

# CIRCUIT PROTECTION & SWITCHGEAR

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# SWITCH TO A TYPE AHEAD OF REGULATION CHANGES

A family-run electrical component supplier will be switching its RCD and RCBO offering from the start of 2021.

**N**iglon has previously offered both AC and A Type Residual Current Devices, but with changes to industry regulations taking effect soon, the company will be moving all production across to A Type devices.

The Midlands-based firm is family owned and run, originally operating under the name S D Hinley from the 1940s onwards, before changing its name to Niglon in the 1960s. Currently, the business has thousands of lines covering circuit protection, wiring accessories, industrial accessories, and many other must-haves for electrical contractors.

With changes being proposed to the 18th Edition BS7671 regulations, the team has seized the opportunity to review its product offering.

Section 531.3.3 of the original BS7671 2018 regulations suggested that AC Types should be used for general installations, but highlighted a number of other options including A Type RCDs. These devices can detect the risk of electrical shock caused by DC pulsating residual current, and protect against this risk accordingly. But their use has been by no means mandatory, despite the increased residential use of multimedia equipment, lighting controls, induction hobs and electric vehicle charging points.

In fact, the open-ended wording of the regulations has seen many continue to regard AC Types as the standard for installations, with other Types only being considered in certain situations. This is despite many other countries in the world having stopped using AC Type RCDs previously.

But with the regulations due to be updated, and the draft proposals for these changes currently being circulated in the industry, AC Types look set to be side-lined in favour of A Types – and some installers are already making the change.



**“AC Types look set to be side-lined in favour of A Types – and some installers are already making the change.”**

Niglon’s Commercial Director, Paul Dawson, explains: “We have continued to source and supply both AC and A Type RCDs and RCBOs – and we did not see a huge upsurge in demand for A Types at all after the publication of the 18th Edition regulations. We believe this is mainly due to the fact the wording is fairly open-ended, and so AC Types have almost been considered the norm up until now.

“Because there has been no clarity around the definition of a standard installation, AC Types have continued

to be used in large numbers across residential installations.

“However, now the draft proposal for the BS7671 Amendment 2 is being circulated, which states that A Type devices must be used where a circuit may be impacted by a direct residual current. This has seen the demand rise for these types of RCDs, although the regulations have not yet been finalised or come into force. This is why we have taken the decision to move production across to A Type devices from the start of 2021.”

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**“We want to ensure our customers’ installations meet the requirements of the new regulation 536.4.202 by protecting both RCDs and switches with a suitable Overcurrent Protective Device.”**

### Confusion over current regulations

There has also been some confusion over regulation 536.4.202 in the 18th Edition, which specifies that the design current should not exceed the rated current of the assembly (consumer unit) taking any diversity and/or loading factors in to account.

For many years, electrical designers have used diversity factors to calculate the correct selection of Residual Current Devices and switches, and in the 18th Edition regulations already in force this is still considered an acceptable practice. However, in the 18th Edition they provided clarification that neither RCDs nor Switch Isolators have the overload protection; therefore, both should now be protected by an Overcurrent Protective Device, selected according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Paul says: “We want to ensure our customers’ installations meet the requirements of regulation 536.4.202 by protecting both RCDs and switches with

a suitable Overcurrent Protective Device. That’s why here at Niglon we are advising our customers to only use RCDs within a consumer unit which have a current value equal to or greater than that of the electrical supply company’s upstream main cut out fuse.

“Over the past few years, there has been a big change in the types of installations which the electrical industry’s contractors are typically undertaking; for example, more and more homeowners are installing both electric vehicle charging points and hot tubs. This is creating an increased power demand on our electrical supply.

“New electricity supply connections to homes are now most commonly 80A or 100A, and many upgrades of older existing 63A supplies are now also taking place. On this basis, the team at Niglon has taken the decision to discontinue our 63A Residual Current Devices within our consumer units, moving the production to only offer 80A and 100A RCD options from the start of 2021.”

### More important than ever

With more installers likely to be making the switch to A Type RCDs and RCBOs in the coming months, the team at Niglon is reiterating its call for everyone to be cautious when using new products. Paul and his colleagues have been speaking out about the importance of certification recently – including in October’s edition of *ECN* – after seeing a rise in untested components on the market.

With devastating, and potentially fatal, consequences if an untested product fails, it’s imperative that circuit protection components are independently tested by a reputable third party.

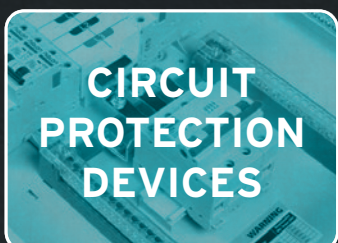
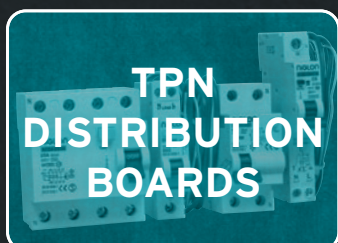
Paul explains: “It’s important that contractors do not assume the onus is on the manufacturer – all of us involved in a component’s sale or installation have a legal duty as well as a moral obligation when it comes to safety. With more A Type RCDs likely to be coming onto the market over the next year, we want installers to be cautious if they are switching from their normal product to a new type.

“As well as championing third-party independent testing as standard for these important devices, we are also calling for total transparency around which products have been thoroughly tested. We would love to see it being standard protocol for proof of certification to be requested every time a new product is sold to a wholesaler or contractor.”

With clear labelling (in brochures and on websites) of products which have been tested to a specific standard, and more open conversations about certification between everyone involved in the industry, the Niglon team believes standards would be higher and reassurance about product safety would be passed right down the supply chain to end users.

