

The importance of correct fire alarm design, installation and commissioning

Fire detection and alarm products and systems that are correctly designed and manufactured can provide early warning of fire that can help save lives and protect property. The performance of these products can be severely undermined by poor installation or maintenance and it is therefore vital that specifiers select competent firms with a proven track record to undertake the work.

For maximum protection from fire, specifiers should look for companies that are approved to take single point responsibility for the design, installation and commissioning of fire detection and alarm systems. As well as this, products should be tested and approved to an appropriate standard and fire and alarm systems should be tested and approved for system compatibility.

LPCB's standard, LPS 1014 (*Requirements for Certificated Fire Detection and Alarm System Firms*), specifies requirements for firms engaged in system design, installation, commissioning and servicing of fire detection and alarm systems. The scheme has been built on years of feedback from fire research, investigation and the industry thus helping to ensure that problems are avoided.

The standard requires one encompassing Certificate of Conformity (or C of C as it is commonly known), which is based on BS 5839-1 and requires the use of third party approved products. It is issued by the approved firm and provides a single point responsibility, which benefits all parties concerned, i.e. the insurer, the fire brigade, the building owner, etc.

The Certificate of Conformity is confirmation by the approved firm that the fire detection and alarm system was designed, installed and commissioned in accordance with the installation rules applied and that the system is recorded by LPCB as a certificated fire detection and alarm installation. For each alarm system, specifiers should request the issue of an LPCB Certificate of Conformity as part of the contract.

The availability of more varied and sophisticated fire detection and alarm equipment means that it is even more important that firms listed are regularly assessed for their competence to design, install, commission and service fire detection and alarm systems in accordance with acceptable installation rules or codes of practice.

Alarm systems are typically made up of various inter-linked components such as detectors - smoke, heat, carbon monoxide, flame and others - manual call points, sounders, control and power supply equipment, fire extinguishing panels and cables. All these different components require testing and approval to the relevant standards.

LPCB has been approving fire alarm and detection equipment for more than 30 years. It has one of the best equipped laboratories in the world, with equipment continuously evolving to service new technologies and standards in the fire detection and cable arena.

BRE Global (through LPCB) provides a complete range of testing and approvals for fire detection products, systems and cables covering all relevant markets such as construction, marine and transport. Specifying LPCB approved products also helps to eliminate potentially unreliable, counterfeit and non-compliant products by providing independent, third-party certification, which increases confidence in the performance of the products.

As well as ensuring systems are designed, installed and maintained by contractors approved to LPS 1014, it is advised they are connected to Alarm Receiving Centres approved to LPS 1020 (*Requirements for Alarm Receiving Centres*). These and all other LPCB installer schemes, approved products and installers are available online at: www.RedBookLive.com.

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