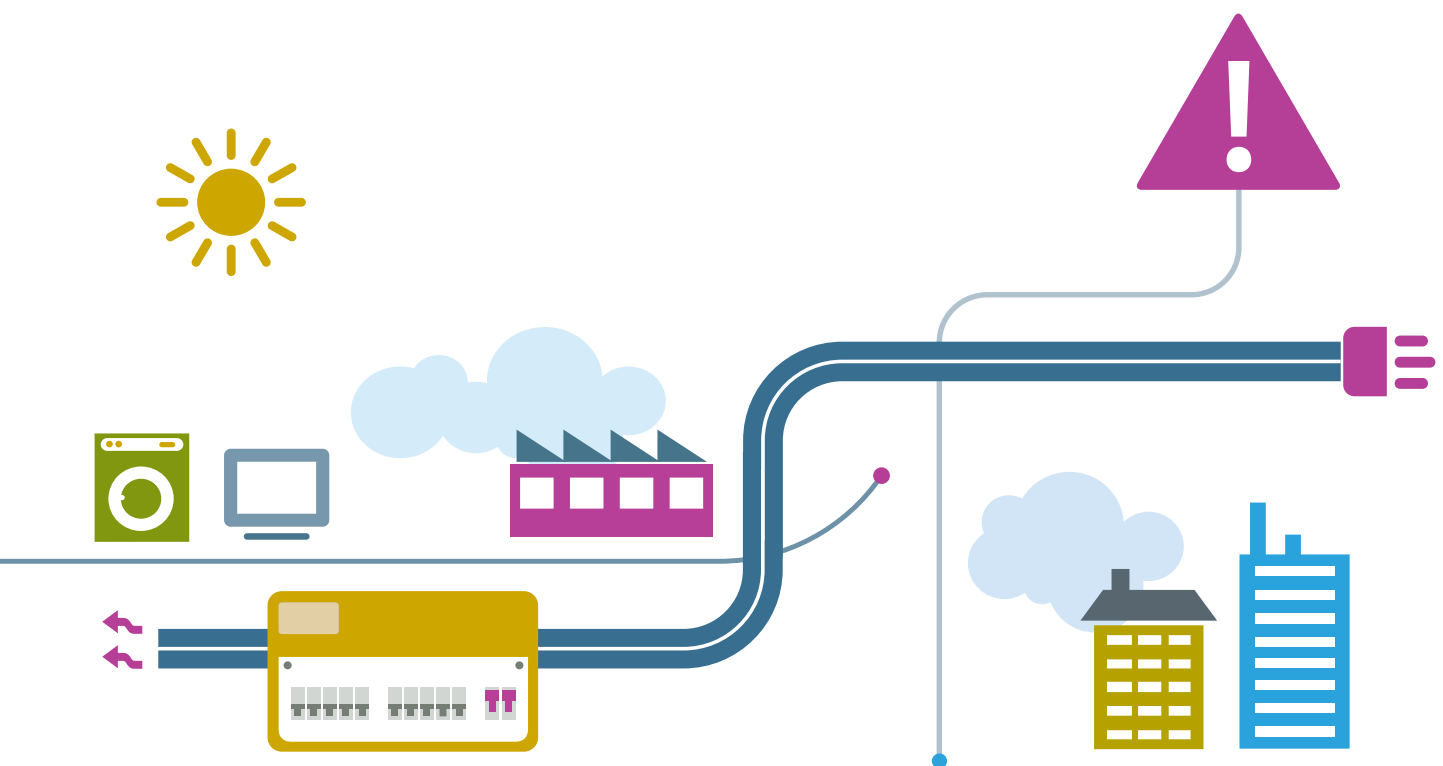


TECHNICAL BULLETIN

SAFE SELECTION OF DEVICES FOR INSTALLATION IN ASSEMBLIES



ABOUT BEAMA

BEAMA is the UK manufacturing trade association for the electrotechnical sector, providing leadership, expertise and independent influence in the areas of product safety, performance, energy efficiency, digitalisation and sustainability. Our activities span a broad spectrum of technology groups, from energy networks through to electrical infrastructure and service technologies in the built environment.

The association has a strong history in the development and implementation of standards to promote safety and product performance for the benefit of manufacturers and their customers.

This publication has been produced by BEAMA's Building Electrical Systems Sector and specifically by BEAMA's Low Voltage Technical Committee.

