



CFOA

Chief Fire Officers
Association



CONSTRUCTION
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CFOA: The Chief Fire Officers Association

The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) was established in 1941 and has become the professional voice of the UK Fire and Rescue Service (UK FRS).

The membership and professional partnerships of the CFOA are wide and varied, encompassing senior management, subject experts and those involved in service delivery at fire and rescue services across the UK. It can count every fire and rescue service in the UK amongst its professional partners.

Members are supported to fulfil their leadership role in protecting local communities and making life safer through improved service delivery. The CFOA provide professional advice to inform government policy and is committed to developing strategic and technical guidance with services all over the UK. In all of its activities, the Association works to achieve four aims which shape its direction. These are:

- To lead and influence the direction of the UK FRS on professional, managerial and leadership issues.
- To be the focal point for professional advice that drives and contributes to the development of policy impacting on the UK FRS.

- Effectively communicate views and priorities.
- Support members to achieve both individual and collective improvement.

As a registered charity, the Association aims to reduce the loss of life, personal injury and damage to property and the environment by improving the quality of firefighting, rescue, fire protection and prevention in the UK.

This happens through the provision of advice, information, leadership, research, informed comment and other services to relevant bodies, and to the Association's own members.

Through the work of the Association, the promotion of efficiency of the UK FRS to the benefit of the public and all communities continues to increase.

The CFOA is supported by a small team in Tamworth who assist the directors, presidential team and membership. It became a limited company in 1998 and followed this a year later by becoming a charity.

There are ten Directors at the CFOA, including a three-person presidential team with four Strategic Directorates, each headed by a Director.

Each directorate encompasses a

number of standing committees or working groups, lead officers for particular references and a number of task and finish groups. Portfolios cover operations response, prevention, protection and road safety, people and organisational development, and corporate services and sector improvement.

Each member of the Association belongs to one of 11 regions, which follow the boundaries of the former regional development agencies.

These regions provide important opportunities for local working, while at local level members of the Association have regional and independent representatives who sit on the Members Sounding Board (MSB), which acts as a sub-group of the main CFOA board.

All aspects of governance, business organisation and business process constantly adapt, as the Association meets challenges that continue to change.

As with many associations, the CFOA's work is wide and varied, from initiatives on furniture fire safety, to work with children and young people. Amongst the areas that the Association are currently involved in are waste management and recycling fires, unwanted fire signals and flooding.



CFOA put waste and recycling under the spotlight

Fire prevention in the waste management and recycling industries has come under intense scrutiny of late, as checks undertaken by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) to support both sectors have shown a more robust response to incidents is needed.

The test results coincided with an in-depth consultation on fire prevention proposals, courtesy of the Environment Agency. Somewhat surprisingly, preliminary findings seemed to show that the use of less water might have its advantages.

The CFOA has said that the objective of the checks was to provide “up-to-date scientific data about the flammable properties of modern materials which are in the recycling system and stored on waste recycling sites. With the ever changing nature of wastes and methods of handling these materials, it is important to update our knowledge of how these materials burn and how best to extinguish the fires”.

Waste-related fires have remained broadly consistent for over a decade but, according to the CFOA, “there have been a number of large scale protracted incidents that have caused

significant disruption to the fire service and local community. The cost to fire and rescue services is estimated to be in the region of £16M a year.”

On the subject of the test results, a CFOA spokesperson said: “The new information will provide updated guidance on stack sizes and separation distances for the industry with the aim of reducing the spread and severity of these fires. The results of the tests will also help the Environment Agency in deciding whether or not to make changes to its permits for waste sites, with the aim of reducing the incidence of fires at these premises.

“Firefighting tests will also take place which will develop smarter and improved tactics for fire services when responding to waste fires. Using modern firefighting techniques will ensure a more rapid knock down of the fire, prevent pollution and reduce the overall impact of the incident on the wider community.”

“These tests are ground-breaking for both the fire and waste industry,” added CFOA waste and recycling mandarin, Mark Andrews. “By establishing this scientific data

we will influence future fire safety guidance with a view to preventing these fires occurring in the first place. The tests are also an opportunity to test both traditional and contemporary firefighting techniques to assess what methods are the most effective in order to influence future operational guidance.

“Our closer working partnership with the Environment Agency and waste sector will ensure we will minimise the negative impact of these events on the surrounding environment and communities if and when they do occur.”

In recent weeks, the CFOA has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Environment Agency to address those incidents impacting both the fire and rescue service and the environment.

Roy Wilsher, Director of Operations for the CFOA, concluded: “The excellent working relationship between CFOA and the EA reinforces the benefits of partnership working and the results of these tests will lead to significant development in the way in which Fire and Rescue Services and the EA plan for and respond to waste fires.”

