



Summer 2011

# The Review

YOU CAN FEEL SAFE WITH THE BRITISH FIRE CONSORTIUM

## Free for all in Risk Assessments?

### Competency criteria , the BFC tackles difficult issues...

Roger Chamberlain, representing the BFC, consults with the Department of Communities and Local Government. Whether your feelings are liking or loathing, risk assessments have been around for a while and will certainly be with us into the foreseeable future. Supporting health and safety legislation, risk assessments have been responsible for making employer and employee examine their work place and working practices, thereby improving the working environment and our public places. Unguarded machinery is unlikely, serious care is taken over working with hazardous substances, acceptable temperature and noise levels are all defined to improve the health and wellbeing of working people. All laudable achievements but are we becoming a risk averse society in the face of the possible litigation? There certainly seems a rash of no win no fee adverts from the legal services peppering the television, billboards and our newspapers. Where does this leave us ?

For many it is seeking some help. If you were to google risk assessment you would find thirteen million six hundred thousand entries. Roger Chamberlain reports, for BFC members, it is a case of ensuring that, if your company offers fire risk assessments, that those carrying out the assessment are indeed a "competent" person. Under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, there is no requirement for the responsible person to be a competent assessor. However, there is a clear indication that they must make "a suitable and sufficient" assessment of the risks in their premises to identify the general fire precautions which must be taken to comply with the Order. As a consequence, the responsible person must make a decision as to whether or not they are sufficiently competent to undertake the fire risk assessment, or whether they should appoint another person to carry out the task, i.e. a BFC member company. (cont)



## Failure in the field, who takes responsibility?

I am sure you will all agree these are worrying times, says Graham Newman, BFC Technical officer. Problems with the performance of products was always our primary concern but these have recently been surpassed by concerns over the safety of the product. The EU commission thought they were helping by issuing the pressure equipment laws of 2002/3 but these have in fact made things worse. In the last 30 years there have been very few product safety warnings but there have been at least 4 in the last 18 months. This is a worrying trend but things are actually worse as some manufacturer choose to keep quiet or avoid responsibility. For example last year we had a warning about valves failing and advice from the manufacturer on what actions to take. I am aware of 2 other makes of extinguisher suffering exactly the same problem but both distributors have remained quiet.

Now we have problems with carbon dioxide extinguisher valves, this is potentially much more serious as one of these failing could result in a fatality. Interestingly in this case the extinguisher manufacturer has warned us of the risk but the advice given is inadequate and unclear. At the time of going to print, things are not clear, as it seems this problem may not be limited to one manufacturer in the UK but could affect many. (cont)

## Who are we

The British Fire Consortium is one of the largest fire trade association in the UK and our members comprise fire equipment maintenance and installation companies, fire consultants and manufacturers who can offer unrivalled expertise in all aspects of fires safety to customers across the UK. A list of members is available on our website. British Standards demand the extinguisher servicing is carried out by a 'competent person'. Customers can be confident that BFC technicians achieve this status by completing the BFC's training course and BSI/BAFE approved examination.

### Members benefits

Valuable networking opportunities are presented regularly through meetings and events.

Meetings **12 July—Frimley**  
**7 October—Bath**

## IN THIS ISSUE

AGM in Bath  
Book your place for this year

BFC Identity Cards  
Photo card for BFC members.

New Training Diary  
Courses available nationwide

New Members  
Focus on our newest recruits

Standards update

And more.....

Contact the British Fire Consortium: Telephone 0333 123 5306

Email: [secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk](mailto:secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk) [www.britishfireconsortium.org.uk](http://www.britishfireconsortium.org.uk)

**Roger Chamberlain reports continued form the front page....**

The Fire Risk Competency Council evolved as a result of the British Fire Consortium becoming involved with others in the Fire Industry who were expressing great concerns that a fundamental part of UK legislation-the requirement of carrying out a fire risk assessment-did not have any competency standards with which to work. Under the chairmanship of Iain Cox, representing the Chief Fire Officers Association and with the backing of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) the council meet to establish competency criteria for Fire Risk Assessors and produce a document that will be the benchmark against which competency levels in fire risk assessment can be assessed and accredited.

A draft document will shortly be available for public consultation and will be forwarded to all BFC members for comment. We look forward to hearing from you.

It was also felt that advice and assistance should be given to persons who may be appointing an assessor to carry out an assessment on their behalf. Therefore a supporting document will be created which will be aimed at the end user (duty holder or responsible person) detailing how to choose a competent fire risk assessor for their company or organisation.

