Fire Safety Risk Remains High with Many Communications Cables Produced Offshore

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 23, 2012) The Communications Cable and Connectivity Association, Inc. (CCCA) announced today it has new evidence that the North American market for communications cable products continues to be undermined by certain offshore-manufactured communications cable products which fail to meet industry fire safety requirements. In July 2012, the CCCA again commissioned an independent test laboratory to analyze whether a sample set of offshore-manufactured cable samples met National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) minimum requirements for fire safety.

- Test results showed that ***five of the six samples failed*** to meet the minimum NFPA code requirements for low flame spread and/or smoke generation for installation in commercial buildings, schools and multi-tenant residences.
- ***Four of the five*** failing samples exhibited ***catastrophic*** results.
- One cable specimen fire was so virulent that the ***test chamber had to be shut down*** in less than 3 minutes.
- Extreme failures like these indicate an ***unacceptable public safety hazard still exists***.

The CCCA conducted fire safety tests on samples of offshore cables in 2008 and 2009 with similar results. This latest round of testing was commissioned to determine if the problem has lessened since it was first brought to the public's attention in 2008. The test results suggest that the problem is still very prevalent. In addition to the fire safety tests, a separate laboratory tested all six samples to the electrical performance requirements for Category cables. Four of the five cables, which failed the fire safety requirements, also failed to meet minimum electrical performance required by industry standards for Category 5e and 6 cables, to which independent test certifications were also claimed.

"As in 2008 and 2009, these recently procured cables were made with inferior materials for this application and inadequate cable designs to cut production costs. Based on material analyses, samples predictably failed the minimum fire safety requirements," says CCCA Executive Director, Frank Peri.

"The CCCA has taken the position that this serious problem will not go away until quality assurance procedures include testing of samples of finished cable procured directly from the marketplace," Peri adds. "We commend UL for leading the industry and putting in place new quality assurance procedures in response to this problem. It is significant that none of the failing samples were certified under UL's fire

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safety listing program. This also means that unscrupulous manufacturers may be moving to other testing agencies with more lenient quality programs, or using unauthorized marks from these agencies. This is disturbing and our concern cannot be understated because these potentially hazardous cables are being installed in buildings today. The potential liabilities we have addressed and risk to public safety in the event of fire are unacceptable."

In advance of the fire safety tests, the CCCA also commissioned a test laboratory to analyze the materials contained in each of the six cable samples for flame and smoke retardant characteristics. These analyses proved to be reliable predictors of the fire safety test results obtained. Peri comments, "As we have demonstrated twice now, material testing is a viable means of predicting fire safety performance from samples obtained in the marketplace and can be accomplished with samples as short as 5 feet in length."

Cables selected for the tests were all procured from the inventory of six separate distributors in North America in April 2012 and were comprised of six different brands of plenum rated Category 5e and Category 6 cables. The brands chosen would largely be considered "unknown" by most buyers in North America. These types of cables are commonly installed behind walls and in ceiling cavities in commercial or institutional buildings, and are connected to wall outlets that have phone or Ethernet ports. The invisible placement of these cables makes their flame and smoke characteristics particularly critical because combustion would not be evident to inhabitants until after the fire had significantly progressed.

The CCCA continues to believe that buying quality, name-brand cables is the best practice to assure compliance to fire safety requirements.

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About CCCA

CCCA is comprised of leading manufacturers, distributors and material suppliers who are committed to functioning as a major resource for well-researched, fact-based information on the technologies and issues vital to the structured cabling industry. CCCA also is proactive at codes and standards bodies and other trade, industry and governmental organizations in communicating and influencing policy and decisions affecting the quality, performance and societal needs of the structured cabling infrastructure.

CCCA member companies: Accu-Tech; AlphaGary; Anixter; Belden; Berk-Tek, a Nexans Company; Cable Components Group; comCables; CommScope; Daikin America; DuPont; 3M; General Cable; Optical Cable Corporation (OCC); OFS, a Furukawa Company; Panduit; PolyOne; Sentinel Connector Systems; Solvay Solexis; Superior Essex; TE Connectivity.

Headquarters: 1001 Pennsylvania NW, Washington, DC, 20004. For further information, visit the CCCA website www.cccassoc.org, or contact Frank Peri, Executive Director at fperi@cccassoc.org.

