The Industry Committee for Emergency Lighting Ltd

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PRESS RELEASE

Good emergency lighting scheme design is crucial for the safety of commercial buildings

For the safety of buildings and their occupants, ICEL - the emergency lighting arm of the Lighting Industry Federation (LIF) - emphasises that all relevant emergency lighting regulations, and the standards that support them, should be complied with in both new and existing buildings. There are no short cuts simply to reduce costs that successfully provide a cost effective and well-designed emergency lighting solution.

Thursday 30th September, London - Commercial buildings of all kinds cover many different businesses and types of operation, but all contain people, whether workers or visitors. Under the new Fire Safety legislation they must be safe at all times - consequently virtually all commercial and industrial buildings will need emergency lighting schemes that are fit for purpose in protecting them and their occupants if an emergency occurs.

Before undertaking the design of an emergency lighting scheme, the lighting designer should be provided with the risk assessment of the premises that has been carried out by a competent person on behalf of the owner / occupier. This document should clearly identify any anticipated risks from activities planned to take place in the premises.

Accurate dimensioned plans of the premises should also be made available. These should clearly show the layout of points of specific risk, which may include staircases, lifts, changes of level and any fire fighting or first aid equipment. Moveable partition walls within some buildings can be a cause of concern for scheme designers if the specified lighting levels, or emergency evacuation routes, are adversely affected by the moving of such partitions. Care must be taken to ensure that exit route signs are suitable and are fully visible at all times.

In addition, extra emergency lighting provision may have to be made to ensure that the premises concerned meet the requirements of the Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA),

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and allow for the safe shutdown of any equipment installed.

Regulations for emergency lighting products and their placement

Building Regulations require that systems comply with BS 5266-1, the Code of Practice for emergency lighting. The design guidance document, BS5266 Part 10: 2008, provides guidance on the method of assessing the requirements for emergency lighting to high risk areas, with recommendations for a number of selective examples. These include kitchens, plant rooms and first aid rooms etc. ICEL's 1006 document could also be consulted to establish the types of risks that may be encountered in many premises; included in this is a model risk assessment plan.

European standard EN1838, which covers minimum emergency lighting design requirements for workplace applications, should also be consulted. Compliance with this standard will help to ensure that the minimum emergency lighting levels within the building concerned are met, and that all emergency luminaire and exit signs are correctly placed and are fully compliant.

To ensure that the emergency luminaires and exit signs themselves also comply, products from ICEL registered companies, or companies that have had their products third party tested and approved to EN60598.2.22, should be considered for use. This will help to ensure that the performance and life expectancy of the emergency lighting scheme is maintained.

ICEL is emphatic that, for the safety of buildings and their occupants, all relevant emergency lighting regulations, and the standards that support them, should be complied with. There are no short cuts or cheap solutions to successfully providing a cost effective and well-designed emergency lighting solution. A well-designed and compliant emergency lighting installation provides lighting of a suitable quality and quantity if a mains power failure or other emergency evacuation situation occurs. It will also bring peace of mind to all involved that the scheme concerned is fit for purpose in protecting the building and its occupants. Non-compliant emergency lighting systems may not do this, and if anything goes wrong, designers, building owners, facilities managers and responsible persons may

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find themselves in the unenviable position of being prosecuted for non-compliance with the regulations.

Therefore, initial scheme design, as well as regular risks assessments carried out in the premises concerned, are even more crucial today than they used to be. All those involved are responsible if the emergency lighting installation is not fit for purpose. The same is true if poor maintenance causes the emergency lighting luminaires to fail to provide the correct lighting levels required for the safety of the building's occupants. Be safe, not sorry – ensure that your emergency lighting is compliant and fit for purpose.

ENDS - Word Count: 739

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For the safety of commercial buildings and their occupants, all relevant emergency lighting regulations, and the standards that support them, should be complied with (photo by Emergi-Lite).

Notes for editors:

1) About ICEL
ICEL (www.icel.co.uk) is a trade association that is the foremost UK authority on emergency lighting, and its members are manufacturers of components and products for emergency lighting fittings. ICEL's representatives serve on BSI and International Standards committees, developing harmonised product and application standards. Therefore, ICEL members are well placed to give advice on product selection and can be expected to provide good quality emergency lighting products.

2) About BS 5266-10:2008
BS 5266-10:2008 provides guidance on the hazards that can occur in a building because of the number of its occupants, its design, and all activities carried out inside it. It also lists the actions occupants have a responsibility to take if the normal lighting supply fails. Further, BS 5266-10:2008 provides recommendations on factors that should be considered in the design and provision of emergency lighting systems to meet identified hazards for buildings. It also indicates how properly installed emergency lighting can reduce risk if the lighting supply fails, and it provides advice on suitable emergency lighting levels, initiation times and working planes. BS 5266-10 also advises inspecting engineers on emergency lighting design suitability, and installation for both new and existing systems.

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