

# THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

When it comes to electrical knowledge, most of us would agree that safety is the top priority – it’s all about knowing which are the safest products to use and why, and which comply with current regulations.



**Y**et every day there are unsafe products being installed in homes, businesses and other sites across the UK – all because the all-important question is often overlooked:

“Has this product been independently and thoroughly tested?”

It’s understandable why contractors may assume each of the choices they have when they select a component for an installation has been properly tested.

But sadly, the team at Niglon is finding this is often not the case – and the instances of untested (or poorly tested) products being circulated on the market is rising, in the company’s experience.

That’s why Commercial Director, Paul Dawson, has been on a mission over the past year to raise awareness across the industry, and use every opportunity possible to shout about how important conversations around certification are.

He explains: “I started my career as an apprentice electrician more than 30 years ago so I know how dedicated contractors are to ensuring their knowledge and skills are up-to-date so that they can keep all of their customers as safe as possible.

“But over time I’ve seen a worrying number of untested products on the market – and I believe that’s because we are all collectively failing to have the conversations we should be having around certification.

It is important for Niglon to know that its products have been properly tested



“In an ideal world, every time a wholesaler purchased a product from a supplier, they would ask for proof of third-party certification. Every time a contractor purchased from a wholesaler, they would do the same. And we would also educate the end-user about this process too.

“That would mean there were checks at every stage of the supply chain and would, in theory, totally minimise the risk of an untested product making it into a home or business.”

## Transparency

For the team at Niglon, it’s important not only that they know their products have been properly tested – but that they can demonstrate this openly to the entire industry. That’s why certification details are displayed on the company’s website and brochure, and why the company has proof of certification ready to show any customer who asks.

And Niglon believes this should be industry standard rather than gold standard. Because it's only by having these open conversations that the products which haven't been thoroughly tested can be highlighted and eventually removed from the market.

### Customer confidence

Not only is it a question of doing what is ethically correct, a focus across the electrical industry on certification would help bolster customer confidence. Most end-users probably assume that anything installed in their home, business or other property is safe, and would be horrified to learn of the number of untested or poorly tested products on the market.

By firstly educating them about different standards of testing and the need for proof of certification, and then as a contractor being able to demonstrate you have done your due diligence when making choices about which products to use, customers know they can trust you to do the right thing.

Generating trust is a fantastic way to guarantee repeat custom and positive reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations, so it's definitely something not to be overlooked – even without considering that using properly tested products is simply the right thing to do!

### Making the choice

Everyone in the industry is faced with choices when it comes to products, and there are various factors such as quality, aesthetics and price to be considered. The Niglon team has been practising what they preach by placing testing at the top of that consideration list.

When surge protection devices were introduced into the 18th Edition wiring regulations, the company was faced with a choice of sourcing an untested low-cost surge protection device, or partnering with a European manufacturer that had more than seven decades of experience.

Niglon stocks the latter simply because the products are certified, especially important in this case because of the limited ability installers have to test a surge protection device once it's installed.

It might cost a little more to stock these products, but how can you put a price on the safety of end-users where these devices will be installed?



### Why now?

Paul adds: "The consequences are terrible should an electrical product fail. At the most minor end of the scale, there's the time, cost and inconvenience of replacing a faulty component. But it can get much worse than that, as we saw during the Grenfell Tower fire which tragically claimed the life of 72 people. While there were other factors which exacerbated the disaster, experts have traced the cause of the fire back to electrical equipment failing.

"Nobody wants another tragedy like Grenfell, and yet four years on I'm seeing a continued rise in the number of untested products on the market. That's why the time to act is now – we shouldn't be waiting until a disaster, or even a near miss, to start having these conversations about certification.

"Sadly, it's simply not safe to assume that a manufacturer has done all of the necessary checks and tested the product to a high standard. So, the onus is on all of us within the industry to do our bit to prevent untested components making it into a home, business or other building where it has the potential to do harm.

"It's not something which can, or should, be left to chance – especially when there is something we can do collectively to minimise the risk. Knowing they could have intervened and didn't isn't something anyone wants on their conscience, and that's why I am calling on the industry to act now before there is a disaster.

"Let's put aside any competition between businesses and focus on collectively minimising the risk, working together to ensure third-party testing and producing proof of certification become a matter of course."

A focus across the electrical industry on certification would help bolster customer confidence

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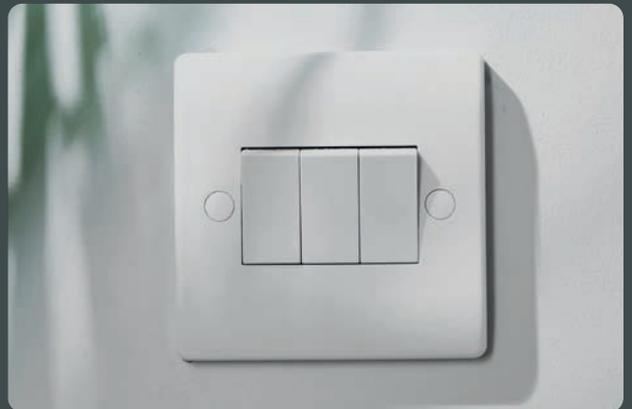
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