NFPA 262 Flame/Smoke Test Results

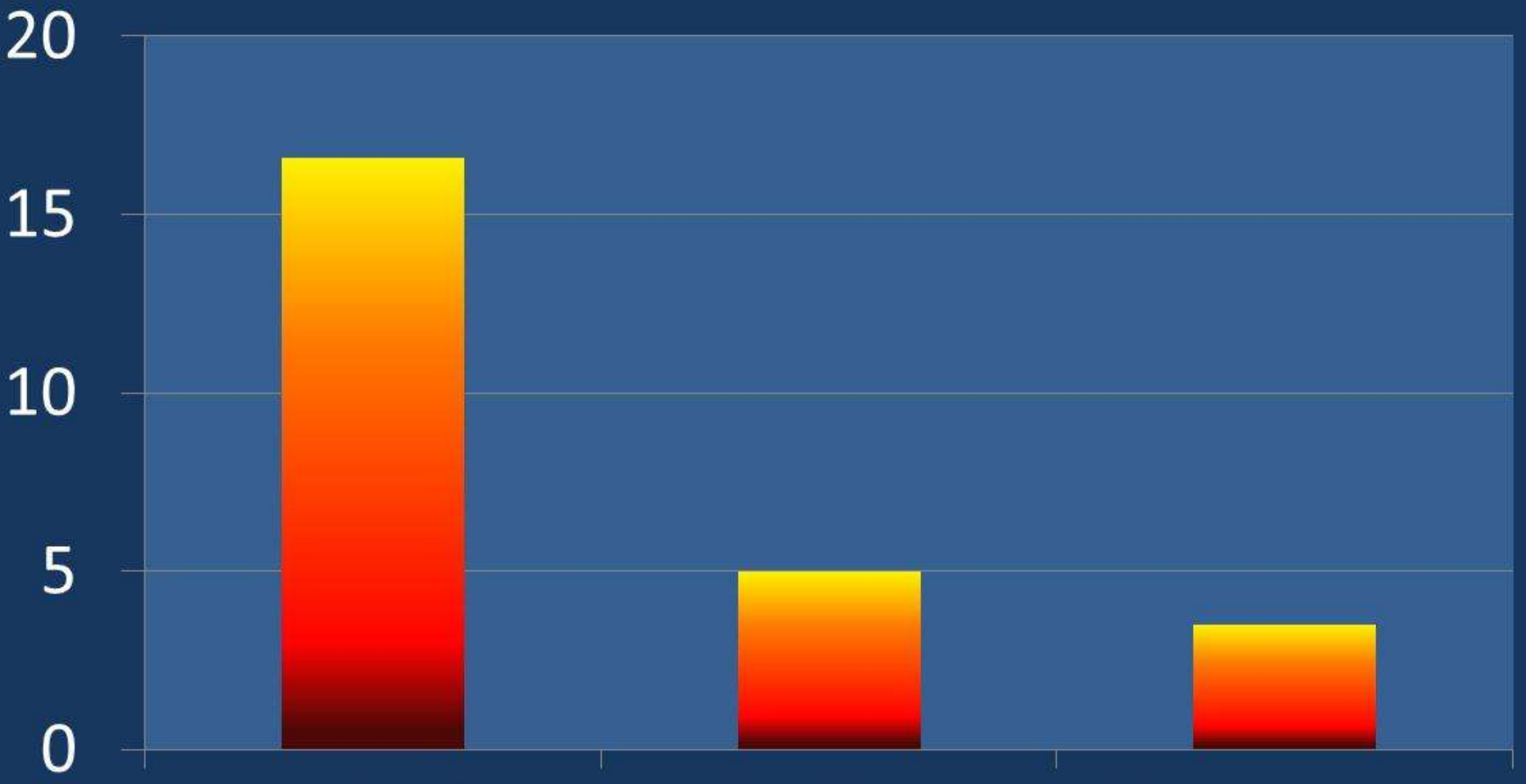
Summary of all 5 failing samples, tested July, 2012 by independent test laboratory