Details of other BEAMA Guides can be found on the BEAMA website www.beama.org.uk

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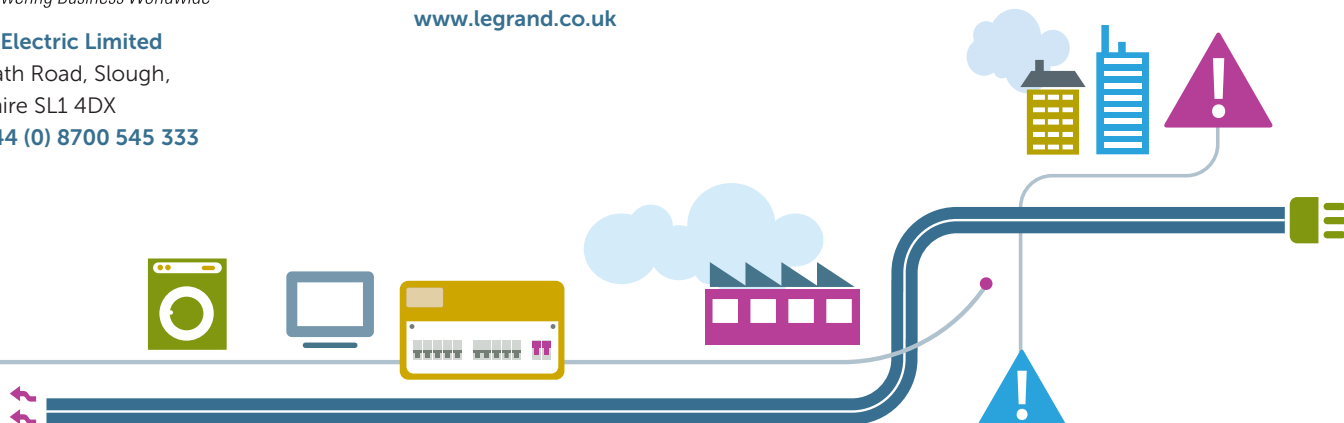
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SAFE SELECTION OF DEVICES FOR INSTALLATION IN ASSEMBLIES

Incorrect selection of devices (e.g. RCBOs, MCBs, MCCBs) for installation into assemblies (e.g. consumer units, distribution boards, panelboards) can have serious consequences. An assembly is an enclosure and all its associated mechanical and electrical components such as the enclosure, busbars, terminals and electrical devices.

There are two scenarios to be aware of:

1. The practice of installing devices of one manufacturer into assemblies of another manufacturer.
2. The practice of installing new devices into an old assembly, even if both are of the same manufacturer.

This practice of mixing products during installation, often without fully understanding the safety implications, is commonplace. Although devices can appear to be similar; the dimensions and technical performance are not necessarily compatible and mixing products in this way is likely to result in an unsafe installation.

In the case of scenario 1, assemblies such as consumer units, distribution boards and panelboards conforming to the BS EN IEC 61439 series are tested with specific devices which are usually from the same manufacturer as the enclosure.

In the case of scenario 2, it should not be assumed that old and new devices and assemblies from the same manufacturer are compatible, because products are subject to continuous development. Over time, new ranges may be released, which may not necessarily be backwards compatible.

Therefore, in both scenarios, **it is essential that the assembly manufacturer's guidance is sought concerning suitability of any substitution or addition.**

Where modifications or additions are made to assemblies, including the incorporation of heat detection / tripping systems, those responsible for such modifications or additions must ensure through verification / testing, that the modified assembly conforms to the requirements of the relevant product standard of the BS EN IEC 61439 series and to the relevant UK legislation including the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations.

In all cases installing devices or components other than those declared by the assembly manufacturer invalidates any testing/certification and warranty.

BS 7671 regulation 510.3 places specific responsibility on the installer, requiring that assembly manufacturer's instructions are taken into account. Regulation 536.4.203 prescribes that in consumer units, distribution boards, incorporated devices and components shall only be those declared suitable according to the assembly manufacturer's instructions or literature.

Installer responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the installer who intends to mix devices/components in an assembly, to undertake appropriate testing and ensure conformity with the relevant standards and legislation.
- The installer has a responsibility to act “with due care”. If this is not done then there is a probability that, in the event of death, injury, fire or other damage, the installer would be accountable under Health and Safety legislation.

Distributor and wholesaler responsibilities

A distributor or a wholesaler also has responsibility under the General Product Safety Regulations for acting “with due care”. Distributors and wholesalers should be able to substantiate any advice related to interchangeability of devices in assemblies. If the installer acts on a distributor’s advice and information and in doing so produces a non-conforming assembly, then both the distributor and installer may be liable for any consequences.



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