEC level.

Whilst the former is well covered by BSI – see also item 3 – the activity in respect of the Systems Approach has proved more challenging. Some time ago IEC recognised that the historic industry-lead development of standards relating to specific products, of which cables are a classic example, did not fit well in a modern world, and certainly could not act as a driver for modern applications. Evaluation groups have been studying how standards could contribute to subjects such as smart cities, smart manufacturing, LVDC networks and Assisted Living. For some, smart cities for instance, there is a wish to go forward and develop standards, but there is a shortage, particularly in UK, of companies willing to commit experts and resource to the detailed work. For many the reason is that, as product based manufacturers, there is no obvious chance to have a major influence because their products are just a component.

Within the medium-term priorities are outreach and engagement, including bringing extra people into ESSAC (BCA's offer was rejected), and Cyber-security.

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- 5 September 2002 (C/2938);
- 6 March 2003 (C/2974);
- 7 July 2003 (C/3003);
- 8 November 2003 (C/3026);
- 9 March 2004 (C/3039);
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- 17 Special CPD issue –December 2006 (C/3197)
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- Special issue – IEC 60811 – June 2012 (C/3517)
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- 45 Autumn 2017 (C/3741)
- 46 December 2017 (C/3756)
- 47 Spring 2018 (C/3770)