



Safer Structures Campaign

Working to raise cable standards for safer buildings across the UK

Background

Almost a year ago Britain witnessed one of the most shocking failures in building safety in the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The likely cause was the UK's current building procedure – what was specified, what was installed or how it was installed.

As part of its response to the disaster, the Government commissioned Dame Judith Hackitt to lead an independent review into building regulations and fire safety, also known as the Hackitt Review. This presented a real opportunity to drive positive regulatory change across all areas of building standards, including for cables.

Hackitt Review

Last week Dame Judith Hackitt published the review's final report. She concluded that regulatory system is **"not fit for purpose"**, and that there are **"deep flaws"** in the system. The report:

- Identified key issues including: a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities, "ambiguous and inconsistent" regulations and guidance, regulations and guidance being ignored, and inadequate regulatory oversight and enforcement.
- Called for a radical rethink of the regulatory framework to drive real cultural and behavioural change. The report stated that this framework should be outcomes-based rather than prescriptive.
- Recommended creating a more robust and transparent construction products regime, through more effective testing with clearer labelling and product traceability.
- Sets out a new regulatory framework for multi-occupancy higher risk residential buildings (HRRBs), demanding duty holder roles and responsibilities during the design, construction and refurbishment phases and during occupation.

Stakeholder response

The review's final report [received](#) a poor response in the press with widespread dissatisfaction that the report did not go far enough specifically by not calling for strong change to regulation.

In a [statement](#) to Parliament, Housing Secretary James Brokenshire MP backed the findings, promising that the Government will "ensure those responsible must demonstrate they have taken decisive action to reduce building safety risks". He committed to bring forward legislation to deliver a new regulatory system and is inviting views on how the Government could implement this until the end of July. He also announced a consultation on banning the use of combustible materials in cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings, which the report stopped short of recommending.



Our concerns

The Safer Structures Campaign is extremely concerned that the Hackitt Review made **no mention of the regulation of cables and fire safety**, despite evidence that existing regulation is weak and unwieldy.

For example:

- **Sub-standard cables are contributing to fires across the UK.** More than 27% of all electrical fires are attributed to faulty wire and cables according to the Local Authority Building Control.
- **Current regulation is not being enforced.** In 2017 a [BBC](#) investigation discovered that Atlas Kablo, a now-defunct Turkish company, had sold 11 million metres of cable that posed a potential fire risk in the UK. The Health and Safety Executive decided against a compulsory recall and only seven million metres were recovered.
- **Existing regulation is too weak.** Under existing regulation all cable installations in buildings must only meet the minimum requirement, equivalent to **Euro Class E** (labelled on the diagram below). This allows for more cables that are less resistant to the spread of flames to be used which is putting public safety at risk. Whilst cables of Cca (C on the diagram) stop the spread of fire within two minutes, cables of Dca (D on the diagram) or lower allow flames to grow to 3.6m in just over seven minutes.

Recommendations for next steps

To ensure the evidence around cable standards and fire safety is properly considered by the Government (having not been included in the Hackitt Review), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should **consult on amending the relevant Approved Documents to introduce a higher minimum standard of cables**, equivalent to Euro Class Cca (marked C on the diagram), with a view to ensuring that cables are more resistant to fire to achieve greater public safety.

