



How can you be sure your lighting is safe?



The Lighting Association

A Lighting Association Guide for Lighting Retailers

Despite the reduction in the number of manufacturers and distributors in the UK selling decorative lighting to the retailer, the range of products on offer is larger than ever with some suppliers offering catalogues of encyclopedic proportions.

This is partly due to a more discerning and fashion hungry consumer and partly to the variety of light source technology that is available.

Go back just 25 years and there was very little other than a GLS or candle incandescent lamp, now we have CFLs in every conceivable shape, halogens of every shape and size and LEDs are now starting to make their presence known and owing to their size we can expect a bigger variety still from this technology.

Add to this the breadth of retailing such that lighting is now available in everything from DIY stores to gift shops, supermarkets to furniture stores, hardware stores to dedicated lighting specialists and, of course, the internet.

How can you be certain the products you sell are safe and compliant with the ever increasing regulations which apply to our market sector?



Look for the CE mark you may think, but remember this is a manufacturer's self declaration that the product complies. Behind that declaration they are required to keep detailed technical files on the product to prove compliance but how do you know they have done this?

Market surveillance is on the increase in the UK, not only are Trading Standards officers seeking out non-compliant product but the Government has appointed the National Measurement Office to check nationwide for compliance with recent Energy Using Products Directives from Brussels and regulations on the restriction of hazardous substances (RoHS). They are trawling retail outlets, purchasing products they suspect might be in breach of regulations, testing them and prosecuting. There has never been a stronger case for ensuring the product you buy is compliant.

How do you check a product is compliant? The best answer is ask for copies of all the certification available for a product but the problem is with such a large variety of product available, manufacturers cannot afford to laboratory test every product in their range without passing on a significant increase to their customers. Many retailers are content to request a certificate of compliance with the relevant regulations but this is nothing more than the aforementioned self certification and is no guarantee that the supplier has fulfilled his legal duty.



The answer is to buy from a company that complies with the Lighting Association Code of Practice Accreditation, Safety for Luminaires Scheme.



This code was initially set up in the 1980's after a member of the public (woman) was seriously electrocuted by a domestic light fitting. Fortunately the incident was not fatal but it was enough for the TV Watchdog programme to take the industry to task and the result was the first Code of Practice (CoP).

Over the years the CoP has developed to cover inspection of members premises, their quality control procedures, inspection of technical files, quality manual and certification, their assembly and testing procedures, calibration of their test equipment and in the increasing case of overseas manufacture, inspection of their factories abroad. The Lighting Association visit and inspect UK members every year and raise any non-conformities for immediate action. A delegate from the LA also visits China at least three times a year to audit factories, offer training seminars to LA members and factory personnel, train auditors and review inspection process prior to export to UK.

The Code of Practice requirements are constantly updated as regulations change,



so when you buy from an accredited Code of Practice member you can be sure they are up to the minute with their documentation and procedures. Compliance with the Lighting Association Code of Practice is a condition of membership and members proudly display their annual Accreditation certificate in their receptions and literature.

There is no other scheme available which offers such a thorough check of your supplier and which provides the level of confidence a retailer needs to assure themselves (know) they are selling safe and fully compliant products.

The Lighting Association is aware that a number of retailers are directly importing products from outside the EU. In this case the retailer is classed in law as the manufacturer as they are the organisation first placing the product on the market in the EU. In this case the retailer must comply with all the same regulations as a lighting manufacturer including the maintenance of technical files and establishing that the product is fully compliant for sale in the EU. The retailer takes on full responsibility for the CE marking of the product.

In such cases where the retailer is, in effect, the manufacturer their professional indemnity insurance should reflect this otherwise they might find themselves personally liable should a product develop a fault which causes damage to people or property. Take for example a light which through non-compliance overheats and causes a fire. The retailer who imported that product would be deemed responsible and therefore liable.

Any retailer who direct imports a product from outside the EU is strongly advised to join the Lighting Association Code of Practice to ensure their compliance with the current regulations and to support their claim to CE mark their product. Associate retail membership of the LA is not sufficient to prove a retailer has met their legal obligations as an importer.

For more information please contact the **Lighting Association** on **01952 290905** or visit their **website**

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