Your council is constantly aiming to give you the best possible technical advice on specific topics that are important and relevant to you and your business. What we can tell you is that Fire Officers will no longer accept tick box risk assessments. The part that fire risk assessments play in ensuring companies and organisations to be compliant in fire safety management is a fundamental and crucial element of their infrastructure, and we, as responsible individuals working in the fire industry, need to be fully aware of the legislation and how it is enacted.

## British Fire Consortium Council Members



Graham Newman  
President



Colin Rhodes  
Chairman



Mart Rogers  
Treasurer



Gary McDowall  
Vice Chairman



Roger Chamberlain  
Audits & Risk Assessment



Ken Day  
Training



Steve Evans  
Councillor



Tom Brookes  
Alarms & Emergency Lighting



Steve Best  
Councillor



Jacqui Teale  
General Secretary

*BFC members requiring technical support should contact the Secretary, Jacqui Teale, on **0333 123 5306** who will refer them to the most appropriate council member.*

### Communicate with Us

One of the services we provide to members is a regular e-mail bulletins that gives up to date information, safety updates, notice of changes to legislation etc.....

We recently monitored the receipt and opening of these e-mails and discovered of the entire number sent out only 84 were opened.

Are they going to the wrong addresses? If you are not getting them please can you ring the secretary to advise us of your current e-mail contact. 0333 123 5306

Perhaps they are going into your spam box. Consider putting the BFC in your contacts list and this may stop our e-mails ending up as spam.

### Graham Newman reports continued from front page

Recently, manufacturers have been driven by the dash to Far East for ever cheaper parts but who benefits from these cheaper parts and more importantly who is responsible if one fails? It could be the British distributor but his responsibility may end by replacing the product, if enough failures occur the British distributor may go out of business leaving seemingly no one responsible. British distributors tell me the responsibility lies with the original manufacturer in the Far East. I wonder what response you will get in 2 or 3 years time when someone has been injured by one of their products.

See BFC product warnings 2010 and June2011 and EU rapex

## And the news from FIREX 2011 at the NEC



Happy technicians  
from Castle Fire,  
Kendal escape with  
their goody bags!

The BFC had a stand at this year's FIREX exhibition in Birmingham and the level of interest in the association was exceptional. The Council members are working hard to convert the high level of enquiries for membership into new member companies.

Although the BFC have taken stands at previous FIREX exhibitions such as FIREX North and South this is the association's first attendance at the main exhibition in Birmingham. Those Council members who manned the stand were very encouraged by the numbers of visitors to the stand during the four days of the event.

Clearly, there are many fire protection businesses that see the advantage of being a member of a fire trade association and TBFC is offering many of the requirements of the Fire Industry by providing high quality training, expert information and guidance on legislation and standards, alongside general advice, warning, alerts, etc. We liaise regularly with the other major trade associations in the UK enabling us access to the most up to date information which we pass on to our members through newsletters, e-mail bulletins and most importantly our general meetings.

One of the main aims of the BFC is to encourage all companies working in our industry to hold a formal membership of a recognised trade association, The BFC has the largest membership of small fire protection and fire prevention businesses in the UK and the experience of meeting and talking with many members at exhibition gave us good feedback on our services, we were able to inform non members to the advantages of membership, explaining the level of support we offer and talk to other organisations about the BFC.

## Top Post for BFC Training Officer



Congratulations to Ken Day, BFC Training Officer on being elected President of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers.

Ken says he feels extremely honoured to have received the nomination to spearhead the organisation which is the UK's fastest growing professional fire safety body. The Institute has a number of overseas members. The aim of the Institute is 'To raise the awareness of fire safety at a local, national and international level, promoting fire prevention, fire protection and reducing the risk from fire as far as reasonable practicable'. Regular technical conferences and training events provide members and others with the opportunity to keep abreast of developments and advances in the fire safety world and provides communication with 100's of other like minded fire professionals.

The Institute maintains a Fire Risk Assessors Register and has been working closely with Warrington Certification on establishing a UKAS accredited Fire Risk Assessor scheme.

For individuals and organizations running fire training courses the Institute provides an accreditation system which is open to both members and non members.

## Nigerian delegates attend BFC Training Course



Following many months of correspondence on visa issues the BFC were delighted to finally welcome their first delegates from Nigeria.

