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Non-compliant emergency lighting products put people and property at risk

ICEL - the emergency lighting arm of the Lighting Industry Federation (LIF) – is concerned about the number of poor quality, non-compliant emergency lighting products that have been finding their way onto the UK market and putting people and buildings at risk. ICEL says that only products complying with BSEN69598-2-22 should be used.

Wednesday 1st September 2010, London – Good quality emergency lighting must be installed in every workplace, and be properly maintained. Unfortunately, many poorer quality, non-compliant products are finding their way onto the UK market, often driven by pressures to reduce costs. ICEL is concerned about the potential risk to property and people, and says that only products complying with BS EN 60598-2-22 should be used. Products registered to ICEL 1001 give additional reassurance to users and facilities managers because they confirm this compliance and also that photometric claims have been verified.

For manufacturers committed to ensuring fully compliant emergency lighting equipment, the extra demands of complying with the RoHS, WEEE and Battery Directives, plus the REACH Regulations have also added to their costs. This is occurring at a time when the volume of emergency lighting products sold in the UK is growing, but the total market value is in decline, some of which can be attributed to technology and market trends. For example, lower capacity cells are used today in self-contained emergency lighting battery packs, significantly reducing costs, but also potentially reducing average installed emergency lighting illuminance. Emergency lighting experts, such as ICEL member companies, are

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addressing these trends by improving circuit efficiencies and designing better optical controllers. The result is that when using a good quality, compliant, product users can be confident that escape lighting illuminance still exceeds the minimum specified in BS5266.

The trouble with non-compliant products

The problem is that many of the lower cost emergency lighting products, which are thought to represent a significant share of the UK market, appear to be manufactured or imported with little or no understanding of optical control or photometric performance.

The typical 8W bulkhead is a good example. Unfortunately, it cannot be assumed that this actually has an output of 8W. A few years ago, such a bulkhead would provide a total flux of around 180 lumens. Today's technologies (using a wide distribution Fresnel lens but with a smaller battery) provide only 100 lumens but still ensure that the one lux minimum escape route illuminance is achieved. However, a non-compliant low-cost product might typically provide only around 60 lumens output and so be unsuitable to provide sufficient illumination to meet the specified requirements. In addition, poor charger and inverter design, and low battery quality, means that battery life can be significantly reduced. Lamps can, therefore, fail prematurely

Such low-cost products devalue the market, to the detriment of emergency lighting manufacturers committed to supplying fully compliant products. More importantly, because such poor quality emergency lighting installations fail to provide the legal minimum escape route illuminance, they put at risk the users of buildings and the buildings themselves.

Regulations now require that in every organisation there is a responsible person for emergency lighting who has to risk assess their premises and obtain third party assurance for the fire safety equipment. Any failure that leads to loss of life, personal injury or damage to property exposes responsible persons, and possibly installers too, with criminal

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prosecution and damages claims through civil courts. Insurance policies may not cover them if inferior, non-compliant equipment has been used.

Environmental impacts

Poor emergency lighting performance of non-compliant products is only part of the concern, as suppliers must also comply with environmental regulations. Untraceable hazardous substances could well have been used, so emergency lighting equipment can reach the end of its life with no way of ensuring that it is properly collected and recycled.

Consider that same 8W bulkhead. A compliant manufacturer uses suitable electronic components and non-lead solder to be RoHS compliant. It is also pre-registered for the REACH Regulations, and belongs to a collective recycling scheme for WEEE Directive compliance. Finally, its battery supplier offers a battery take-back scheme, and its lamps will come from a WEEE registered supplier.

All suppliers, whether they be UK/EU based manufacturers or importers are also legally responsible as 'producers' for the compliance of their equipment, but do they always meet these responsibilities in full? This is another compelling reason to use only emergency lighting equipment from expert manufacturers, distributed through reputable electrical wholesalers and suppliers.

One way of telling whether an emergency lighting product meets the regulations is to look for the CE mark - mandatory for all luminaires on sale in Europe. This is the manufacturer's declaration that the product conforms to all relevant European safety standards. Some low-cost non-compliant emergency lighting products may not be CE-marked or possibly the CE mark might be bogus, which is much more difficult for buyers to determine. Further information on emergency lighting products can be obtained from ICEL members (contact details on www.icel.co.uk).

ENDS – Word Count: 835

CAPTIONS:

CAPTION 1 (file - ORBIK_Geneva_LED.jpg)

Figure 1: Orbik's Geneva recessed 8W or LED emergency luminaire. Orbik is an ICEL member company.

CAPTION 2 (file - EMERGILITE_Serenga_Escape_Route.jpg)

Figure 2 shows Emergi-Lite's Serenga escape route sign, powered by LEDs, which provide excellent soft illumination, whilst achieving energy and space savings. Emergi-Lite is an ICEL member company.

Notes for editors:

1) Effects of fire legislation

The Fire Safety Order (FSO), which concerns non-domestic premises having employees (such as businesses), or guests (such as hotels) in England and Wales, has resulted in significant alterations to the ways in which all premises are assessed and made safe. The main effect has been a greater emphasis on fire prevention in such premises, which include the voluntary sector and self-employed people having premises separate from their homes. An important change is that no longer is it the Fire Service's duty to make sure the workplace is safe. That duty lies with the 'responsible person', who is legally accountable.

Although the Government has given responsible persons the authority to oversee their premises' fire safety, Fire Protection Officers (FPO) will audit Fire Risk Assessments and associated documentation relating to any premises. The responsible persons will then be informed of their compliance or otherwise. If there are concerns, FPOs can and do use their powers of enforcement.

2) RoHS, WEEE, Battery Directives and REACH Regulations

- **RoHS Directive (2002/95/EC)** - This concerns the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. It is closely linked with the **Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE) 2002/96/EC**, which sets collection, recycling and recovery targets for electrical goods, and is aimed at solving the problem of vast amounts of toxic e-waste.
- **Battery Directive (2006/66/EC)** - This concerns batteries and accumulators, and it regulates the manufacture and disposal of such items in the EU.
- **REACH Regulations** - This, the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of CHemicals (REACH), is an EU regulation that addresses the production and use of chemical substances, and their potential impacts on both human health and the environment. Full implementation is to be phased in over a decade.

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