

NEW WIRING COLOURS

The IEE will publish Amendment No 2 to BS 7671: 2001 (the IEE Wiring Regulations) on 31 March 2004. The Amendment will specify new cable core colours for all new fixed wiring in electrical installations in the UK. These new colours are sometimes referred to as “harmonised” colours, as they will bring the UK more closely in line with practice in mainland Europe.

Electrical installation work commencing after 31 March 2004 may use the new harmonised cable colours or the pre-existing colours, but not both. Work commencing on site after 31 March 2006 will be required to comply with the harmonised cable core colours and must not use the old colours.

Full details of the changes can be found in Amendment No 2 (AMD 14905) to BS 7671: 2001 – which is a free download from the IEE website (www.iee.org/cablecolours). They are also within the new version of BS 7671: 2001 (incorporating Amds 1 & 2) to be published on 31 March; this new version of the Wiring Regulations can be identified by its brown cover. The cable colour changes are summarised below.

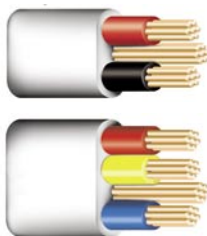


Single-phase installations

The fixed installation colours of red phase and black neutral are replaced by brown phase and blue neutral, respectively. These are the colours that have been used in appliance flexible cables for many years. The protective conductor is still identified by the colour combination green-and-yellow.

Existing

Cannot be used after 31 March 2006

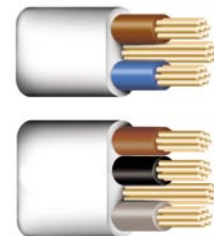


Twin flat
6242Y

Triple flat
6243Y

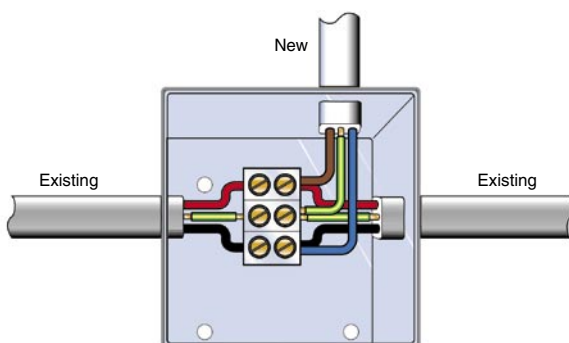
New (harmonised)

May be used from 31 March 2004



Extensions or alterations to existing single-phase installations

Alterations or additions to a single-phase installation do not require marking at the interface between old and new cabling providing that they are correctly coloured. However a warning notice must be fixed at the distribution board or consumer unit, like this:



CAUTION

This installation has wiring colours to two versions of BS 7671.

Great care should be taken before undertaking extension, alteration or repair that all conductors are correctly identified.

See also www.iee.org/cablecolours

See overleaf for information on three-phase cables and installations

Three-phase installations

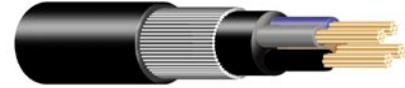
For three-phase cables the phase colours are brown, black and grey, instead of red, yellow and blue, respectively, and the neutral colour is now blue instead of black. Again the protective conductor is identified by the colour combination green-and-yellow. Alternatively all three of the phase conductor cores may be coloured brown and marked L1, L2, L3 at the terminations.

Existing



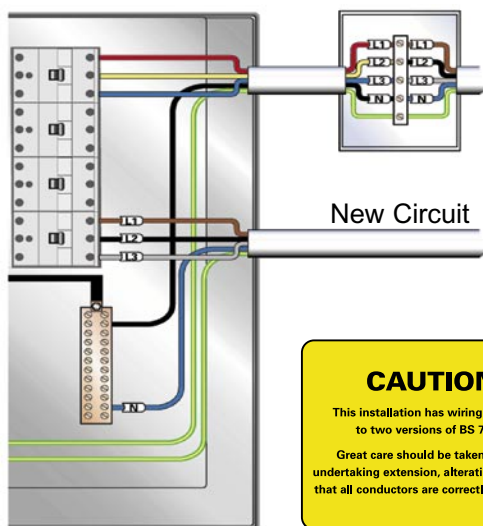
Four-core
armoured

New (harmonised)

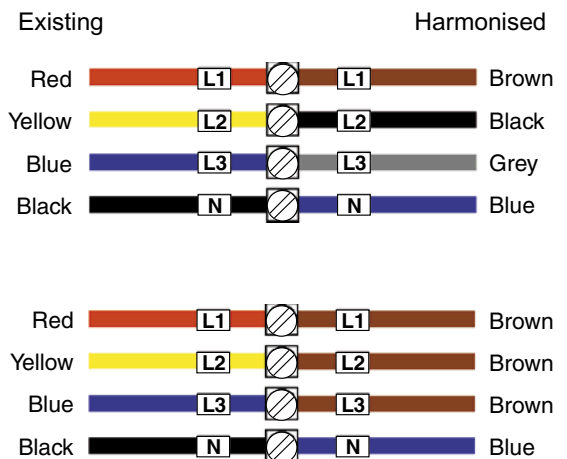


Extensions or alterations to existing three-phase installations

For alterations or extensions to three-phase installations, it is recommended that old and new cables are marked at the interface L1, L2, L3 for the phases and N for the neutral. The marking should be made to both the new and old cables and is preferred to the use of coloured tape. A caution notice is again required at the distribution board.



Schematic of alternative interfaces



Remember – you will need to use the new cables in order to comply with BS 7671 (the Wiring Regulations), from the dates shown. The new harmonised cables will be available from your stockist on, or very shortly after, 31 March 2004.

For more information, consult the industry's agreed web resource centre:

www.iee.org/cablecolours

where you can find detailed information on the changes, practical articles, FAQs and more.

Organisations across the industry have agreed these changes and efforts to promote them, coordinated through a BSI/BEC national safety committee. This leaflet has been supported financially by the following organisations:



British Cables Association



Institution of Lighting Engineers