



Testing by CCCA Finds High Failure Rate in Electrical Performance of Imported Category 6 Copper Patch Cords

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The Communications Cable and Connectivity Association (CCCA) announced that it recently completed large-scale, electrical performance testing of Category 6 copper patch cords. Test results show an 85% failure rate in patch cords produced offshore by companies who are largely unknown in North America. A second, large sample set of Category 6 copper patch cords produced by multiple, well-recognized manufacturers was also tested and showed 0% failure rate. Copper patch cords are typically used to connect network devices for signal routing (i.e. wall outlets, patch panels, switches, routers).

CCCA's patch cord testing program follows the communications cable testing program conducted in 2008 and 2009, which uncovered a serious fire safety hazard with non-compliant copper data communications cable imported into North America.

To assure statistically meaningful results, CCCA tested a total of 499 samples from 16 brand names of Category 6 patch cords at a UL (Underwriters Laboratories) audited test lab. 322 of 379 patch cords made by offshore manufacturers, not generally known in North America, failed to meet minimum industry electrical performance requirements as specified in TIA 568-C.2. 78% of the failing samples failed by a margin of 3dB or more and 45% of the failing samples failed by margin of 6dB or more. Because noise is measured on a logarithmic scale, a 3dB failure indicates a noise level that is twice as high as the allowable standards and failures of this magnitude could contribute to significant network problems.

Included in the testing pool were 120 Category 6 copper patch cords from well-known manufacturers in North America. All had a 100% pass rate.

None of the failing products was identified as using independent, third party testing laboratories to verify quality. Patch cord testing and verification programs are available from leading independent testing agencies and generally provide a level of quality assurance to buyers.

Frank Peri, CCCA's Executive Director said that "Once again, we see disturbing test results that seem to fit the pattern uncovered with our testing of offshore bulk data communications cable. The overwhelming failure rate of these offshore patch cords is very unsettling, suggesting that the manufacturers exporting these products are likely aware they are selling faulty products. The lack of third party verification with lesser known brands should put all users on alert to be sure they are getting the performance they expect and are paying for."

CCCA emphasizes that many of its members are well recognized global companies with offshore manufacturing facilities and business operations. The quality issues and failure to comply with industry standards are not necessarily regional in nature, but rather the result of the use of low quality components, poor assembly methods, and poor quality controls, which can improve profit margin for the manufacturer.

About CCCA

CCCA, a non-profit corporation formed in 2007, has a mission to serve as the major resource for well researched, fact-based information on the technologies and products of structured cabling media to support current and future needs of the networking, IT and communications industries. CCCA also is proactive at codes and standards bodies and other trade, industry and governmental organizations in communicating and influencing policy and decisions affecting the quality, performance and societal needs of the structured cabling infrastructure.

CCCA member companies: ADC; Accu-Tech; AlphaGary; Anixter; Belden; Berk-Tek, a Nexans Company; Cable Components Group; CommScope; Daikin America; DuPont; 3M Dyneon; General Cable; Optical Cable Corporation (OCC); OFS, a Furukawa Company; PolyOne; Sentinel Connector Systems; Solvay Solexis; Superior Essex; Tyco Electronics.

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