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Bryland Fire Protection – First Company in world to achieve Approved Installer status for Jactone PAFSS® LPS1666 certified enclosure fire suppression systems

Established for over 50 years, Midlands based Bryland Fire Protection are a leading provider of fire detection and alarm systems, advising, installing and maintaining systems and equipment for clients throughout the UK. Earlier this month in conjunction with one of their key suppliers, Jactone, they became the first company to achieve Approved Installer status for Jactone PAFSS® LPCB certified LPS1666 Fire Suppression Systems.

PAFSS is manufactured under the ISO 9001 quality system and was the first equipment in the world to be certified to a new LPCB Standard, LPS1666, with Jactone the first company to obtain this third party approval, in recognition of the performance of their Direct Pneumatic Tube based suppression systems. Moreover, Jactone's system is the only system currently certified with design allowance for 'Enclosed or Open Vents' and 'Forced & Natural Airflow'.

Bryland Fire Protection refuse to compromise on quality, insisting that their customer service, technical



Jactone's MD Craig Halford is pleased to present Approved Installer Certification to Graham Turner, MD of Bryland Fire Protection Limited

and design engineers are the best trained and knowledgeable in the industry. They source, collaborate and only supply premium quality manufactured products to ensure longevity and value for their clients. So when Jactone introduced PAFSS it was natural choice that they invite Bryland Fire Protection to be the first team to receive the training and qualify to represent and install this innovative fire suppression solution.

The PAFSS detection tube is designed to melt and burst at a consistent temperature in a real fire situation. The subsequent loss of pressure in the tubing opens the cylinder valve to release the sophisticated extinguishing agent, 3M™ Novec™ 1230 at the heart of the fire. Curtailing the fire at source, means that the fire is extinguished swiftly to minimise the cost of damage, limiting the potential spread and reducing downtime associated with any remedial repair works.

LPS 1666 certified systems are ideal for a variety of environments including electrical enclosures, wind turbines and CNC machinery. Other systems within the PAFSS family can be used for fire protection of laboratory fume

cupboards, commercial kitchens and many other applications.

PAFSS many features include; simple to install and cost effective to maintain, operated by a pneumatic signal, and uses only quality-engineered material. As an authorized installer of PAFSS, Bryland Fire Protection are partnering with innovative, pioneering suppliers to continue to offer the most advanced and effective fire suppression solutions to both their industrial and commercial clients.

The creation of the new LPS1666 standard is very significant for the fire industry as this now means that consultants, specifiers and project managers are now able to confidently add PAFSS to their portfolio of recognized solutions when advising their clients on the very best fire protection solution to suit their needs.

This recent product introduction follows further developments within Bryland Fire Protection. A wide range of training and e-learning courses are now available to book online which include Health and Safety Essentials, First Aid at Work, Food Hygiene and Driver Safety.

More information about the products and services available at Bryland Fire Protection, along with recent project completions and case studies can be viewed on their website www.brylandfire.com or call 01384 573 350 to speak to one of their trained advisers.



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Intelligence & Innovation

Fire Safety in the UK Construction Industry

The construction industry faces a unique set of challenges when it comes to fire safety. Construction sites play host to a range of potentially hazardous machinery, materials and situations which, if improperly tended, could lead to a costly disaster. It's a high risk environment - almost 65,000 construction workers in the UK sustained an injury at work in 2014/15. The risk is two-fold - a fire in an active build project can cost constructors millions, or even the loss of the entire project, but far more important is the risk to contractors' lives. A thorough and intelligent fire monitoring and prevention system is essential to keep employees and investments safe.

To increase the difficulty of this process, site managers must ensure that a fire risk assessment has been carried out and a fire safety strategy put in place for both the contractors' village, made up of modular offices and facilities, and the building under construction. These measures must cover several important considerations. First of all, a temporary and dynamic means of sounding an alarm within the building under construction depending on contractors' location within the build, ideally through manual call point and sounder combinations which can be moved as required. Then, a more static and complex FDA system must be implemented for

the village. On top of this, support including emergency lighting, extinguishers, evacuation assembly points, staff training and a fire warden programme must be put in place.

There are technological solutions to many of these problems. For example, radio-enabled fire safety devices, which can transmit alerts across a large site. Given the evolving nature of a construction site, a connected capability is essential to increase the efficiency and accuracy of fire safety programmes, and such systems can be easily removed and re-installed multiple times. In sites which have the capacity to carry IP cables, it's also worth considering the benefit of intelligent connected fire detection and alarm systems which can collect and analyse data to better determine the true state of a fire incident, reject false and unwanted alarms and help site managers improve accuracy and overall safety without a large hike in outlay.

