



# BFC Bulletin

Spring 2009 Newsletter



## Disbelief and disappointment as new fire standard blocked

During April this year, the fire industry was anticipating the imminent publication of revised British Standard BS 5306-3, the Code of Practice for the commissioning and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers. A three year revision and public consultation process had resulted in significant changes and a vastly improved document which simplified and updated procedures and addressed safety issues. A key amendment had also been introduced which calls for the replacement of all plastic extinguisher heads with a new one at the five year extended service, to halt a series of horrific injuries caused by their failure during use or maintenance, due to UV degradation. Training and refresher courses based on the content of the revised standard have already been created and are being rolled out, and presentations have been given across the UK to explain the changes by all relevant trade associations.

The astonishing news that BSI was threatened with legal action on the day of publication if they went ahead with it in its present form, causing BSI to suspend publication, was therefore met with disbelief by the Consortium and others in the industry.

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### BFC – the benefits

**for our customers...** the British Fire Consortium is 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 fire safety to customers across the UK. A list of members is available on our website. British Standards demand that extinguisher servicing is carried out by a 'competent person'. Customers can be confident that BFC engineers achieve this status by successfully completing the BFC's training course and BSI/BAFE approved examination!

**for our members...** we provide our members with valuable networking opportunities, expert technical support and high quality training. We are committed to BSI and European standards and are represented on BSI committees, enabling our members to influence the standards of the future. Assistance is available for members to obtain BS EN ISO 9002 and to extend BAFE examination approval to registration, although this is not a mandatory requirement of membership. For more information visit our website or call the BFC secretary.



Expert training from the BFC

New contact details for BFC Secretary: Tel: 0333 123 5306 Fax: 01384 230 606  
Email: [secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk](mailto:secretary@britishfireconsortium.org.uk) [www.britishfireconsortium.org.uk](http://www.britishfireconsortium.org.uk)

# STANDARDS UPDATE

Continued from front page...

During the final FSH/2 meeting (the last stage in the ratification of a new standard) a delegate representing another trade association raised several objections. This in itself was highly irregular at this late stage, but agreement was eventually reached to publish the standard as planned, with one remaining objection (relating to an extinguisher labelling issue) to be discussed following its publication, and an amendment issued at a later date if appropriate. However, in spite of this agreement, the following day the threat of legal action was received by BSI in writing, from the company that the delegate works for.

Graham Newman, President of the British Fire Consortium said, "The blocking of BS 5306 at this late stage is disastrous for the industry and could result in publication being delayed for many months. All standard committee delegates, including the delegate from the blocking company, had originally made it clear they were satisfied with the revisions and content of the new standard. It seems that the trade association that this company belongs to is now taking up the case of the individual manufacturer member, as they have since contacted BSI and given their full support to the action taken by their member.

I believe the trade association's loyalty should be to its membership as a whole, the fire industry and the consumer, and for all their sakes, they should support the publication of the improved standard immediately. If another service technician is injured as a result of the dangers we have tried to address in the new standard, I would question how those who wish to hold up the standard for the sake of such an inconsequential issue could live with their conscience."

Unfortunately these circumstances have no precedent and, because of the actions taken by the trade association, the BSI now find themselves in a difficult position and will have to devise a process in which to move the situation forward. BFC members will be kept informed as the situation develops.

## BAFE Update

BAFE has recently been restructured as a company limited by guarantee and has relocated to new headquarters at the Fire Services Training College in Moreton in Marsh, Oxfordshire. The BFC's Graham Newman has been appointed a director on the new BAFE board. He said "I believe my appointment is a measure of how highly the Consortium is now regarded by BAFE as a major player in the fire trade."

## British Fire Consortium Council Members



Graham Newman  
President



Colin Rhodes  
Chairman



Mart Rogers  
Treasurer



Ken Day  
Training Officer



Gary McDowall



Daren Pool



Roger Chamberlain



Sanjay Sagger



Steve Best

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

# BFC TRAINING COURSES

The Consortium has a reputation for offering the highest quality training which represents outstanding value for money for members. For more details, costs and latest course dates please refer to the website at [www.britishfireconsortium.org.uk](http://www.britishfireconsortium.org.uk) or contact Ken Day, BFC Training Officer: Tel: 01743-248045 Email: [bfc@florianfire.com](mailto:bfc@florianfire.com)

## EXTINGUISHER TECHNICIAN COURSE – COMPETENT PERSON

4 days including accredited examination

## EXTINGUISHER TECHNICIAN – REFRESHER COURSE

1 day

## FIRE ALARM COURSES

All Modules 1 day except Module 6 half day.

Module 1 – Foundation

Module 2 – Maintenance

Module 3 – Installation

Module 4 – Commissioning

Module 5 – Advanced Design

Module 6 – Part 6 Systems

## EMERGENCY LIGHTING

1 day

## TRAIN THE TRAINER

3 days

## RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLERS – MODULE 1

Installation, commissioning and maintenance

2 days

## RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLERS – MODULE 2

Design

2 days

## FIRE SAFETY MANAGER – MODULE 1

Fire Risk Assessment

5 days

## FIRE SAFETY MANAGER – MODULE 2

Fire Safety Management

4 days

## DRY RISER MAINTENANCE

1 day



# AGM 2009



The BFC 2009 Annual General Meeting will take place at Jurys Hotel, Albert Dock, Liverpool on Saturday 10th October. The meeting will start at 9.30am followed by lunch and free time before dinner and entertainment in the evening. Members are encouraged to make a weekend of it and to enjoy all the shopping and cultural opportunities this great city has to offer! The Consortium has pre-booked a number of suites for Friday and Saturday night. Gary McDowall at ABC MacIntosh is handling bookings on the Consortium's behalf – call Gary as soon as possible on 01536 260333 or 07801 850011 to make your reservation.



## New BFC Secretary

Twenty years of experience in the fire industry and membership of the Institute of Professional Administrators means Jacqui Teale is eminently qualified for her new role as Secretary of the British Fire Consortium. Jacqui handles day to day administration for the Consortium and can be reached at the Consortium's new number and email address:

Tel: 0333 123 5306

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

## Definitely not cricket!

In the last issue we reported an increasing rogue practice within the industry, whereby customers of Consortium members were being targeted by other maintenance companies who would visit the customers' premises and carry out scheduled maintenance just before the BFC member was due to visit. Since publication several other members have responded with similar stories. The BFC Council was also disappointed to learn that these unscrupulous tactics were sometimes even being employed by BAFE registered companies who would further mislead the customer by telling them that unless they used a BAFE registered company, their insurance would be invalid!

This is categorically not the case, and the BFC Council strongly urges all BFC members to inform or remind their customers that there is NO legal or other requirement for servicing companies to be BAFE registered. What the British Standard demands is that servicing is carried out by a 'competent person' and customers and their insurers can be reassured that BFC engineers who have successfully completed the BFC's training course and BSI/BAFE approved examination automatically achieve this status. Furthermore the status applies whether or not the BFC member company has achieved BAFE accreditation.



### British Fire Consortium

Telephone: 0333 123 5306

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