

Ask Eddie: your questions answered

Eddie recalls
a job with
'green slime'



I was asked to do a periodic inspection report for a customer. The installation was carried out around the late 1960s and had all the normal problems – undersized main earth, undersized main equipotential bonding conductors, and the rest. But I came across a problem I had not seen before. Many of the cables within the property had a green slime coming out of them which had got into some of the switches and was spoiling the wallpaper in one room. What was it? And what should my recommendations be?

The green slime is Di-isooctyl Phthalate. It is a bi-product of a reaction between the plasticiser in the insulation and the copper conductor. This plasticiser had an anti-oxidant added to it between 1965 and 1971 – and so is not so common, although these symptoms could have become

more noticeable following the installation of a central heating system, for example, as it is thought that high ambient temperatures accelerate the process.

Although unsightly, this goo is not conductive and so therefore will not cause electrical tracking, possible arcing or propagation of fire. This slime is oil-based and so will not just wash off but a strong soapy mix or methylated spirits may be required to remove it. Caution should be taken in removing this produce as it is mildly toxic and may cause burning or irritation especially to areas such as eyes, nose and mouth.

The presence of this product does not necessitate a rewire; however where this problem is seriously affecting an installation, then unfortunately a rewire may be the only answer. It may be possible in some cases to reduce the formation of this by forming a drip loop in the cables below the terminal.

Should a rewire be recommended then consideration must be given to disposal of these cables and contaminated accessories as they would be considered hazardous and therefore should be disposed of in suitably-labelled containers. The potential risk would increase if this was discovered within a school or area frequently used by children and therefore should be removed.

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Seminar show to visit Wigan

NAPIT's next seminar is being held in Wigan, Lancashire, on Wednesday October 17 (4.30pm to 6.30pm).



The seminar is your chance to have your say on NAPIT and to find out about important issues affecting your work.

The venue is Wigan Rugby Union Football Club, Douglas Valley, Wingates Lane, Leyland Mill Lane.

Entrance to these member-only events must be booked in advance.

For more information or to book your place contact NAPIT on 0870 444 1392

