



News and views from Fire & Security Consultancy Limited

The secret to cutting building maintenance costs - *the right way!*

Whilst some argue that it is impossible to reduce costs without cutting corners, forward-thinking building maintenance teams have managed to employ some practical changes, which have not only reduced costs, but have also reduced carbon emissions, increased operational efficiency and helped them to remain fully compliant with legislation.

The changes that building managers can implement range from simple ideas, such as installing toilet hippos, to more progressive changes, such as installing a Building Management System (BMS).

Whilst a BMS can be installed as a standalone application, as we move into the era of SMART buildings, more often we are seeing the BMS integrated with a wide range of monitoring programs across multiple platforms, providing building managers with a single, shared view of building operations.

Integrated systems generally include; power, heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, access control, elevators and lighting; however, as the technology continues to develop, we will soon begin to see integrated fire and security systems.

Of course, due to their very nature, fire safety systems are subject to a whole host of legislative requirements, and currently, there is no formal guidance for integrating these types of systems. Fortunately, legislative bodies recognise that integrated systems are the way of the future and therefore BS 7273 Part 6 is currently being drafted to outline the code of practice for the interface between fire detection and alarm systems with ancillary systems and equipment.

In a further attempt to improve life safety, official bodies are also currently drafting CEN 169 WG3 in relation to wayfinding technology. This will provide guidance on how information from sources such as fire detectors and control emergency lighting signage can be used to direct building occupants down the quickest and safest possible emergency exit route.

So, why are we telling you this?

Hochiki have recently launched FIREscape+ to the UK market; a combined fire detection and emergency lighting system with the added benefit of wayfinding technology. This system has been specifically designed with efficiency in mind. It allows you to install fire detection and emergency lighting devices onto one set of low voltage cabling, saving you money on installation and maintenance. Furthermore, all devices are self-testing and can be monitored via a single control panel, making maintenance much more efficient. LED luminaires and low voltage cabling also contribute to reduced carbon emissions and reduced energy bills. These are just some of the great benefits brought to you by FIREscape+; head over to our website to learn more.

www.hochikieurope.com/firescapeplus



Growth in demand for fire solutions exacerbates skills crisis in fire engineering

The effects of the Grenfell Tower tragedy are being felt across the fire industry, a study into the UK fire market suggests.

Defying any dampening effect Brexit-related uncertainty might have caused, enquiries for goods and services post-Grenfell have grown strongly, a survey of fire solution providers has revealed.

Wave 10 of the Market Conditions Survey is the latest annual snapshot of trends in the UK fire sector from The Fire Industry Association (FIA). In the first full 12 months analysed by the report since the Grenfell tragedy, which claimed 71 lives in June 2017, it was also revealed that companies already struggling to find suitably qualified engineers are now having to ramp up recruitment further to fulfil orders.

"The industry as a whole needs to entice more people into the fire and security industry to grow," said a fire professional who completed the survey. *"Fire engineers are very sought after,"* one respondent wrote, with another noting there is *"still a huge skills shortage in the industry."*

A global shortage of components, meanwhile, makes it more challenging for providers to meet growing demand, as well as eroding profit margins. Concerns were also raised about competence and compliance. If the growth in enquiries suggests landlords and other responsible persons are taking their responsibilities more seriously, some respondents suggested all too many service providers are failing to do likewise.

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“There was initially a knee-jerk reaction post-Grenfell,” said one. “It still worries me how many competitors are still offering ‘get arounds’ or interpreting the rules in a way that is for commercial gain, at the expense of what is professionally or ethically correct.” Another who echoed these sentiments said: “There seems to be a bigger focus on cutting corners where possible – indicating that profits are under pressure. My biggest concern for the industry as a whole is lack of effective competency.”

Ian Moore, CEO of the FIA said “With a number of scathing reports on the lack of professionalism and competency in our industry, building owners and landlords are starting to demand the best available – compliant in every sense – as it has been reinforced that they are responsible and the consequences in cutting corners can be dire.”

“This can only be advantageous for FIA members – as we are, by nature of the strict joining criteria, all professional organisations that have taken the time and money to prove competency to different degrees.”

Competence and compliance are the FIA’s raison d’être. Third-party certification is a prerequisite for joining the association, which promotes compliance with standards and legislation among suppliers and fire safety professionals across the supply chain.

The full report can be downloaded from the FIA website www.fia.uk.com

Fire safety in construction a bigger priority post-Grenfell

construction sector frustrated by government response

The construction industry has seen myriad improvements to fire safety since the Grenfell Tower fire, but there is frustration that the government has responded too slowly, a new study reveals.