	Flame Spread (ft.)	Peak Smoke	Avg. Smoke	Test Duration
Sample 1	19.5	3.42	1.78	<3 min
Sample 2	19.5	3.74	1.89	6 min
Sample 3	5.0	1.32	0.29	20 min
Sample 4	19.5	2.48	1.10	15 min
Sample 5	19.5	4.11	2.27	7 min

Notes

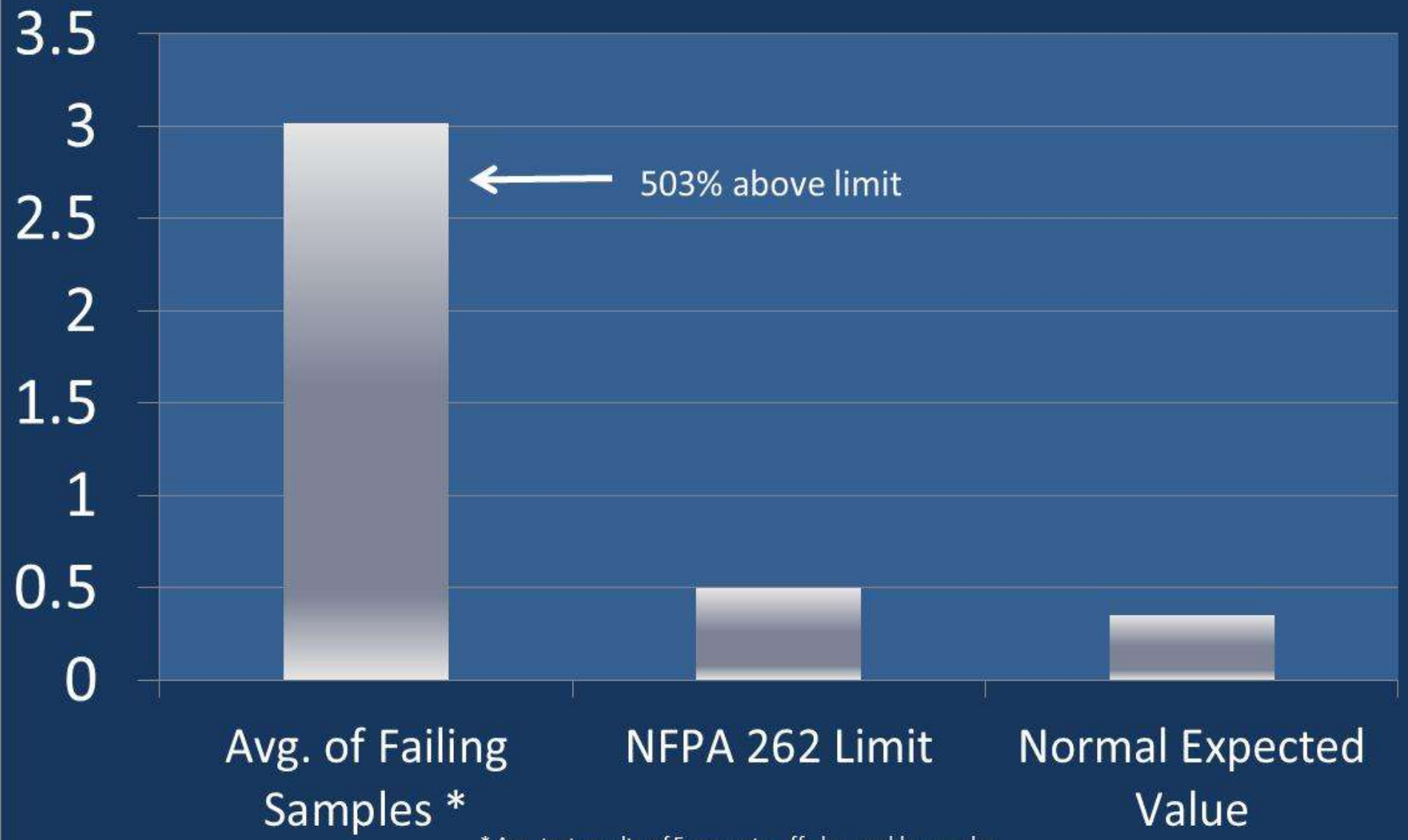
- 19.5 ft. is the maximum length of the burn chamber. Tests are terminated once the flame spread has reached this point or excessive fire in chamber
- NFPA 262 test is specified to run 20 minutes, unless cable sample burns out of control, whereby test is terminated early

Flame Spread (ft.)



