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FIRES CAUSED BY FAULTS IN FLUORESCENT LIGHTING EQUIPMENT III

Incidents attended by the Fire Brigades in the United Kingdom
during 1951
by
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This note extends the information available on fires caused by faults in fluorescent lighting equipment. In F.R. Note No.115/1950 and No.123/1951 analyses were given of reports of incidents involving fluorescent lighting equipment attended by the Fire Brigades in the United Kingdom during 1950. The present note records the results of a similar analysis of incidents which occurred during 1951.

There were 48 incidents, 46 in England and Wales and 2 in Scotland. Fifteen of the fires started in chokes, 14 in transformers, 3 in resistances, 4 in wiring and 3 in condensers. One fire was caused by heat from a fused lighting tube igniting a wooden beam, and another started in unspecified apparatus associated with lighting equipment. In all these incidents there was a breakdown or overheating in the component mentioned.

The remaining fires include an incident where an employee, while adjusting the installation, caused a short circuit, and a fire which started in a condenser in equipment which was switched on after the lighting tube had been removed. There was also a fire in which a bird's nest built around the transformer of the equipment caused a short circuit. Finally there were four fires where the location of the fire was not stated.

Damage was confined to the apparatus in 33 of the incidents; 6 fires spread beyond the apparatus and caused minor damage confined to the room of origin. Slight damage was caused to the roof by a fire in a fluorescent sign over the main entrance to a shop, and 7 fires damaged the ceiling and floor above the room in which the fire started. The only serious fire occurred in a bookshop in which severe damage was caused to approximately two-thirds of the shop and its contents. The fire spread to the stairway of the flat above the shop.

There was one non-fatal casualty, a male aged 23 years, who received a shock while adjusting a lighting tube.