



Press release

Nexans makes a major advance in fire-performance cables with the launch of INFIT™ insulation technology

Paris, December 17, 2009 – Nexans, the worldwide leader in the cable industry, has made a major advance in materials science by launching its new INFIT™ insulation technology developed specifically for fire resistant cables. Fire-resistant cables ensure the integrity and continuity of vital safety circuits during the critical building evacuation and fire fighting periods required by the highest national and international standards. In the event of a fire, INFIT™ insulation transforms into a tough ceramic shield that ensures a high level of fire resistance, while in normal use INFIT™ makes cables easy to handle and install.

INFIT™ advanced technology

Until now, the cable industry has mainly relied on two major technologies to insure the integrity of flexible cable insulation during a fire: Mica taping and ceramic forming silicone rubbers.

Each of these technologies presents a number of advantages. The classical insulation taping based on Mica, and largely used since the 80s, can easily be implemented on an industrial scale to provide a tough, effective electrical insulation when overlaid with a cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE) coating. On the other hand, silicone rubber insulation can be extruded directly on to the conductors, and offers a good compromise between fire performance and ease of installation. However, new customer requirements for improved fire performance, strippability and easy connection prompted Nexans to develop a new insulation technology dedicated to fire-resistant cables.

INFIT™ is a unique, innovative technology that combines in a polymeric material the advantages of both the tough mica tapes layer and the extruded silicone insulation layer. This enables the new Nexans cables to offer both the tough and easy to handle surface expected from a traditional mica tape/XLPE cable and the strippability and easy installation of a flexible silicone rubber insulated cable.

INFIT™ technology offers enhanced fire-performance since, when the insulation is exposed to fire, it transforms from a flexible, plastic covering to a tough insulating ceramic layer that preserves circuit integrity (i.e. no breaks or short circuits).

INFIT™, the fruit of an ambitious Research & Development project

The new technology results from ten years of development by the Nexans International Research Center based in Lyon, France, working in close partnership with the Australian Nexans R&D Center. The successful outcome of the project has been based on fundamental studies that especially highlight the synergy between ceramic science and the latest polymer science.

In classic ceramic science, a well defined curing process is followed to form a high performance ceramic. Yet, in the case of accidental fire, the temperature increase is sudden and unmanaged. So the first challenge was to develop a ceramic forming system able to react and form an electrical insulating shield in a very short time across a wide range of temperature increases, while also exhibiting a high level of electrical insulation. The second parallel challenge was to achieve this performance using an extrudable formulated polymeric material, rather than a powder, that also fulfilled the very demanding standards of the cable industry.

INFIT™ can be implemented in compliance with many worldwide cable standards and according to the most rigorous product quality and safety criteria. Nexans cables insulated with INFIT™ can resist fires reaching temperatures about 1,000°C, at voltages up to 1kV, exhibiting a high level of char cohesion and electrical insulation.

INFIT™ is a proprietary Nexans technology protected by a dedicated patent portfolio.

INFIT™, a technology that traverses cable markets

INFIT™ will be gradually deployed in the coming months across the entire Nexans fire resistant product ranges, for building as well as industrial applications such as on board ships.

“INFIT™ advanced technology has been developed in response to the specific requirements expressed by our customers to meet their own demands in terms of safety, reliability and performance. We mobilized teams of engineers and materials experts to achieve this result. It is a perfect example of Nexans’ strongly customer-oriented approach to R&D” said Jérôme Fournier, Director of Nexans international Research Center.

About Nexans

With energy as the basis of its development, Nexans, the worldwide leader in the cable industry, offers an extensive range of cables and cabling systems. The Group is a global player in the infrastructure, industry, building and Local Area Network markets. Nexans addresses a series of market segments from energy, transport and telecom networks to shipbuilding, oil and gas, nuclear power, automotive, electronics, aeronautics, handling and automation. With an industrial presence in 39 countries and commercial activities worldwide, Nexans employs 22,400 people and had sales in 2008 of 6.8 billion euros. Nexans is listed on NYSE Euronext Paris, compartment A. More information on www.nexans.com

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