Forward looking companies Misoab Services and Seamate Maritime Services based in Lagos have decided to formalise their extinguisher provision and maintenance standard and have adopted BS 5306-3 and 8.

Michael Ogunjuy and Ntuk Joy Ntuk of Misoab Services are seen taking part in the practical maintenance session which equipped them to take the top places in the practical assessment with an achievement of 99% and 97% respectively.



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Anti Foaming  
Agent



ABC Macintosh Limited, Unit C,  
Marconi Courtyard, Brunel Road,  
Corby, NN17 4LT

**Call or contact us now**

**01536 260 333 enquiries@abcmacintosh.com**

# British and European Standards Update

The British Fire Consortium send representatives to committees working on a number of both British and European Standards BS EN3 Manufacture of Extinguishers, BS EN5306 Servicing of Extinguishers, BS EN6643 Refilling of Extinguishers, BS EN2 Classes of Fire, BS 6165 Aerosol Fire Extinguishers, BS 7863 Colour Coding, BS 5839 Fire Alarms and BS 5266 to name just a few!!!

Here is a short resume of work done recently. Not forgetting as members of the BFC you can purchase any standard you need from us with a 30% reduction, just contact [secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk](mailto:secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk) with your request.

There has been little progress on British extinguisher standards as BSI seems to be going through a reorganisation which is never helpful. Work continues on the European front so the problems at BSI become an irrelevance as they now appear to just have the role of a rubber stamping organisation.

The problems involving carbon dioxide extinguishers failing to comply with EU law looks like it might be getting closer to a resolution as does harmonising the extinguisher manufacturing standard EN3 with the PED, much to the dismay of some European manufacturers who seem to prefer to remain in the past.

There has still been no progress at all with fire blankets; it seems to an area that the Europeans will not address. We are writing a standard for aerosol fire extinguishers where work is progressing.

Finally, there have been a number of meetings to work on a standard for the servicing of extinguishers. Some of the topics of discussion are interesting to say the least! For example it has been suggested that all stored pressure extinguishers (except carbon dioxide extinguishers)

should be opened annually to check the dip tube hasn't fallen off. Another, is a basic service should be done every two years with no commissioning needed, enabling the customer to simply purchase their extinguishers from a supermarket, install them and only call in a competent person after two years. We, at the BFC are working hard to ensure such ideas go nowhere. The UK has already lodged its formal objections to them. Graham Newman reported.

BS5266 Emergency lighting Standard is still out for public comment, There have been quite a few comments so I feel it will be held up for more discussion, next meeting 13th July.

BS5839-6 this had come to a standstill. The three committees dealing with this review had appointed the individual Chairmen and were waiting for the BSI Secretary to call the next group of meetings. It was confirmed that the noise levels had been changed to 75 db above the bed head and the timescale for the release of the document will be at the next meeting, perhaps in June?

This is a big change to BS5839-6 that members will need to be aware of if it stays, currently its 85db within 3m of a bedroom door, this may mean that if there is currently a smoke detector outside the bedroom door, it may not now reach the required 75db at bed head if you lose 30db through the fire door. However this still has further to go yet. Changes are being made to unify the principles of both documents; nearly all the interested parties wanted this (apart from Colin Todd who wrote the last one). Next meeting 5th July. Third Party Certification BAFE launched their SP204 (Emergency Lighting Scheme) and its fire scheme had up to 400 members and was growing, however it is felt that the emergency lighting may not take off as most installers of emergency lights were either NIC or ECA electricians.

CFOA False Alarm policy. The majority of the fire brigades were content with the policies they already had in place, whilst others were happy to include aspects of the CFOA policy to their policy. The minority were intending to adopt the CFOA policy. It looks like the fire brigades are satisfied with doing their own thing and put two fingers up to CFOA (in my opinion, I cannot see the point of CFOA policy if their own officers do not want to adopt it). It has been noted that some of the brigades are trying to bring in some way of charging for false alarms with Devon and Somerset being quite vocal in support of it. Tom Brookes reported.



## Half a century of Service

Steve Evans and Graham Newman Pictured above with long service awards presented to them by The British Standards Institute. Both BFC Council members have worked conscientiously for twenty five years.

# New Service For Members—ID Cards



Example front

Competent Person for the installation, commissioning and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers.

