

THE FIA - AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The past decade has seen a vast increase in the use of optical fibre - primarily driven by the need to provide a quality, high-speed transmission media for digital trunk telephony services. The specifications for these systems have typically been produced by large national telecommunications service providers. This has resulted in clear standards and specifications to which all suppliers to the WAN telecommunications industry must adhere.

In parallel there has been a significant growth in optical fibre systems being installed in private data, entertainment and telecommunications networks which are separate from the national telephony and data carrier systems. This part of the industry is served by a large number of relatively small organizations supplying small, medium and large corporate customers with products and services. An organizational focus is required for both suppliers and users in this sector of the industry in order to ensure the quality and reliability of network design, installation practice and methods of training.

The **Fibreoptic Industry Association** provides such a focus as a Trade Association to which companies, organizations and individuals involved with, or planning an involvement with, fibre optics can subscribe. In addition, by means of seminars, publications, newsletters, press promotion and similar activities, the **Fibreoptic Industry Association** is dedicated to raising the profile of the industry and highlighting its many benefits in order to increase its growth and thus provide direct benefits for members.

Our overall aims can be summarised as follows:

- to promote an awareness of the benefits and applications of fibre optic technology as an adjunct to - or as a replacement for - conventional copper communications technology;
- to promote an awareness of the existence of a professional fibre optics industry fully capable of meeting the needs of users, so benefiting both suppliers and their customers;
- to promote and adopt standards to which professional participants within the fibre optic industry should be expected to adhere;
- to provide a central source of information on wide ranging aspects of the fibre optic industry;
- to provide a single voice to promote and represent the interests of the industry obtained by consensus and debate amongst FIA members;
- to develop and promote codes of practice within the industry - both operational and ethical - to which members will be expected to adhere and thus offer an assurance that the highest quality of service will be provided.

THE FIBREOPTIC INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

(a Company Limited by Guarantee)

Head Office: The Manor House, BUNTINGFORD, Hertfordshire, SG9 9AB

Tel: 01763 273039 Fax: 01763 273255

Web: www.fia-online.co.uk ----- e-mail: jane@fiasec.demon.co.uk

ABOUT THE FIA

The FIA was first created in the UK during February 1990 with just 30 members. It now represents 200 small, medium and large organizations within the fibre optics industry - both in the UK and overseas. Regional offices have been, and continue to be, set up to provide local contacts for non-UK members. The FIA was created with the express intention of facilitating the development and professionalism of the fibre optic industry. Since then, the Association has gone from strength to strength and its wide ranging membership includes end users of fibre optics, installers, distributors, training providers, consultants and component manufacturers.

The FIA operates a state-of-the-art web site that provides members with a whole range of value-added services. This web site receives more than 800 visitors each month, indicating that it is being heavily used by the outside world to find out about FIA members' services.

The FIA is directed by the **FIA Management Council** under the Chairmanship of Paul Bateson (Optical Test and Calibration).

Commercial Activities are headed by John Marson (Twistnet Communications) who is responsible for seminars and other fibre-optic based events - an area important to the FIA. He is also responsible for ensuring the regular publication of the **FIA Newsletter** that is the primary communication source for members.

A Technical Directorate, under the direction of Mike Gilmore (The Cabling Partnership) is tasked with an extremely active programme involving representation on many of the UK, European and international standards committees. Through this he manages the **FIA Standards Forum**. The Technical Directorate is also responsible for many of the documents published by the FIA and is in ultimate control of the **FIA Arbitration** and **Audit Services**.

Other members of the FIA Council are responsible for specific industry areas and initiatives.

These include:

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| John Colton (Lucid Optical Services): | Training |
| Paul Bateson (Optical Test and Calibration): | Test and Measurement |
| Ken Jones (EDS Systems): | Installers |
| Phil Whitehead (ACCL): | Cross-media Development |
| Simon Comben (J Brand): | Ministry of Defence Liaison |
| Alan Bullen (Lynx Networks plc): | Infrastructure |
| Jonathan Lewis (Huber & Suhner) | |

The FIA is a co-host of the Telecommunication Infrastructure Advisory Board (TIA-B) and a member of the UKCPO (UK Consortium for Photonics and Optics).

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INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIA

International membership applies to members outside the UK who join via the FIA Secretariat either because they wish to deal direct or because there is no relevant FIA Regional Office. International members will receive information in English and will not receive discounted access to events and seminars operated in the UK or other areas serviced by FIA Regional Offices. As a result the fees charged for International membership are lower than for full membership.

Corporate Membership and Associate Membership of the FIA are available in either full or International status.

Corporate Membership is open only to those who are directly involved in the fibre optic telecommunications industry and are manufacturers, distributors, re-sellers, consultants, installers, systems integrators, training providers etc. Corporate Members are able to:

- use the **FIA** Corporate logo and have their products and services promoted world-wide via the **FIA "Guide to Members Products and Services"** and the FIA web-site;
- apply to any **FIA** Approval Schemes applicable to their industry sector;
- attend and vote at Annual General Meetings.

Nominated persons within each Corporate Member receive:

- the **FIA** Newsletter by electronic distribution (paper copies are a "cost-option");
- free access to many of the **FIA** technical services, including the Standards Forum, and **FIA** commercial and employment services.