Since the fire in June 2017, which killed 71 people, construction industry professionals have seen substantive changes in products used for cladding, insulation and fire doors, as well as greater demands for more fire testing of products. A survey of construction professionals from all parts of the trade, conducted for UK Construction Week (UKCW), also suggested fire safety has become a bigger priority in revised procurement policies, tenders and contract terms, the survey reveals. However, the government was widely criticised for taking too long to clarify new requirements since the fire and subsequent publication of the Hackitt Review on 17 May 2018. “Things are changing, but way too slowly,” said a construction professional who completed the survey. Another said: “I just wish that action could happen more quickly”. Another had particularly low expectations of the government “The government will take a decade to produce yet another set of incomplete regulations together, and will probably produce another white paper. They need to set a clock on this.”

Asked what changes they had made since the tragedy respondents had most frequently reviewed project designs and specifications, commissioned additional fire risk assessments on projects and ramped up fire safety training.

They were also asked to pick the three changes they thought would most likely

improve fire safety across the built environment, in buildings of all sizes and types. On average they most frequently cited greater involvement of some to conduct a full fire risk assessment to enhance design and specification - such as an architect, clerk of works, fire engineer, or fire and rescue service.

Contractor-led Design and Build

Many called for the end of contractor-led ‘Design and Build’ contracts. Not far behind in second place was a sea change in specifying materials. Many backed the recently announced ban on combustible materials in exposed areas of a building, in particular cladding or insulation.

The aluminium composite material panels used on Grenfell Tower have been banned and more recent regulations will extend the ban to include plastics, wood and products that include combustible materials such as aluminium composite panels in the external wall systems used in residential buildings more than 18 metres tall. The only materials that will be allowed are those classed as A1 or A2, which includes elements such as metal, stone and glass, which seldom contribute to fires; or plasterboard, which makes no significant contribution.

The third most highly ranked change sought by construction professionals was the installation and regular maintenance of sprinklers and other active fire detection and

suppression equipment into all buildings. New regulations only ranked sixth on the industry’s list of priorities.

Asked to score out of 10 their confidence that the UK’s approach to fire safety in all buildings would now change for the better, respondents on average went for 6 out of 10. Contractors, specialist sub-contractors and building products suppliers are marginally more confident than other groups (average confidence score of 7 out of 10).

“Our research shows that the industry has taken to heart every opportunity to change its practice and is already well along a process that will change the way all buildings are procured, design, built and maintained,” said Nathan Garnett, event director at UK Construction Week. “This is an issue that will be discussed widely at next week’s event, and is likely to remain the highest agenda item for years to come. While confidence is quite good at this time, we must do all we can to maintain the positive attitude and momentum behind these changes.”

Geoff Wilkinson, managing director of Wilkinson Construction Consultants, a fire safety and building standards expert and one of the speakers at this year’s UKCW seminar on quality in construction post-Grenfell, says “It is very encouraging to see the industry getting on with it, despite the hiatus from Government. But what’s needed is an industry-wide coordinated response.

“The ban on combustible materials is long overdue. We need to be told why it has taken over a year to get to this point when a very simple changing of regulatory guidance could have achieved the same thing in days.”



Quelcast Fire Collar Range Gains CE Mark Certification

Quelfire, a leading UK passive fire protection manufacturer and supplier, has announced that its QuelCast Cast In Fire Collar range has gained CE Marking.

QuelCast Cast In Fire Collars prevent the spread of fire through plastic pipes and cables where they penetrate concrete floors.

The QuelCast Cast In Fire Collars have been tested in accordance with BS EN 1366-3:2009 where pipe diameters of up to 160mm have met insulation and integrity criteria for this standard

for up to four hours (EI240), maintaining the

fire rating of the concrete floor slab. QuelCast Cast In Fire Collars are an essential part of a fire stopping strategy because they enable plastic pipes and cables passing through fire compartment floors to meet the requirements of Building Regulations.

As part of the CE Mark certification, Quelfire has strict quality control processes in place. This involves every batch of QuelCast collars undergoing a series of tests to ensure consistency and guarantee performance. The company is then audited by Warrington Certification and inspectors visit its factory on a regular basis to verify that manufacturing is carried out to the same high standards as the products that were fire tested for CE certification.

