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See last page for biographical details



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Next generation IT Infrastructures

NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE! by **Mike Gilmore, FIA Technical Director** **for Networking+ (December 2009)**

BS 8492 was published in October 2009 and covers "Fire performance and protection of telecommunications equipment and telecommunications cabling". Despite being a Code of Practice it represents a substantial contribution to the information available to premises owners, insurers and product suppliers.

The document provides new clarity in advance of the extension of the Construction Products Directive to communications and power cabling – and the forecast modification of the CPD to a European Regulation transmuting the CPD to the CPR. There is a great deal of comment from certain quarters regarding the impact of the CPD/CPR in the UK but it is clear that the UK government intend to go no further than accepting the marking of cables to indicate their performance attributes. What are certainly not planned are any requirements to use particular products in specified parts of buildings.

Against this background BS 8492 provides an excellent introduction to a holistic approach to the implementation of fire protection within buildings with respect to telecommunications cabling. It cautions against the simple use of cabling fire performance as the only solution and focuses on a balanced approach that also involves fire containment, detection and suppression measures - relegating reliance on cabling fire performance alone to a measure of last resort where it has been impossible to achieve the desired result by any other means.

The types of cables to be used do vary, depending upon the purpose of the premises and the primary objective of fire protection within those buildings. However, by concentrating on the use of compartmentation to prevent spread of fire and the correct specification and implementation of fire stops at the fire barriers segregating those compartments, BS 8492 restricts the need to install expensive, high performance cables.

Huge amounts of data were reviewed during the preparation of the Code of Practice - much of which is not featured or mentioned in the final text. In order not to waste that work, the Electrical Contractors Association ITEC and the Fibreoptic Industry Association have agreed to publish this information as one of their joint documents via the TIA-B web-site at <http://www.fia-online.co.uk/TIA-B>. This should have been completed by the time you read this article. The TIA-B "Guide to Fire Performance Testing of Telecommunications Cabling" is a free download. In order to purchase BS 8492 go to the FIA web-site at <http://www.fia-online.co.uk> and click on the "Buy standards on-line here" button.

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The Cabling Partnership is a division of e-Ready Building Limited
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Biography

As the Technical and Standards Director of the UK Fibreoptic Industry Association, Mike is heavily involved in the development of training and competence standards for the fibre installation industry and sets down policy in this area. In addition he chairs the audit and arbitration committees for the FIA. His book "Fibre optic cabling; theory design and installation practice" published in 1991 remains a reference for both experts and entrants into this field.

Mike also initiated the establishment of the Telecommunications Infrastructure Advisory Board (TIA-B) along with the relevant directors of its other host organisations CMA and ECA-ITEC.

In the UK, Mike is Chairman of TCT7, the BSI Technical Committee responsible for the three panels on telecommunication cabling. He also chairs two of these panels (TCT7/-/1 and TCT7/-/3) and is Secretary of TCT7/-/2. TCT7/-/1 and TCT7/-/2 act to assist development of European and international standards for the design and installation of telecommunications cabling respectively. TCT7/-/2 also manages the implementation of these standards in the UK, where necessary producing supporting national standards.

Mike is involved in CENELEC TC215 - as Convenor of Working Group 1 and Secretary of Working Group 2. These committees are responsible for the development of an integrated series of standards for the design and installation of telecommunications cabling in a range of premises. In 2008 he led the ETSI STF362 on energy efficiency in broadband deployment resulting in the ETSI TS 105174 series documents, allowing Mike to assist in a new TC215 activity covering data centre facilities and infrastructures (monitored in the UK by BSI TCT7/-/3).

At international level, Mike is Convenor of the Cabling Implementation Task Group (CITG) within ISO/IEC JTC1 SC25 WG3. This group is responsible for the strategic management of the international standards covering the specification, QA, installation, administration, operation, maintenance and repair of generic cabling. This work supports all the cabling design standards produced by ISO/IEC JTC1 SC25 WG3 including ISO/IEC 11801, ISO/IEC 15018, ISO/IEC 24764 and ISO/IEC 24702 for industrial premises produced by ISO/IEC JTC1 SC25 WG3 IPTG (also convened by Mike Gilmore).

Mike is a regular speaker at seminars and conferences in all five continents. He has provided the keynote address and opening presentation in many conferences in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. His seminars, providing regular updates on the progression of cabling standards are particularly well attended and are operating in the UK and continental Europe.



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