Associate Membership is open only to users of fibre optic products, systems and/or services in the sense that they buy-in these facilities for their own networks. Associate Members are able to:

- use the **FIA** Associate logo and have their details published via the **FIA "Guide to Members Products and Services"** and the FIA web-site;
- attend Annual General Meetings.

Nominated persons within each Associate Member receive:

- the **FIA** Newsletter by electronic distribution (paper copies are a "cost-option");
- free access to many of the **FIA** technical services, including the Standards Forum, and **FIA** commercial and employment services.

SERVICES, ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIP FEES (INTERNATIONAL)

Among the range of **SERVICES** offered by the FIA are:

1. publication and distribution of a regular **FIA Newsletter** summarising FIA activities plus news about its members and the industry;
2. publication of a range of **technical guides** and **references** on fibre optics;
3. the **FIA Arbitration Service**, which helps settle disputes between members and their customers should they arise;
4. the **FIA Audit Service** which provides independent verification of specification compliance;
5. the **FIA Standards Forum**, a database relating to existing and forthcoming fibre optic standards;
6. a **Seminar/Symposium** programme covering a range of topics relevant to fibre optics;
7. the **FIA Approved Installer Scheme**;
8. the **FIA Approved Training Provider Scheme**;
9. the **FIA Qualification Scheme**.

Among the range of **ACTIVITIES** undertaken by the FIA are:

1. **representation at BSI, CENELEC, ETSI, ISO and IEC** standards committees - regular updates on the status of standards activities are provided;
2. promotion of members' activities via a regular '**e-Guide to Members' Products and Services**';
3. promotion of members via a "**best-in-class**" **web-site** dedicated to fibre optics;
4. promotions via the trade and technical press covering the activities of the FIA and its members;
5. participation in major communications industry exhibitions;
6. liaison with other **Trade Associations** and industry bodies;
7. participation in the work of other key industry groups including the TIA-B and UKCPO.

Fees (effective 1st January 2010)

| Status | Turnover | Annual Fee | Renewal discount |
|-----------|----------|------------|------------------|
| Corporate | - | £395 | £45 |
| Associate | - | £175 | - |

TECHNICAL QUERIES AND STANDARDS ENQUIRIES

Technical Query Service

If you have a technical query with regard to fibre optic technology you have three options to choose from.

You can either contact the Secretariat by telephone or e-mail or you can go direct to the Technical Director via the FIA Website.

FIA Standards Forum

The Standards Forum is a service, only available to FIA members, that lists the current standards in the field of optical fibre technology and, possibly more importantly, allows access to the latest drafts of standards. Comments to these draft standards can be made to the FIA Standards Director and will be addressed by the relevant standards body.

This empowers even the smallest FIA members by getting their voices heard at national, European and international levels.

APPROVAL SCHEMES

FIA Approved Installers

The FIA has developed a unique approach to installer approval by providing hardware and software tools to allow the quality assurance demands of standards such as BS 6701 and BS EN 50174 without the need for a dramatic increase in administrative overhead.

The FIA enters into a partnership with its Approved Installers - increasing market visibility and credibility, minimising risk and maximising profit.

FIA Approved Training Providers - and the FIA Qualification Scheme

With the overall objective of improving the levels of expertise within the fibre optics industry, the FIA Qualification Scheme provides recognised personal qualifications, a clearly identified career path and ensures continuing learning provision. It also encourages quality training provision by requiring that all core elements of the Qualification Scheme be delivered by Approved Training Providers.

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ARBITRATION AND AUDIT SERVICES

Following approaches from installers within its membership, the Fibreoptic Industry Association is now providing two important services.

FIA Arbitration Service

The FIA Arbitration Service has been created to provide technical advice and support where there is a dispute relating to the work or services provided by an FIA Member. The FIA Arbitration Service is managed by the FIA Arbitration Committee and supported, where necessary, by two independent arbiters.

A decision to use the FIA Arbitration Service requires prior agreement by both parties involved that they will accept the final arbitration of the Committee. The Committee will be chaired by the Technical Director of the FIA.

NOTE: UK members are expected to carry out work to the guidelines laid down by BS7718 (Code of Practice for the Installation of Fibre Optic Cabling). Non-UK members may adopt other standards of practice as demanded by local contract to regulation.

FIA Audit Service

In contrast to the FIA Arbitration Service, the FIA Audit Service is a technical rather than contractual service. The FIA Audit Service acknowledges that procurement should always be made against an appropriate specification. However, those who do not fully specify their purchase may be taking very high risks if a dispute arises later as they may have no recourse open to them. Unfortunately, even where a specification has, to all intents and purposes, been correctly stipulated, there will be occasions when controversy arises.

The FIA Audit Service is able to provide independent verification of specification compliance for those products and services supplied by FIA members to other FIA members as well as external organizations. The Audit Service is managed by the FIA Audit Committee which is chaired by the Technical Director of the FIA.

The assessment of compliance will be undertaken by independent personnel using agreed UK, United States, European or international standards and/or codes of practice.

This method of assessing conformance allows the service to be provided using fixed and highly economic rates.

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