The minimisation of false and unwanted alarms is also a key issue to consider when it comes to fire safety. Construction companies have a responsibility to protect not only their own employees, but also the lives and interests of the communities around them, and it's essential to avoid any unnecessary risk or disruption to either group. Repeated false alarms could result in a genuine

alert being missed. False alarms can also cause unneeded fire brigade callouts, which will only damage corporate reputations and relations with the local community, as well as putting victims of real fires at risk.

REDUCING INTERRUPTIONS

Clearly, whatever the project, any site installed with a fire detection system must ensure it reduces false or unwanted alarms. Should a construction site be evacuated, crucial deadlines could be missed. If a project using costly hired plant experiences a false alarm, highly pressurised decisions will have to be made about whether to extend the rental period. Even worse, should a large number of false alarms occur, it could result in the unfortunate consequence of those onsite becoming complacent to the sound of an alarm and failing to respond to the warning of a real fire.

More broadly, false alarms are an incredible drain on public resources. According to the London Fire Brigade (LFB), around a third of all calls attended to are false alarms, leading to many fire brigades reviewing their policies - repeat offences increase the risk that the response to a genuine incident will be delayed. Some site managers could be unaware that the local fire brigade might not respond to an alarm activated by an automatic



Innovation: Industry

fire detector due to their policy of not answering false alarms. Automatic alarms are hard to verify. As such, site management needs to ensure either that fire wardens are well-trained in correct reporting procedure, or that fire detection equipment is capable of discerning between, say, dust and smoke. Furthermore, since January 2014, the LFB charges companies if it has to attend more than ten false alarms in a 12-month period. This is to ensure fire-fighters are available to attend in a real emergency rather than held up at the scene of a false alarm.

IMPLEMENTING A MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL STRATEGY

For construction companies looking to improve safety and reduce false and unwanted alarms, it is clearly advisable to implement a well thought-out fire safety strategy that takes into account the necessary risk assessments across each of these possible triggers and situations. This is crucial in order to identify and wherever possible eliminate the potential scenarios in which false and unwanted alarms could occur.

If an existing system has been prone to false alarms, it is advisable to look at incorporating intelligent fire alarm detection devices. By using interactively adjusted algorithms these can establish if the detected

properties of carbon monoxide, heat, smoke or particles correspond to those held in memory for real fire events. By utilising this type of detection technology, dust from an angle-grinder will not trigger an alarm, for instance.

It can also be incredibly beneficial to have a wireless radio-enabled system in place to ensure that detectors across the site are integrated, to aid the early detection and verification of fires. Once a fire detection and alarm system is in place, although it might sound very basic, site teams must ensure that absolutely all staff tasked with using the fire controls are trained to do so - a mis-chosen fire extinguisher or ill-advised escape route could mean the difference between life and death.

CONSTANT VIGILANCE

With an appropriate fire detection and alarm system installed, there must be a programme of planned, preventative maintenance in place to support it. In England and Wales this is a legal requirement under Article 17 of the Fire Safety Order (FSO), and its equivalent in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The advisory engineering best practices as to how maintenance should be carried out can be found in British Standard, BS 5839-1:2013.

Site managers should ensure that their fire detection and alarm system is maintained by a competent servicing organisation. Where the construction period is too short to merit a regular testing programme, those responsible for installation of battery-operated temporary units should nevertheless ensure the compliance of their devices at the point of installation.

The number of maintenance visits required is determined by the fire risk assessment and should take into account the level of risk (to life, property and construction continuity), complexity and size of the system. Such maintenance visits will allow the servicing engineer to work with the site team to identify any persistent causes of false alarms.

All construction sites must be protected by a well-designed, installed and regularly maintained fire detection and alarm system. Throughout this process, reducing false and unwanted alarms has to be high on the agenda as not only will this help to ensure the highest levels of safety, but it will help to reduce the amount of resources teams have to dedicate in order to manage the time-consuming and potentially costly repercussions.

By Lee Jasper, Head of Product and Solutions Group, Tyco



Mitigating Risk: Mike Burroughs talks timber frame construction

Mike Burroughs - a member of the Chief Fire Officers Association - speaks exclusively to Abigail Burr about the dangers of timber frame construction sites.

Mike has been a member of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) Structural Timber Working Group since 2010. He left Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service in 2015, having enjoyed a career of over 30 years, and is now a Forensic Fire Investigator with Fire Investigations (UK) LLP, and Fire Consultant to the Structural Timber Association. Mike continues to sit on the CFOA Working Group.

HOW COMMON ARE CONSTRUCTION SITE FIRES IN THE UK?

Recent statistics for England show that fires in dwellings under construction have declined from 274 in the year 2009/2010 to 171 in 2014/2015 – a reduction of 38%. These figures are for all methods of construction. However, it is worth noting that this coincides with the recession, which started in 2008, and the subsequent revival of construction projects over the last few years, as well as an increasing market share for timber frame in England.

