



NEWS FROM THE APPROVED CABLES INITIATIVE (ACI)

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## **APPROVED CABLES INITIATIVE REVEALED TO ELECTRICAL SUPPLY INDUSTRY**

### Rogue, dangerous cable to be eradicated in collaborative pledge to cable a safer Britain

Today, the Approved Cables Initiative (ACI) launched its proactive and co-ordinated plan to investigate and address the issue of unsafe, non-approved and counterfeit cables in the UK marketplace. With an audience of electrical industry professionals, trade organisations, legislators, media and members of parliament, this new industry-wide initiative has the objective to communicate, educate and raise awareness of this serious issue.

The UK market for electrical cables and systems has an approximate value of £2Bn. It is estimated that up to 20% of cable product in the cable systems supply chain is unsafe, non-approved or counterfeit\*, resulting in a major concern for the entire industry, from manufacturer through installer to end user, who may not even be aware of the significant health and safety threat it poses or the legal ramifications for the organisation or individual. The ACI, with industry and regulator support, will be taking a determined approach to educate the electrical industry about purchasing and installing such cables and raise awareness of the existence of unscrupulous manufacturers and distributors.

The launch, held in Westminster, was hosted by the British Cables Association (BCA) with widespread support from industry trade bodies including the British Approvals Service for Cables (BASEC), Electrical Distributors Association (EDA); Electrical Contractors Association (ECA); Electrical Safety Council, and the NICEIC Group Limited. The objectives, targets and imminent actions of the ACI were outlined in a presentation by Michael Simms, President of the British Cables Association (BCA).

The presentation outlined that the presence of unsafe, non-approved and counterfeit cables in our supply chain seriously undermines confidence in both the UK and European approval standards as well as causing life threatening risks to the public - over 27% of all electrical fires are attributed to electrical products or faulty wire and cables\*\*. Dangerous cables, often fraudulently marked or completely unmarked, are coming into the UK through ruthless importers who are not complying with their legal duties under UK regulations. This cable is then in our supply chain, sold on to installers and end users through wholesalers supplying cable and therefore breaking the law.

Unsafe, non-approved cables often have copper conductors that are undersize with low conductivity, non-fire-resistant sheathing, or insufficient or poor quality armouring. Counterfeit cables can even have copper-coated steel or aluminium conductors in place of copper, therefore posing at serious risk of electric shock or fire if over loaded. Some carry no markings at all, but the majority are fraudulently marked showing standards and approvals to which they have no claim and are clearly intended to mislead the distributor, wholesaler and installer.

Fraudulent markings present a particular challenge, as it is often difficult to tell that a cable is not manufactured to the appropriate standard for its use merely by looking at it. So much so that many organisations throughout the supply chain are not even aware of the seriousness of the problem.

The ACI is urging the supply chain to routinely check cable markings and cable reels looking in particular for a manufacturer's identification that they recognise, so if there is a problem it will help trace the cable back through the supply chain. For peace of mind, our recommendation is to insist on an independent third-party approved cable. If you sell, supply, or install unsafe cable, you contravene health and safety regulations, you could void insurances and could face serious criminal allegations which might result in a custodial sentence

With industry and regulator support, the ACI has pledged to educate the electrical supply chain - from manufacturer to end user through a comprehensive communication programme of seminars, marketing material and articles to national trade media. For suspect importers, manufacturers and distributors, the ACI will be direct in its approach to investigate and publicise the results. The ACI is also implementing a coordinated approach to Government to enforce and develop legislation ensuring that only cables that fully comply with British, European or International standards and carry a third party certification can be manufactured for sale, offered for sale, distributed or installed in the UK.

The ACI will regularly test samples of cables suspected of being unsafe or non-approved, and if found to be unsafe details will be passed to the Police, Trading Standards and the Health and Safety Executive.

It is the intention of ACI to name and shame any companies, wholesalers, distributors or installers who persistently use these dangerous, non-approved cables. However, the ACI would hope that by highlighting the issue to the industry these companies will voluntarily start to adopt safe and approved cables.

To find out how to become a supporter of the ACI or for more information visit [www.aci.org.uk](http://www.aci.org.uk). The ACI also welcomes any examples of suspect faulty, non-approved or counterfeit cables. These can be sent to ACI for testing and advice by contacting ACI at [report@aci.org.uk](mailto:report@aci.org.uk) or on 01908 267300

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**Information for editors:**

\*BCA - this is an estimated figure based on feedback from discussions with manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and contractors/installers and other initiatives e.g. BEAMA

\*\* DCLG fire statistics

The Approved Cables Initiative (ACI) is addressing the issue of unsafe, non-approved and counterfeit cable entering the UK marketplace. With industry and regulator support, the ACI is taking a proactive and hard hitting approach to educate the electrical supply chain - from manufacturer to end user through a comprehensive communication schedule of seminars, marketing collateral and articles to national trade media. For suspect importers, manufacturers and distributors, the ACI is direct in its approach to investigate and publicise the results. The ACI is also implementing a lobbying campaign ultimately seeking to re-enforce legislation and increase testing for suspect cable. This is the first initiative of its kind in the electrical industry with the framework to proactively communicate, educate, investigate, eradicate and legislate.

The ACI is a British Cables Association (BCA) and BASEC co-ordinated group working with supply chain representative bodies: Electrical Distributors Association (EDA); Electrical Contractors Association (ECA); Electrical Safety Council, British Approvals Services for Cables (BASEC); Doncaster Cables; Energy Networks Association (ENA); NICEIC Group Limited

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