

The BSI guide to standardization

Section 3: British Standards standardization policies

Part 1: Fire safety

STANDARDIZATION POLICY STATEMENT

FIRE SAFETY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

All standards (e.g. test methods, specifications, design codes) in support of fire safety shall be:

- **Appropriate to the hazard and/or risk.** There should be a clear understanding of the nature of the hazard and, where appropriate the risk presented by that hazard (see the guidance in BS 6336). The assessment of risk shall be appropriate to the hazard, and shall be elaborated as a pre-cursor to any requirements related to it.
- **Mutually compatible.** Requirements or procedures given in one standard, should be compatible with those presented in other standards addressing similar hazards.
- **Not misleading.** References to fire in British Standards shall not suggest, explicitly or implicitly, that compliance with a standard will ensure the fire safety of a product, material, structure or system.

The above policy is adopted throughout the whole of the UK National Standards Development Programme, and shall be promoted onwards into CEN/CENELEC and ISO/IEC.

2. BACKGROUND

Introduction

Many British and international standards exist that largely deal with or have a significant component that relates to fire safety. With so much activity there is a risk of fragmentation, conflicting requirements and differing levels of detail. Therefore to maintain the reputation of BSI in the fire arena there is a need for a clear strategic approach that all committees are satisfied with and that also introduces an appropriate level of co-ordination.

Strategic overview

In the developed world, fire claims the lives of 10-20 people per million of the population per year. Direct property losses amount to approximately 0.2 % of GDP per year. The large majority of fatal fires in those countries occur in occupied buildings. Together with the costs of the emergency services, fire protection in buildings, fire insurance administration and the consequential losses to commerce, the total cost approaches 1 % of GDP. Fire safety impinges on nearly every aspect of human endeavor and requires the assessment and control of risk of materials, products and structures in the broadest sense. The main stakeholders include industry, in particular the construction industry, regulators, clients, designers, suppliers, insurers, building operators, consumer groups, research and testing organizations and certification bodies.

Objectives of the policy

Fire safety has a significant impact on our world and it is therefore essential that there is a well developed, well organized set of standards that are effective and easy to use to reduce the impact of fire. This is the primary objective of the fire safety policy. However, it is also clear that where such standards exist the international use of such standards increases, which is of benefit to the UK economy. The secondary objective of the policy is to achieve coordination of fire related work among all committees.

3. GUIDANCE

The following table and guidelines shall be used to determine whether a standard should incorporate fire requirements:

Hazard		Risk		Action
		Probability	Consequence	
Primary	Fire itself	Low	Low	No
Primary	Fire itself	Low	High	Perhaps
Secondary	Heat of smoke	High	Low	Perhaps
Secondary	Spread of flame etc	High	High	Yes

- In the preparation of all fire-related standards (including standards and codes relating to the construction products directive, structural design codes, and design and execution codes), technical committees shall consult B/-/12, Fire coordination, which is responsible for ensuring the planned overall structure of fire-related standards in consultation with committee chairmen and the relevant government department.
- All standards shall conform to this policy, and published standards shall be checked for conformity to this policy as part of their 5 year review.
- In the preparation of all standards that include fire safety, technical committees shall consult the secretaries of relevant fire committees (contact the secretary to B/-/12 for guidance). It is important to coordinate work with other committees, particularly with regard to drafting or modification of sections of other committees' standards where reference is made to fire, fire safety, fire protection and related issues.
- All UK delegates to international and European standards meetings shall check that the UK brief is in accordance with the policy.
- In the preparation of standards that include graphical symbols for fire safety, technical committees shall consult PH/8/1, Safety signs (including fire safety signs), in order to ensure that new symbols do not conflict with or duplicate symbols or sets of symbols already standardized.
- A warning shall be included in all British Standard methods involving fire tests. It shall be of a general or specific nature, as appropriate, on taking precautions to safeguard health of personnel conducting the tests against the risks of fire or inhalation of smoke and toxic products of combustion.
- Misleading information and misrepresentation of product capability can lead to prosecution under consumer protection, trading standards or health and safety legislation.

4. REFERENCES

BS 6336, *Guide to the development of fire tests, the presentation of test data and the role of tests in hazard assessment*