

CHANGE YOUR OLD LAMPS FOR NEW

Older luminaires, manufactured to earlier, less strict safety standards than those now in force, may urgently need to be modified to make them safe, an expert has warned.

The warning comes from David Bertenshaw, the head of Strand Lighting Research and Development, who feels that stringent new tests recently introduced for electrical equipment by the EEC may have left some areas of lighting in the dark.

Speaking at a conference organised by the Electrical Research Association (ERA) in conjunction with the Lighting Industry Federation (LIF), he said, 'Older luminaires in use made, possibly, to earlier safety standards could now need to be modified to protect sufficiently against danger. Certainly all exposed metalwork

that may become live in case of an electrical failure must be reliably bonded to earth.

'All wiring should be inspected and if sufficiently deteriorated replaced with new, of appropriate rating, including temperature.

'Mechanical alterations may be required to ensure assemblies, accessories and suspensions are adequately secured and shields added to protect against the hazard of tungsten halogen lamp explosion if this could constitute a danger in actual use.

'The Health and Safety Executive reports that every year around 50 people are killed at work by electricity. It is hoped that very few, if any, of these are killed by failure of electrical luminaires.'

In describing the historical background to entertainment lighting, David explained that

laws imposing a legal duty to provide luminaires to a particular safety standard did not fully come into force in Britain until the late 1970's — more than 90 years after the first public use of electric lighting.

Electric lighting was, in itself, a momentous leap forward in safety terms. From the time gas lighting came into general use, early in the 19th century, fire was a constant hazard, leading to the burning-down of a number of theatres, with loss of life in some cases.

The first theatre to be lit electrically was The Savoy, in 1881, where the London Fire Brigade reported that electric lighting appeared to be 'absolutely safe'. Barring a few accidents in various parts of the country while theatre staff learned how to handle the new source of power, it proved to be as safe as predicted.

However, although there was a steady development of voluntary standards over the years, it was not until Britain joined the Common Market that regulations were introduced, leading to the EN60598 standard for luminaires which provides a general safety standard for the lighting industry.

Footnote: A factsheet is available from Strand Lighting covering the full text of David Bertenshaw's paper. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope (A4 size) to the Marketing Department at Isleworth for a free copy. Address on page 15. Readers are reminded that there is a legal obligation upon them to check all electrical installations for safety. Strand Lighting Limited has a policy of providing products of the highest design standard, often in excess of minimum legal requirements, and is constantly reviewing and updating designs to ensure full compliance.

FAME FOR STRAND'S PALS

A new College for the Performing Arts — on similar lines to the New York school which inspired the TV series *Fame* — is to open in Nottingham complete with the latest Precision Automated Lighting (PALS) for its theatre from Strand Lighting.

The college will be based at 'College Street', which opened in 1988 as the Nottinghamshire Centre for the Arts in Education, to train young people in the performing arts and use of theatre and studio facilities.

So successful has the scheme proved to be, with schools from throughout the county using its facilities, that Nottinghamshire County Council's Education Department has decided to extend it. This has allowed the setting up of a college and a BTEC course for students aged 16+.

College Street's theatre, which is used by visiting professional companies and by school pupils on training courses, is already equipped with a Strand M24 memory and effects board. This complements its video and editing suite, plus new desk top publishing facilities.

Strand's PALS equipment has been installed to allow pupils and students to become conversant with the latest technology.

College Street spokesman, Alistair Conquer, said, 'The PALS system reflects the high

quality of equipment which is being used in the training of young people.

'Our County Council's Education Committee has always had a far-sighted policy with regard to the arts. It was considered necessary to have the same quality in the lighting system that might be encountered at any other professional venue.'

Instruction

The PALS system allows motorised luminaires to be positioned according to instructions relayed either from a personal computer or a Strand Galaxy 3 system. It permits repeated pinpoint accuracy in repositioning.

Although PALS will be used primarily by students from the School for the Performing Arts, it will also be available to visiting schools from throughout the county.

To demonstrate the latest technology available to schools and other small venues, Strand Lighting used College Street for a 'stage lighting roadshow', at which up to 4,000 schools from throughout the region were represented to see Strand products.

These included Gemini Plus, Act 6 dimmers, Strand's new MX system, and the newly-installed PALS system in full operation.



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