

Electric Cable

Snake (蛇) is one of the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac. Snakes are long and thin and have different colours. You may find them on ground, on walls and in holes. Such descriptions are also applicable to electric cables. In fact, the electrical trade in Hong Kong uses the term “large snake” or “大蛇” for large size power cables. Some snakes found in Hong Kong are protected species. Similarly, electric cables in fixed electrical installations in Hong Kong are protected mechanically and electrically in compliance with the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations. Works near underground cables of the power companies must follow the requirements in the Electricity Supply Lines (Protection) Regulation to ensure the safety of workers and continuity of electricity supply.

According to the Chinese astrology forecast, 2007 is a year that snakes have to undergo certain evolutions (變色蛇*). Such forecast is incidentally applied to cables in Hong Kong. With effect from 1 July 2007, insulation colour code for identification of phases and neutral of electric cables will be changed from red, yellow, blue and black to brown, black, grey and blue. There is a 2-year grace period till 30 June 2009 for this colour code change. This change was first proposed by the electrical trade industry in early 2004. After an in-depth assessment, the Working Group on the Review of Cable Colour Code in Hong Kong recommended the change which was subsequently endorsed by the Electrical Safety Advisory Committee for implementation. This new cable colour code complies with the requirements of relevant national and international standards (such as IEC 60446, EN 60446, BS EN 60446 and BS 7671) and has been adopted by the majority of the European countries. Finally, please be aware of snakes and cables. You should always assume them alive, don't touch them until you have carried out tests to prove and confirm that they are dead.

The Electrical Blog is contributed by Electrical Division. If you would like to know more about this topic please contact the Division Hon. Secretary Ir Gary Ko, cwko@kumshing.com.hk

[* Note: 2006年6月27日，世界野生生物基金會發表聲明說，在東南亞婆羅洲原始森林中工作的生物學家最近發現了一種以前未知的、能夠像變色龍一樣隨外界環境的變化而改變身體顏色的蛇。]