

# Technical Note

## TN29: Paint Applied to Data Cables



In the last year there have been an increasing number of instances where communications cables and the pathways containing them at high level have been spray painted, whether by accident or intention as part of painting the ceiling.

It is a practice that should be strongly discouraged for many reasons these include but not limited to:

1. It could change the performance characteristics of the cable
2. It can hide important information on the cables themselves
  - a. Labelling, (Services carried, especially fire)
  - b. CPR classification
3. It could change the fire performance of the cable

There are many different paints used from a water based acrylic paint that dries to touch relatively quickly that would have little impact on the performance of the cable, however the way that it is applied is a cause of concern. Multiple coats and if sprayed on cables that sit on a tray, will form pools of paint that take longer to dry. The major question for this sort of application and paint is: "will it impact the CPR Classification of the cable?".

The more serious concern is a solvent based paint that contains chemicals that will not only have an impact on performance of the cable it will almost certainly change its reaction to fire.

### Conclusions

We get asked on many occasions to comment on whether the paint will affect the data cables. The simple answer is we are in NO position to comment, we are not the scientists that developed the chemical composition of the paint.

With the trend towards higher CPR classifications being specified it is important that this practice is eradicated where possible and consultants and architects educated on the potential impact. If any cables are painted in such a manner, only confirmation from the Paint Manufacturer that their product will not impact the reaction to fire of the cables shall be accepted.

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*This Technical Note has been produced by Paul Cave, Technical Manager, on behalf of Excel*

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