* Avg test results of 5 separate off-shore cable samples
* All testing conducted by independent test laboratory
* Tests conducted July, 2012; Cables procured April 2012

Peak Smoke



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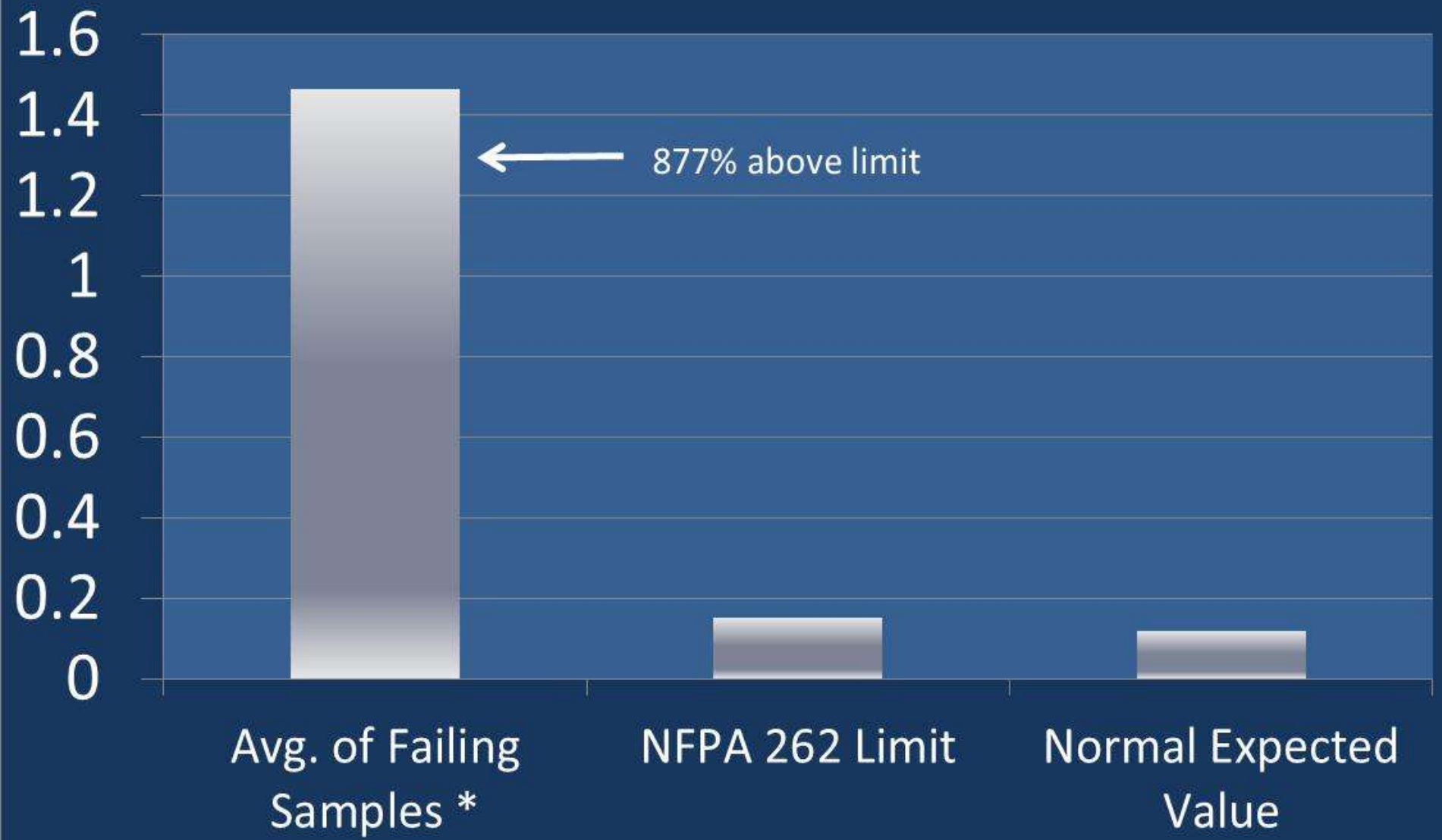
Avg. Smoke



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