Provisional figures show that housing starts in the UK have risen by 6% to 175,000 in the last 12 months and timber frame has a 27% share of that market.

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES OF TIMBER FRAME BUILDING SITES AGAINST THEIR VULNERABILITY TO FIRE?

Advantages I am aware of include

sustainability, low carbon footprint, speed of build, and speed to make weather tight. Various construction techniques are possible, including prefabricated panels which are manufactured in factory controlled conditions and assembled on-site. Fires in cavities and voids are an issue in all construction types.

ARE THERE ANY SAFETY FEATURES ON BUILDINGS TO MAKE THEM MORE RESISTANT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF FIRE?

There are many different methods of construction that fall under the title 'timber frame'. Standard Category A is vulnerable during construction but is appropriate in many circumstances. Once completed there is standard fire resistance within rooms.

Category B has increased fire resistance and Category C is clad with non-combustible boards. Different features apply to other structural timber such as Cross Laminated Timber and GluLam.

HOW IS SAFETY MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT?

Fire safety starts at the design stage and must be maintained throughout the project. In addition, as a condition of membership, members of the Structural Timber Association are required to adhere to the SiteSafe Policy as well as the 16 Steps to Fire Safety.

The requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 apply to construction sites and are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. Once the building is complete the

Fire Safety Order is enforced by the local Fire and Rescue Authority.

WHAT MEASURES ARE IN PLACE IF A FIRE DOES OCCUR ON A TIMBER FRAME CONSTRUCTION SITE?

This very much depends on the size and complexity of the site as well as the construction method. As mentioned earlier, the Fire Safety Order applies to construction sites. This requires the 'responsible person' to take 'general fire precautions'. This is defined as measures to reduce the risk of fire and spread of fire, providing sufficient means of escape and ensuring they can be effectively used, measures for fighting fire, measures for detecting and giving warning in case of fire, and measures for training employees and mitigating the effects of fire.

In addition they are required to consider the 'off-site' risk. This is where the Separating Distance Guidance published by the STA and recommended by HSE comes in.

Finally, again as a condition of membership, members of the Structural Timber Association are required to register all sites over 600sq m total floor area. This is via a database that is maintained by the Chief Fire Officers Association; entries are forwarded to the relevant fire and rescue service based on postcode. This makes the Fire and Rescue Service aware of the site and allows them to pre-plan.

Timber Framers and contractors who are not Structural Timber Association members are encouraged, but not required, to notify the local fire service.



CFOA to share research data with AFAC

A landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between two national institutions – the Australian and New Zealand National Council (AFAC) and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA).

For the uninitiated, the Memorandum outlines in detail arrangements for the reciprocal sharing of research and data during 2017 - 2022, and leaves the door open for an ongoing partnership of knowledge sharing in the months and years to come.

The significance of the MoU cannot be understated. The Memorandum marks a vital first step towards an unprecedented level of exchange between the two nations, and has lasting implications for best practice in both countries.

“The positive discussions we have had with CFOA bode well for future progress on a range of initiatives across a broad spectrum of issues impacting on fire and emergency services agencies” said

Mr Stuart Ellis, CEO of AFAC.

According to the CFOA, the MoU will improve the use of existing resources, give greater access to international fire research and data, and allow for the development of new data and best practice, much of which would not occur otherwise.

“This is another important step in helping to reduce the risk from fire in all our communities, with research leading the way in evidence-based decision making,” said Neil Odin, Deputy Chief Officer of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, who spoke on behalf of the CFOA.

The agreement will require close collaboration however, if both organisations are to make good on their joint aim of safer firefighters and safer communities. Crucially, at the heart of the MoU is a shared belief in the importance of gathering and leveraging data to promote a more effective and efficient public service.

Increasingly, the accumulation and sharing of data is playing a pivotal role in identifying areas for improvement, inefficiencies and bad practice. As such, both the AFAC and CFOA are ahead of the curve. The hope now is that similar organisations will follow suit.

AFAC - the Australian and New Zealand National Council for fire, emergency services and land management - has created synergies across the emergency management sector. The Organisation represents over 288,000 staff including volunteers, many of whom operate in the mitigation and response phases of emergency management and support transition to recovery.

On the opposite side of the world, the CFOA's Integrated Data and Research Programme has brought together fire and rescue services from across the country to understand and utilise their own and others' fire data and improve fire outcomes for communities.



COMMUNITY



STAKEHOLDER



E-BOOKS



VIDEO



WHAT DOES THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION?

WITH 110,000 CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS EAGERLY AWAITING YOUR GUIDANCE, WHAT WOULD YOU SHOW THEM TODAY IF YOU COULD?

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