

Lighting Global Policy for Non-Plug-and-Play Terminals

Version 1

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This document explains the requirements that must be met for a product with non-plug-and-play terminals to be eligible for the Lighting Global Quality Assurance (QA) program, and provides examples of acceptable and unacceptable terminals and connectors. For a product to be eligible for the Lighting Global QA program, all electrical connections, except for permanent connections made at the time of installation must be able to be made without the use of tools. In cases where non-plug-and-play connectors are used for permanently installed connections, the connections must be straightforward to make, provide a good quality electrical connection, and not require technical expertise to make, such as wrapping wire in a specific direction, soldering, or crimping in the field.¹ If a product has both plug-and-play and non-plug-and-play connections, the requirements of this policy apply only to the non-plug-and-play connections.

Requirements

For connectors to be acceptable when used to connect a solar home system the following must be true:

1. Adequate instructions are provided for making each type of connection.
2. After installation, all terminals, other than connections on the charge controller, must be insulated so that no live electrical parts can be contacted or must be enclosed in a way that the component would meet IP2x (i.e., a 12.5 mm probe cannot enter the enclosure where the terminals are located). In the case of battery terminals, only one terminal must be insulated.
3. Connectors on charge controllers need not be enclosed or insulated, but must be designed in a way to minimize the potential for short-circuiting, such as with plastic dividers.

Additionally, the leads from the battery to the charge controller shall have short circuit protection, which will be assessed by inspection. This protection should be located as close to the battery as practical.

- Overcurrent protection for the PV module or array shall meet the requirements of IEC 60364-7-712:712.43 unless all of the following criteria are met: The potential maximum current from all sources (the entire array) does not exceed the ampacity of the conductors.
- The inverter or battery is incapable of back-feeding power to the array.
- The array has no more than two identical modules (or series-connected strings of identical modules) wired in parallel.

¹ For the purpose of this document, the terms *in the field* and *at the factory* are used to differentiate between terminals that must be installed by a technician versus terminals that are preassembled.

All terminals for loads will be considered ports and are subject to the ports and protection tests, which include the overcurrent protection and PV overvoltage. The entire product is subject to the miswiring test.

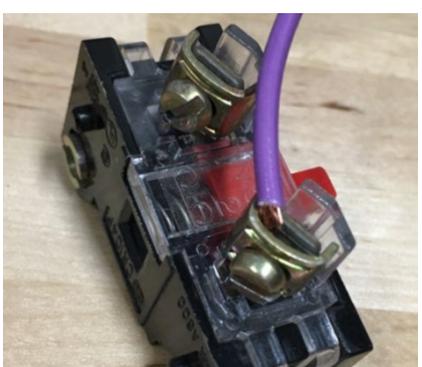
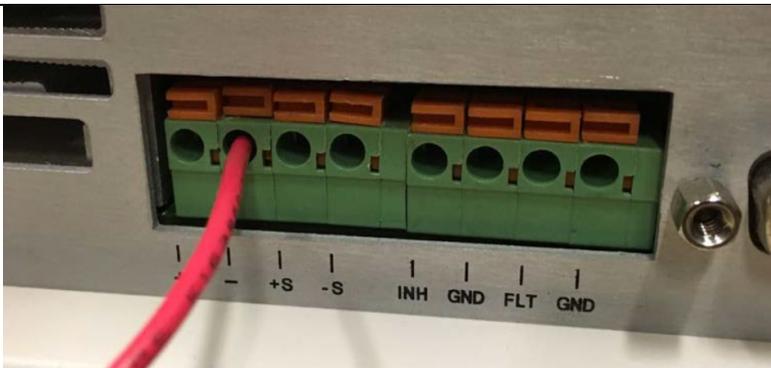
4. Adequate strain relief must be provided for all non-plug-and-play terminal connections. The method for providing strain relief shall be clearly described in the installation instructions and, if any equipment or devices are required, these shall be included with the kit. Easily disconnected terminals, like blade terminals, are only permissible if enclosed in a way that the consumer cannot easily access the terminals.
5. A means must be provided and described in the instructions to identify wires or cables in order to avoid incorrect connections (e.g., color coding or labeling of wires).
6. Any required tools other than commonly available tools (e.g. flat or Phillips screwdrivers, pliers, wire cutters, manual wire strippers) must be included with the kit. For kits that are exclusively installed by the company's trained and authorized technicians, tools need not be included in the kit, but documentation shall be submitted confirming that the necessary tools are supplied to the installing technicians.
7. All required materials (e.g. wire and terminals) must be provided with the kit, supplied to the installing technician, or adequately specified to allow the installer to select the correct materials to make the connection. Note, for most kits, the required wire shall be included with the kit. For systems that are exclusively installed by the company's trained and authorized technicians, detailed guidance for providing wire for testing is included in the Quality Standards.
8. All connectors or terminals must be appropriate for the wire type and size, number of wires, current, voltage, and installation location. If terminals are for indoor use only, this limitation must be clearly indicated in the installation instructions. Connectors must be used within their design limits. The company is required to provide specifications for connectors from the connector manufacturer upon request.

Additional requirements may apply as described in the Quality Standards; in case of a discrepancy between this policy document and the Quality Standards, the information in the Quality Standards will prevail.

Acceptable Terminals

Examples of acceptable terminals are presented below (Table 1). Any type of connection that is permanently made at the factory is also acceptable provided that it complies with Lighting Global Standards regarding workmanship and current-carrying capacity.

Table 1: Examples of acceptable non-plug-and-play terminals.