Keith Wells, Quelfire Managing Director, said: *"The CE Mark approval on our cast in fire collars is a significant accomplishment for Quelfire. The fire collars meet the rigorous and high safety standards that we have set for all passive fire protection products. Contractors that switch to our cast in collars will demonstrate that they are taking proactive steps to ensure the consistency of fire stopping of service penetrations."*

QuelCast Cast In Fire Collars are quick and simple to install and generally require no backfill, avoiding additional cost and time once positioned. They have a compact footprint that allows for closer positioning of pipes as well as an integrated moisture and smoke seal. The collars feature integral fixing points for easy installation in site.

Contractors that use QuelCast collars save around 40 per cent in material and installation times compared to traditional on-site methods – they eliminate the requirement for timber formwork or concrete drilling, whilst avoiding work at height to fit collars or wraps after the floor slab is in place.

Constructed from a robust polypropylene material, the collars contain a high-performance intumescent that reacts under the influence of heat. This will exert pressure on the pipe as it softens, to form a carbonaceous char, which provides an effective insulation plug, preventing smoke and fire passing through to the adjoining compartment.

The QuelCast Cast In Fire Collars offer Type X Durability, meaning they are unaffected by weathering once installed on site. The range features a strong, robust lid, avoiding a number of health and safety issues on site for main contractors. They are suitable for foot traffic and wheeled trolleys, whilst preventing items from falling through the aperture.

QuelCast Cast In Fire Collars are suitable for one of the widest ranges of plastic pipe materials in the market, including PVC, PVC-U, PE, HDPE, MDPE and PP as well as a number of pipe wall thicknesses. They are available to suit 50mm, 110mm and 160mm pipes. QuelCast Collars have also been tested and can be used to firestop cable penetrations.

The range is backed up with Quelfire's market-leading technical support, which is available to all customers. Quelfire's promise is to assist customers all the way from the design stage through to installation and completion of the project. This service will be highly valued by reinforced concrete frame contractors looking to meet tender commitments on current and future projects.



Quelfire offers a one-stop-shop, single branded system approach that provides contractors with a wide range of firestopping solutions. The products are manufactured by the company in the UK. Quelfire is one of the leading manufacturers and suppliers of specialist passive fire protection for buildings and has 40 years' experience of supplying high quality, independently tested solutions.

For more information on Quelfire's new Cast In Fire Collars, visit: www.quelfire.co.uk

FIRE SAFETY DURING REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF CLADDING

HSE is undertaking a series of inspections of removal and replacement of Aluminium Composite Material cladding projects on tall buildings. The focus of these visits will be on fire safety, though other matters of evident concern found will also be dealt with.

HSE has produced a sector technical note for its inspectors at Appendix 1 of its operational guidance on Managing fire risk during cladding and insulation removal and replacement on tall buildings, focused on fire matters that is also useful for clients, managing agents, designers and contractors involved in planning, procuring and undertaking the work. If you are engaged in such work, you are strongly advised to read and follow the guidance in the note, which supplements the guidance in **HSG 168 – Fire safety in construction**.

UEST ARTICLE - Breaking ground: equality and diversity in the construction industry

Nick Conway, Managing Director at ITC, takes a look at the practical steps those in construction can take to improve equality and diversity in our industry.

With the UK's evolving culture and environments, we are living in an age where inclusion and understanding of one another is continuously increasing. Yet, many industries are still working to diversify their companies' culture. Equality isn't a problem to solve, but an emerging social norm that brings about better working and social environments. To change the landscape, we need to showcase accessible opportunities and advantages of careers in construction to attract a diverse range of demographics.

Embracing each other's differences and collaborating, strengthens teams planning, problem-solving and communication. At ITC, we believe in our people, our work and being better, so we regularly ask ourselves; What actions can be taken to improve equality and diversity in our industry?

● Open up communication

One key way to promote equality in the workplace is to ensure there are open lines of internal communication and that everyone in the team feels empowered to have their views heard. It's important to listen to the first-hand experience of team members who have encountered issues of equality or who have ideas of where and how the industry can progress. Having a leadership team who are accessible and approachable is vital in order to use the experiences of all to make the industry a fairer place. Prioritising internal communication is key to the work at ITC.

Equality is a sector-wide issue and, as such, is something we can only truly address together. Sharing ideas and being inspired by others as we all push for progress is vital if we're to see change at the speed that's required. Equality isn't an area of competition, but collaboration: we need to learn from each other.

● Invest in young people

Young people are the future, and this cliché is true for our sector. It's an industry where, of those born in the UK, 30% of employees are over 50. This means we need to invest in gaining the interest of the next generation if we want our area to grow and develop.

Higher education costs often act as barriers for many prospective students – either in entering the industry or increasing in levels of seniority. At ITC we've made funding education a key part of our strategy by helping ten team members through university whilst working for us.

