

"Limited Combustible Cable" is 100% Recyclable?

"Hype - Hype - Hooray"

Technically, yes...Functionally, NO.

In the USA, there is a huge volume of installed communications cabling. Some estimates place the volume of the installed cable at more than 65 billion feet. Recent estimates indicate that there may be as much as 8.5 million miles of abandoned cable in the workplace. The National Electrical Code (NEC 2002) has a provision, which requires the removal of accessible abandoned cable not identified and tagged for future use.

<http://www.wireville.com/story.php?id=00049>

Under the new code requirements, we expect a swelling torrent of communication cabling entering the waste stream. This flood of waste material is mixed like a sea of colored spaghetti. There are many different cabling constructions installed in the workplace. The churn of cabling continues at an alarming rate as we move, add, and change our cabling network infrastructures.

At a recent jobsite, which was refurbishing rental space in an office building, we observed the abandoned cabling that was being removed. In the waste dumpster, we found a myriad of communication cables in a wide spectrum of colors. There appeared to be no universal color code to identify construction or materials of the cable. On closer inspection, we found the majority of the cables were 4 pr UTP (unshielded twisted pair) communications cable. However, there were a host of other hybrid constructions, i.e. single & multimode fiber optic cables of different counts, 4 pr STP (shielded twisted pair), 6 pr UTP, 8 pr UTP, 24 pr UTP, 25 pr UTP, and a mixture of UTP copper cables and fiber optic cables in the same sheath. Don't forget to include signal wire, coaxial, twinaxial, alarm, fire alarm, and specialty video cables. All of these cables come in a wide selection of colors. There are no jacket color standards to recognize one type of construction versus another. To separate these cables for specialized recycling, you must have an extensive list of manufacturers' part numbers and understand the code and category markings on the cable.

The predominant cable jacketing material in communications cabling is PVC containing LEAD stabilizers. At this time, there is no cost effective method to remove the LEAD stabilizer compounds from the PVC in the recycling process. Additionally, many municipalities are reviewing the types of hazardous materials (HAZMAT) that are in the waste stream for their landfills. Some municipalities have begun to route the heavy metal wastes from the unlined C&D (construction & demolition) landfills to the lined HAZMAT waste facilities. There are additional costs associated with specialized waste disposal. Every indication is there will be significant cost increases in these areas of waste disposal. Some governments have begun adding front-end charges on products to cover the additional cost associated with the full life cycle and waste disposal.

Yes, FEP is 100% recyclable (hype), if you can afford to identify it and separate it. At this time, cost effective separation does not seem to be a reasonable expectation.

But that's just my opinion,

Frank Bisbee - Editor
"Heard On The Street" column

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INSTALLED 4 pr UTP COMMUNICATIONS CABLE TYPES

CAT3 Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT3 Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT3 Plenum w/Kynar PDVF jacket & FEP insulation
CAT3 Plenum w/Halar ECTFE jacket & FEP insulation

CAT4 Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT4 Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT4 Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & 3 pr FEP x 1 pr FRPE insulation

CAT5 Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5 Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT5 Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & 3 pr FEP x 1 pr FRPE insulation
CAT5 Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & 2 pr FEP x 2 pr FRPE insulation
CAT5 Plenum w/fluoropolymer jacket & 2 pr FEP x 2 pr FRPE insulation
CAT5 Plenum w/fluoropolymer jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5 Plenum w/Kynar PDVF jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5 Plenum w/Halar ECTFE jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5 Plenum w/fluoropolymer jacket & FRPE insulation

CAT5 Enhanced Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5 Enhanced Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT5 Enhanced Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5 Enhanced Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT5 Enhanced Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & 3 pr FEP x 1 pr FRPE insulation
CAT5 Enhanced Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & 2 pr FEP x 2 pr FRPE insulation

CAT5e Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5e Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT5e Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5e Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT5e Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & FRPE insulation
CAT5e Plenum w/FEP jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5e Plenum w/unLEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT5e Non-Plenum w/unLEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT5e Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & 3 pr FEP x 1 pr FRPE insulation

CAT6 Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT6 Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT6 Plenum w/FEP jacket & FEP insulation
CAT6 Plenum w/unLEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT6 Non-Plenum w/unLEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation

CAT6e Plenum w/LEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT6e Non-Plenum w/LEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation
CAT6e Plenum w/FEP jacket & FEP insulation
CAT6e Plenum w/unLEADed FRPVC jacket & FEP insulation
CAT6e Non-Plenum w/unLEADed PVC jacket & PE insulation