

In addition to the standard demands of connectors, as defined in IEC 60 603-2, for example, market and application specific demands and requirements are gaining increasing significance.

In the railway engineering area the demands made on reliability and safety are particularly high, in order to ensure utmost passenger safety in all instances. Especially in the case of routes involving a high share of tunnels that only offer limited escape route possibilities in the event of fire, the technical demands made on the materials employed are very stringent.

In addition to the fire load, and/or the flammability of a material, the so-called smoke gas density is a key characteristic, which is determined based on the opacity and toxicity of the smoke gas emissions. The risk posed by the two characteristics can not be defined in relationship to each other, which means that both minimal inflammability as well as minimal smoke gas density must be fulfilled. Materials that meet both requirements are very rare and in many instances it is only possible to fully meet one of the two criteria.

The French NFF 16-101 railway standard defines these requirements precisely and presents a structure of application groups by way of a matrix.

NFF 16-101 classifies non-metallic materials used in rail vehicles in terms of fire behavior, opacity and toxicity of smoke gas emissions in the event that the materials should burn.

In order to enable the classification with regard to the deployment of connectors, the following values must be applied:

1. Fire behavior class

Classification:

I0	for I.O. ≥ 70	and no inflammation at 960 °C
I1	for I.O. 45 - 69	and no inflammation at 960 °C
I2	for I.O. 32 - 44	and no inflammation at 850 °C
I3	for I.O. 28 - 31	and no afterburning at 850 °C
I4	for I.O. ≥ 20	
NC	not classified	

Note: The values are derived from specified test methods determining the oxygen value (I.O.) and testing inflammability by way of a filament.

2. Smoke development classification

Classification:

F0	for I.F. ≤ 5
F1	for I.F. 6 - 20
F2	for I.F. 21 - 40
F3	for I.F. 41 - 80
F4	for I.F. 81 - 120
F5	for I.F. > 120

Note: The values of the smoke index (I.F.) are derived from specified test methods by determining opacity (specific optical density, opacity values), toxicity (critical gas concentration of CO, CO₂, HCl, HBr, HCN, HF, SO₂ in smoke).

The matrix from NFF 16-102 shows how the combination of both characteristics results in a classification. This matrix is defined by the contractor in each project put up for bidding. The matrix is geared to the type of train and course of the route, whereby special attention is given to the number of tunnels. By complying with the high classifications I2 and F1, the designated standards supplementing connectors according to IEC 60603-2 can be used in all four defined groups and for all railway applications. According to NFF 16-102 the standard DIN connectors (I3, F4) are only permissible for Group 1.

group1							group2						
	I0	I1	I2	I3	I4	NC		I0	I1	I2	I3	I4	NC
F0							F0						
F1			X				F1			X			
F2							F2						
F3							F3						
F4							F4						
F5							F5						

group3							group4						
	I0	I1	I2	I3	I4	NC		I0	I1	I2	I3	I4	NC
F0							F0						
F1			X				F1			X			
F2							F2						
F3							F3						
F4							F4						
F5							F5						

Diagram: Classification from NFF 16-102, April 1992

The HARTING DIN Power and DIN Signal-Portfolio looks back on a highly successful track record in the railroad engineering industry. Typical application areas include – among many others - control, steering, monitoring components and modules on board trains, as well as signal technology components or the power supply of electronic components.

The extended range of connectors complying with the highest classification according to NFF 16-101 and 16-102 considerably reduce our customers' development times: as the selected connectors are suitable for every stipulated hazard or risk class, they are ideal for realizing product platforms, and therefore find use in every conceivable rail vehicle or railroad engineering project. This dispenses with the need for complex, product specific development work, at least in terms of selecting passive PCB interfaces, while the technical approval process is streamlined considerably.

In order to facilitate rapid identification the additional, railway specific articles are designated accordingly on the product pages.