Investing in young people isn't all about funding for higher education. Work experience and apprenticeships are vital ways of opening up and demystifying our sector to men and women from all backgrounds. We've had a number of students complete their work experience with us and get a taste of life in construction. Showcasing the many different roles and skills within our industry while challenging pre-conceptions.

● Everyone is an ambassador

Every member of your company is an ambassador for the industry, helping redefine public perception and demonstrate that it's not just about hard hats. Promoting the variety of work available in the sector is vital in improving equality and diversity, as sharing knowledge opens up the sector to those who may never have previously considered a construction career.

There are, of course, some more quantifiable ways of being an industry ambassador. Our Business Development Manager Becky Cheney is a member of the Association of Women in Property, sitting on their South East Committee. This role sees her support students in industry workshops, giving advice and helping them find internships and graduate jobs, and Becky has also written about what our sector can do to address the gender imbalance.

● Care

This is the least tangible of the steps I've suggested, but it's by no means the least important. It's easy to tell if a company truly cares about its team as well as making a difference in the industry. It's believing that true success stems from your people, not projects, which will allow wholehearted commitment to the pursuit of equality.

Here at ITC, we're honoured to be industry recognised through awards for our work, but what we're perhaps most proud of is the feedback we received from Investors in People, when they certified us as Gold standard, last year. And they're the values which are required for a more equal and diverse industry. Hard work, honesty and trust? The cement we'll need to build towards a fairer future.

Fire risk assessment sector must undergo cultural change in wake of Hackitt report, says safety expert

Speaking at FIREX 2018, Brian Gregory from Safety Management UK told delegates that "somebody needs to stand up and do something different" following the publication of Dame Judith Hackitt's independent review of building regulations and fire safety.

"I believe Dame Judith got a lot right," he told delegates at the event. "It's about how cheap we can get the job done. It doesn't matter where you come from. Everybody has looked to cut corners and save money. That's why the culture needs to change. Dame Judith talked about a lack of leadership from the enforcement authority," added Mr Gregory. "That's probably fair. There needs to be clarity and it comes from people standing up and saying these are the rules. But everybody keeps shying away from that. There needs to be clarity and it comes from people standing up and saying these are the rules. But everybody keeps shying away from that."

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"We've had a race to the bottom. Whether we have got there yet is another matter, but if there's further to go, then the problems are only going to get worse."

One of the key recommendations in Dame Judith's report was for a Joint Competency Authority, which will have a wider role around addressing systemic issues around culture and behaviours. But having worked for one of those agencies in the past, Mr Gregory said he would be "amazed if they come together and have one unified voice".

"If they do it will take a long time," he commented. He also criticised the role that procurement has played in the "race to the bottom" of standards.

"We are being asked for solid gold fire risk assessments, but at bronze prices and paid in 90 days. If we are going to provide solid gold fire risk assessments, Type 4 fire risk assessments and fire door surveys

which look at each door properly, then we are going to have to charge for that. Someone will have to accept this will all cost money.

"Unless we change the culture, nothing will change, but it's who goes first – us or them. Someone will have to put their hands up and say it needs to be more quality orientated." Mr Gregory also said there was currently a shortage of fire risk assessors in the UK and the industry needs to find a way of attracting and training new people as demand for assessments continues to grow.

"There needs to be more cross-discipline thinking," he added. "Fire risk assessors do not talk to the guys who put in the active stuff. They are not consulted at the design stage. We are brought in at the end, and we have occasionally delivered some horrific news to buildings that have been refurbished and we are the ones that get shot, because we bring the bad news. With some joined-up thinking, we could build a better end product."



Fire & Security Consultancy Limited

How are we doing?

Here at Fire & Security Consultancy Limited we want to hear your thoughts, ideas, opinions - good or bad - so that we may continue to improve our services to you. Please contact us on **01634 260702** or via email at **info@fireconsultancy.com**

If there are issues that concern you, new guidelines or rules that you don't quite understand, we are here to help. We are always happy to look into any specific field of work on your behalf, and quite often his results and findings are shared with colleagues through this newsletter.

If you need us to quote on new works for you the contact details are the same. And don't forget we also undertake **Fire Stopping** works along with many other fire and security services - check our website for full details fireconsultancy.com

So, you know where we are when you need us!

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Well it's that time of the year again when we can all relax, have a drink (or two?!) and look forward to a nice rest for a few days.

All of us here at Fire & Security Consultancy Limited wish you a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous, safe, New Year.