“It’s not something which can, or should, be left to chance as there is no way of knowing when or if these products will fail,” Paul adds. “The risk can be eliminated with proper testing, and nobody wants a disaster to happen, so waiting and doing nothing until something goes wrong is simply not an option. Let’s act now before it’s too late.”

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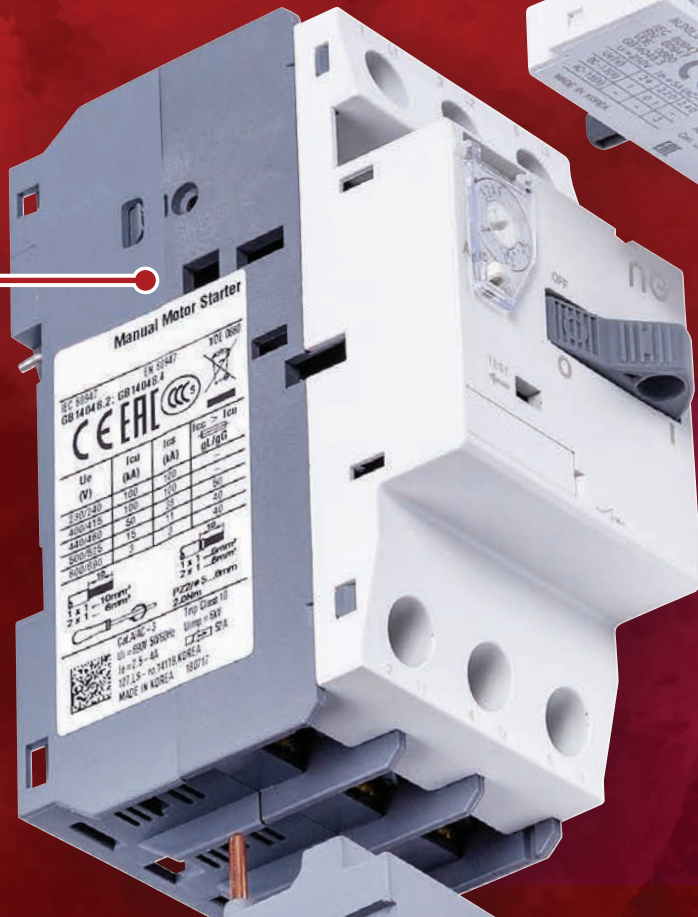
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## CONTROL & AUTOMATION

# MOTOR CONTROL GEAR

Manual Motor Starters



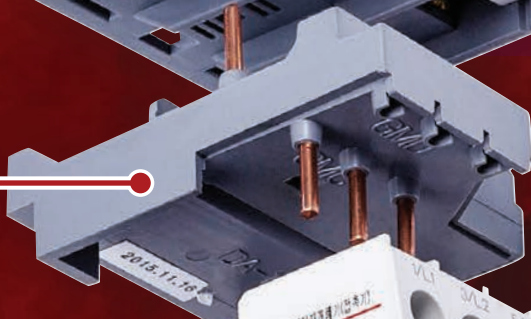
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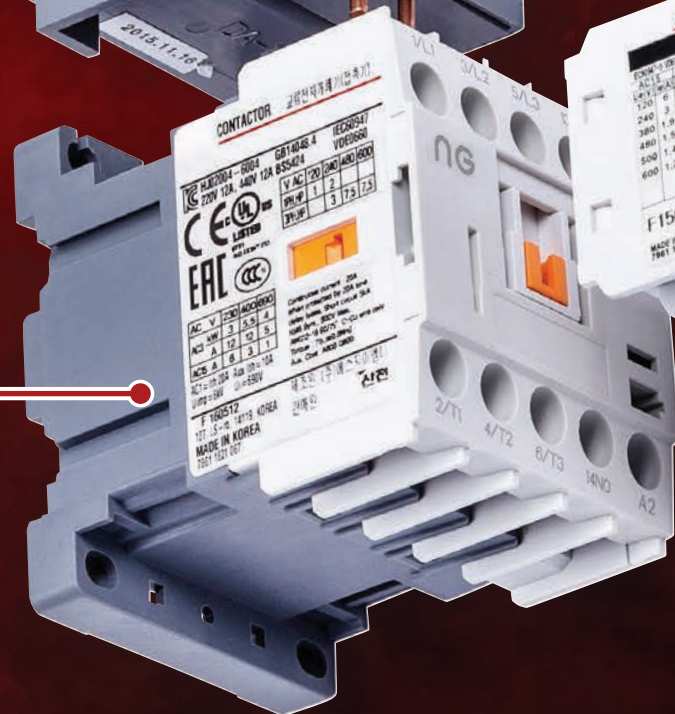
Thermal Overload Relays



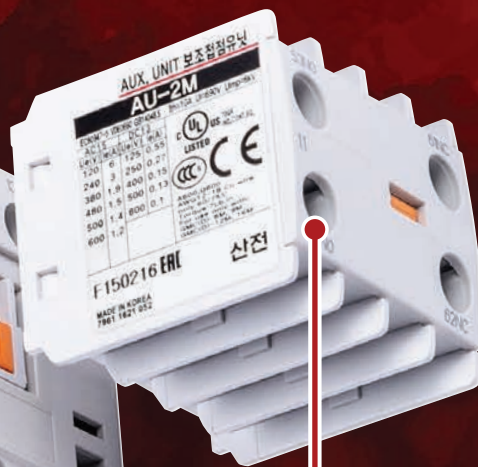
Contactor Couplers



Contactors



Aux Contacts



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## PREMIUM EDGE S

# ACCEPT NO ALTERNATIVES