Screw terminals in which the wire is inserted into a hole and clamped down		
		<p>These terminals are simple to use and make a reliable connection, when used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications regarding the size and number of wires inserted.</p>
Screw terminals in which the wire is clamped between two plates or similar		
		<p>In these types of screw terminals, it is not necessary to wrap the wire around the screw. The wire is inserted between two plates or washers and the screw is tightened to clamp the wire in place.</p>
Lever-actuated terminals or spring terminals		
		<p>In this type of terminal, the orange lever is pushed in with a small screwdriver and the wire is inserted. When the lever is released the wire is held in place.</p>

Binding posts

Some binding posts may have a hole to insert the wire; in others, the wire needs to be wrapped around the post. *Only those that have holes to insert the wire are permitted. Those that require wrapping the wire are not permitted due to the increased likelihood of the connection being improperly made.* No tools except wire strippers are required.

Certain connectors supplied with the product to be attached to wires by the installer in the field.

Only connectors with attachment mechanisms similar to those described above (wire is inserted into a hole and clamped down, binding posts, etc.) are considered acceptable. In the picture to the left, wire is inserted in the hole in the bottom of the plug and a set screw in the back of the plug is tightened to hold the wire in place.

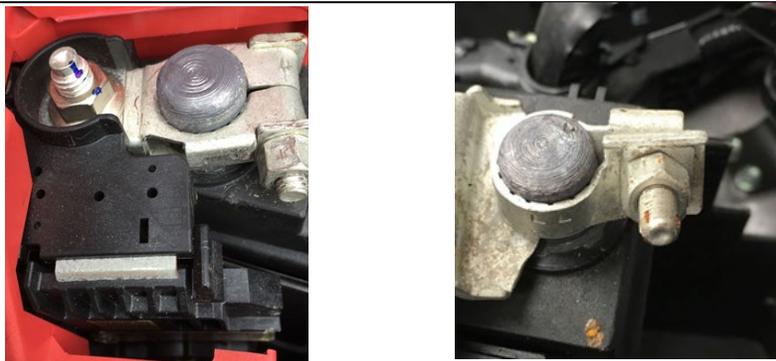
Screw terminal connections in which the wire is terminated at the factory with a spade or ring lug:



These connections are very secure but negate one of the advantages of using screw terminals, which is that the wire can be cut to size on-site.

Lugs must be crimped to the wire at the factory.

Battery terminals that are secured by a bolt and nut:



The wire must be either terminated at the factory or connected using one of the other acceptable methods listed in this document (such as clamped between two plates).

Quick disconnect (FASTON®) terminals crimped to wires at the factory



Note: these are only permissible if enclosed so the consumer cannot easily access them.

Quick disconnect terminals must be crimped to the wire at the factory

Unacceptable Terminals or Connections

The following terminals are considered unacceptable and ineligible for the Lighting Global program because they either provide a poor quality connection or require technical expertise to make, such as wrapping wire in a specific direction, soldering, or crimping in the field (Table 2).

Table 2: Examples of unaccepted non-plug-and-play terminals.

<p>Alligator (crocodile) clips</p>	
	<p>These are simple to use but can make a poor connection and require exposed conductors to function.</p>
<p>Screw terminals in which a bare wire is wrapped around the screw:</p>	
	<p>It is easy to fail to secure all the strands in this connection, which can increase the resistance of the connection or short with neighboring terminals.</p>

<p>Butt splice or splice-cap connections made by the installer to splice two (or more) wires together</p>	
	<p>These connections require skill and the proper tools to install correctly.</p>
<p>Twist-on wire connectors (wire nuts)</p>	
	<p>These are very common in building wiring in some countries (including the US) and uncommon in others (such as the UK). They are not suitable for wires that are subject to flexing or pulling (unless strain relief is provided) and are not suitable for outdoor use.</p>
<p>Soldered connections insulated with tape or heat-shrink tubing</p>	
	<p>These connections require a skilled technician.</p>
<p>Wires twisted together and taped without soldering</p>	
	<p>This is not an effective method for making reliable wire connections.</p>

Spade or ring lugs when the terminal is crimped on by the installer in the field.



These connections can be more secure than those made with bare wire, but the installer must be trained in proper crimping technique and the tool, terminal, and wire size must all be matched, or a poor connection will result. In addition, training is needed to distinguish a good crimp from a poor crimp.

Quick connect, spade and ring lugs are only allowed if the connector is connected to the wire at the factory.

- Companies submitting products with non-plug-and-play terminals are required to complete and sign the Lighting Global Non-Plug-and-Play Terminals Declaration Form and provide a copy of the installation instructions for the product. Installation instructions are required to include:
 - a list of all required tools
 - sufficient instructions, including illustrations, to make each type of connection so that it will be safe and reliable
 - a means (picture, diagram, etc.) to identify wires or cable
 - clear directions that describe how to install the strain relief
 - a statement that specifies whether the terminals are for indoor use only
 - description of the wire type and maximum length of cable that is used to connect the PV module and light points.
- Companies are encouraged to provide the following documentation in advance of testing to ensure their product will be eligible for the Lighting Global program:
 - Photos of permanently installed connections, including connectors.
 - Evidence that all connections, other than those to the charge controller are insulated or enclosed in a way that the component meets IP2X. Acceptable documentation includes: Photos, technical specification/certification or specific diagrams of enclosure/insulation.
 - Technical specifications/certifications that the leads from the battery and PV module to the charge controller have short circuit protection.
 - Evidence that all terminals have strain relief. Acceptable documentation includes: photographs, technical specification/certifications, or instructions on how to install with effective strain relief.