

Making buildings sustainable will be impossible without first upgrading the electrical installations

Speakers at the International Electrical Safety Forum, held today in Mexico, debated on the socio-economic impact of electrical installations

Brussels, 9 November 2011: In Europe today, climate change and volatile demographics are the two main challenges facing sustainable building. At the 2011 International Electrical Safety Forum, held today in Mexico City, the European Copper Institute presented on how a safe and periodically-verified electrical installation can contribute to sustainable development in the building construction sector.



Main challenges in making buildings sustainable

Mitigating a building's impact on climate change and adapting residential buildings to changing demographics and living patterns are important factors in making buildings sustainable. The challenge of climate change requires improved energy performance in buildings, transport systems to and from those buildings and also energy production from renewable resources.

“Our buildings can overcome these challenges with more energy efficient electrical installations, lighting systems, heating and cooling, electrical appliances and with charging stations for electrical vehicles and integration of household renewables,” explains Benoit Dome, world programme leader for electrical safety at ECI.

Ageing populations, an increase in single-person households and a greater number of people working from home create new societal needs in meeting these modern living patterns.

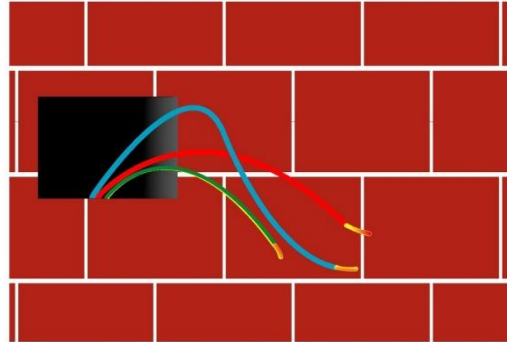
“As 80% of the current buildings in Europe will still be in use in 2020, renovation is key to avoid laying a burden on future generations. The question then becomes whether existing electrical installations are now ready to cope with new demands,” says Dome.

Electrical installation is key to sustainability

The new French regulation on mandatory inspection of electrical safety that came into force in 2009 showed that after one year of inspections, 72% of installations violated at least three out of five minimum safety requirements.

Five basic safety requirements

1. Appropriate and accessible main isolator
2. All live parts sufficiently insulated
3. Appropriate earthing network
4. Appropriate fuse or circuit breaker on every circuit to protect against over current
5. In bathrooms: suitable equipment, all sockets protected by a 30 mA RCD, appropriate equipotential bonding



Mandatory inspections are a cohesive policy whose impact enables the fulfilment of social and environmental requirements. In order to reach EU objectives on sustainable buildings, 80% of all electrical installations in the EU should be renovated in the next ten years. Furthermore, an upgraded electrical installation will also lead to direct energy savings of about 5%.

About International Electrical Safety Forum

International Electrical Safety Forum ANCE-FISUEL is an event intended to explore best practices in Electrical Inspection/Certification for Electrical Installations from other countries, identify key Mexican players and understand their roles/position, and also to debate, exchange and share ideas, models and concepts related to electrical installation inspection and certification

www.foroancefisuel.com.mx

About The European Copper Institute

The European Copper Institute (ECI) is a joint venture between the world's leading mining companies, custom smelters and semi-fabricators (represented by the International Copper Association, Ltd) and the European copper industry. Its mission is to promote copper's benefits to modern society across Europe through its headquarters in Brussels and its network of eleven national Copper Development Associations.

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