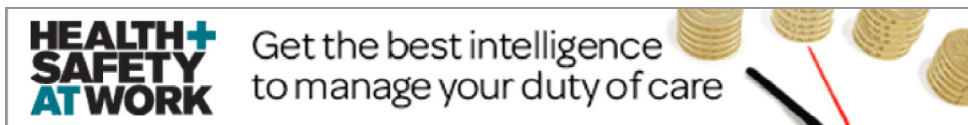




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## Ask the expert: cabling in corridors

External Author: [Alcumus](#) 11 May 2015

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**Question:**

Our electrician is planning work requiring extra cabling in the ceiling void along our main corridor. He tells me all our cables in this area need fire resistant supports. Is this true?

**Answer:**

The short answer is yes for the additional cabling, but no for the supports for existing cables. In January, there was a major update to the IET Wiring Regulations, which incorporated potentially life saving revisions.

Your fire duties include keeping corridors, stairways, hallways and open spaces kept clear at all times.

Those same escape routes help transport data communications, containing all the associated cables and the clips, ties and trunking that keep them in place. It's convenient for maintenance, but generally unnoticed and overlooked.

When exposed to direct flame or heat from combustion, non-metallic cable conduit, trunking, clips, ties and other supports are liable to collapse, leaving the wiring hanging into and across escape routes, hindering escape.

Several firefighters have died when cables have fallen and they have become entangled and trapped. To improve the safety of anyone using escape routes, Amendment 3 includes a new regulation (Reg 521.11.201): "Wiring systems in escape routes shall be supported such that they will not be liable to premature collapse in the event of fire."

Non-metallic supports can no longer be the sole means of support: cables must be secured with metal fire-resistant supports fixed to the non-combustible substrate of the building.

Similarly, though the risk is not of entanglement, metal cable management systems cannot rely on a support system that might prematurely collapse because that too could slow or prevent escape. The changes align with existing standards BS 5859 for fire alarms and BS 5266 for emergency lighting systems to have fire resistant supports and cables. Contractors have six months to get up to speed with the Amendment 3 changes.

The requirement is not retrospective but all electrical installations designed as of 1 July must comply. Electrical contractors will be expected to hold a copy of BS 7671:2008 incorporating Amendment 3 for periodic inspections or assessment visits after this date.

**Keith Rhodes, consultant**

*Alcumus is a leading health, safety and environmental consultancy whose specialists develop tailored and workable solutions*

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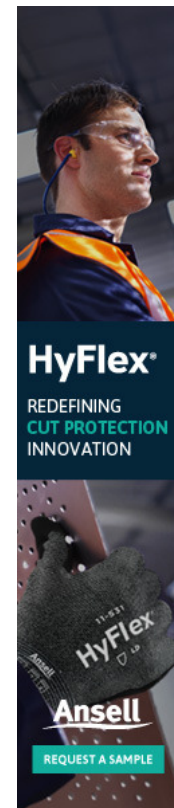
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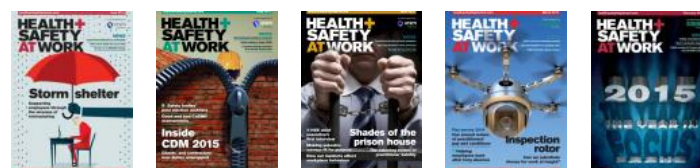
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