A. Company Limited  
Unit 3, Random Trading Estate  
Odd Green Road, Somewhere  
AA1 1BB  
Telephone 01234 56789

For Verification Telephone 0333 123 5306

The issuing of this identity card to the registered technician does not permit the above named company to display the BFC logo anywhere, unless the company is a full member of the British Fire Consortium.

Example back

From June all delegates who attend and pass the BFC 3 day extinguisher technician course or the BFC refresher training will be given a photo ID card. Photograph will be taken during the course and cards produced and sent with the certificate. ID cards can also be issued to delegates who attend and pass other BFC courses upon request.

Anyone wishing to order a card who has trained with us in the last 2 years can contact the secretary to order their own. You will need to be able to e-mail us a passport style photograph. There is no charge for this.

## BFC Training Diary 2011

### Extinguisher Technician Exam Course

#### BS 5306 Competent Person

July	18—21	Cheltenham
September	04—09	Bexley
October	03—06	Glasgow
November	14—18	Birmingham
December	05—08	Northampton

### Fire Safety Manager - Module 1

#### Fire Risk Assessment

September	05—09	Stockport
October	17—21	Northampton
November	14—18	Stockport

### Fire Safety Manager - Advanced

May	23—27	Northampton
September	26—30	Stockport

### Fire Alarm - Module 2

#### Maintenance

September	20	Birmingham
November	22	Birmingham

### Fire Alarm - Module 5

#### Advanced Design

September	22	Birmingham
November	24	Birmingham

### Extinguisher Technician Refresher

July	18	Bexley
September	05	Cheltenham
September	12	Belfast
October	03	Birmingham
October	10	Glasgow
November	14	Cheltenham
December	12	TBC

### Fire Safety Manager - Module 2

#### Fire Safety Management

July	25—28	Northampton
December	05—08	Stockport

### Fire Alarm - Module 1

#### Foundation

September	19	Birmingham
November	21	Birmingham

### Fire Alarm - Modules 3 and 4

#### Installation and Commissioning

September	21	Birmingham
November	23	Birmingham

### Emergency Lighting

September	23	Birmingham
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# This year the BFC visit Bath

## Annual General Meeting 2011

**Put the  
date in  
your diary**

**Friday  
7 October**

An opportunity to meet your councillors and fellow members, listen to the guest speakers and have a part in the running of your trade association.

As a full member the meeting with lunch and evening meal plus entertainment is your free entitlement. So why not come along with your partner to..

### **The Hilton Hotel Bath**

[www.hilton.co.uk/bathcity](http://www.hilton.co.uk/bathcity)



Rooms have been pre booked and are available at a special rate, or it is possible to arrange your own accommodation.

Contact Becky at  
ABC MacIntosh  
01536 260333

### Your Annual General Meeting

9.30 meet and greet coffee  
10.00 AGM with guest speaker

1.00 lunch

extra delegates or guests welcome  
£26.85 pp

the afternoon is free for you to enjoy the delights of Bath

7.00 Evening dinner for you and your partner plus a 'West End Show'

extra guests welcome £48.00 pp

**for further information contact  
[secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk](mailto:secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk)**

# New Members Feature

## Recycling - we know it makes sense!

Our back page profile now introduces new members. New members, joining since the last issue can give us information about their company and the services offered. The following companies have become members:

Fire & Safety Management UK Ltd West Sussex; Three Counties Fire Protection Cambridgeshire; The Hire Supply Company T/A Firesafe Nottinghamshire; P & R Services (Glasgow) Ltd; LeaLec Ltd Suffolk; G and R Fire Protection Perth; Astral Fire & Security Ltd Staffordshire; 1st Choice Fire protection (Wales) Ltd Caerphilly; AMT Security Systems Ltd London; LCE Fire & Electrical Services London.

In this issue we would like to introduce.....

## Fire Protection Recycling



Based in the West Midlands, Fire Protection Recycling are the one stop shop for the disposal of all your fire equipment throughout the UK and Europe.



We have van/skip/roll on roll off/pallet and drop off services in place to ensure the correct procedure. With all collections a Duty of Care Waste Transfer Note will be provided for your records. With collections of Detectors and Florescent Tubes Hazardous Waste paperwork will also be provided.

Please take a look at our website [www.fireprotectionrecycling.co.uk](http://www.fireprotectionrecycling.co.uk) to see how your equipment is recycled.

Or contact us on freephone  
0800 0194 529

Fire Protection Recycling feature



## Who will be the next new members to be featured here?