



Washington, DC

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Communications Cable and Connectivity Association (CCCA) and the Copper Development Association (CDA) Warn of Non-compliant Category Cable Made with Copper Clad Aluminum Conductors.

In the ongoing effort to educate the structured cabling industry on non-compliant cable products, the CCCA and CDA are drawing attention to non-compliant cable designs using copper clad aluminum conductors. The CCCA has encountered several sources in the U.S. marketing Category 5e and Category 6 communications cables made with copper clad aluminum conductors instead of solid copper conductors. Communications cables made with copper clad aluminum conductors violate several industry standards, including UL safety standard UL444. Consequently, such cables made with copper clad aluminum conductors do not have a valid safety listing and cannot be legally installed into areas of buildings which require CM, CMG, CMX, CMR or CMP rated cables.

The Copper Development Association (CDA), the market development, engineering and information services arm of the copper industry, also expressed safety and performance concerns over the proliferation of non-compliant copper clad aluminum conductors for certain data cable applications.

The applicable industry standards which require solid copper conductors for multi-conductor communications cables are the National Electrical Code (current and older versions), UL 444, and TIA 568C.2. The National Electrical Code (Section 800.179) states that *“Conductors in communications cables, other than in a coaxial cable, shall be copper.”* UL 444, Standard for Communications Cable (Section 5.1.1) states that *“The conductors shall be solid or stranded, annealed, bare or metal-coated copper.”* UL444 compliance is a basic requirement for any communications cable to receive fire/safety ratings from Underwriters Laboratories or other nationally recognized test laboratories. The Telecommunications Industry Association’s TIA 568C.2 specification (Section 5.3) requires compliance to ANSI/ICEA S-90-661-2006 and ANSI/ICEA S-102-732 which both include the following language: *“Solid conductors shall consist of commercially pure, annealed, bare copper ...”*

Kevin Ressler, CCCA Chairman stated, "The use of copper clad aluminum conductors in cable designs is a relatively new development, so some contractors may be unaware that such cable does not meet the NEC, UL, and TIA codes and standards referenced above. Fortunately, copper clad aluminum conductors can easily be detected by scraping the thin copper surface, exposing the underlying bright aluminum."

Mr. Andy Kireta, President of CDA said, "As an organization, we place high confidence in industry codes and standards and support products that fully comply. The codes and standards that serve the structured cabling industry reflect copper's long history of performance and its remarkable capacity to meet network speeds that seemed impossible only a few years ago. We applaud CCCA's focus on cable compliance and product quality issues which improves and strengthens this vital industry. "

As with its previous alerts concerning non-compliant cables, the CCCA points out that the best practice to assure quality cable and network performance is to buy from known brands and quality distributors.

Frank Peri, CCCA's Executive Director stated, "When dealing with lesser known brands, users should consider asking for complete documentation of product specifications, in writing, to confirm the product meets recognized industry standards. Users should also carefully examine cable for proper marks and labels to show it has been verified or listed by an independent third party such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and/or Intertek/ETL. As an added measure, UL and ETL website directories can also be checked to assure cable manufacturers are in compliance and authorized to display the appropriate mark."

About CCCA

CCCA, a non-profit corporation formed in 2007, has a mission to serve as the major resource for well researched, fact-based information on the technologies and products of structured cabling media to support current and future needs of the networking, IT and communications industries. CCCA also is proactive at codes and standards bodies and other trade, industry and governmental organizations in communicating and influencing policy and decisions affecting the quality, performance and societal needs of the structured cabling infrastructure.

CCCA member companies: Accu-Tech; AlphaGary; Anixter; Belden; Berk-Tek, a Nexans Company; Cable Components Group; CommScope; Daikin America; DuPont; 3M; General Cable; Optical Cable Corporation (OCC); OFS, a Furukawa Company; PolyOne; Sentinel Connector Systems; Solvay Solexis; Superior Essex; Tyco Electronics. Headquarters: 1001 Pennsylvania NW, Washington, DC, 20004. For further information, contact Frank Peri, Executive Director at fperi@cccassoc.org, phone: (904) 223-4100.

About CDA

The Copper Development Association Inc. is the market development, engineering and information services arm of the copper industry, chartered to enhance and expand markets for copper and its alloys in North America. For further information, contact Victoria Prather, Manager, Communications at yprather@cda.copper.org, phone: (212) 251-7200 or David Brender, National Program Manager, Electrical Applications at dbrender@cda.copper.org, phone: (212) 251-7200.