

Fire Precautions

DIN No	TD5/009	Issue Date	2 October 2000
Open Government Status	Fully Open	Review Date	31 October 2003

BS 5588: PART 0: 1996 - FIRE PRECAUTIONS IN THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF BUILDINGS: GUIDE TO FIRE SAFETY CODES OF PRACTICE FOR PARTICULAR PREMISES/APPLICATIONS

by I Buckland

Summary

This DIN informs those who have interests in process safety and fire precautions issues to the recent publication of a British Standard.

Background

The standard provides a compendium of the current UK published advice on fire safety for a variety of building types and activities. It also usefully lists previously published guidance, and where this has been replaced, identifies the document superseding it.

The style of the standard is unusual in that its aim is to be solely informative, comprising a listing of documents (and their application), rather than providing a design specification. Its purpose is to identify to the user, the fire safety guidance available for their particular building of interest. The guidance relates mainly to the design and management of buildings for safety in the event of fire; ie General Fire Precaution matters. However HSE publications which give guidance on Process Fire Safety matters are also listed, where these make recommendations on the structure of the building; eg such as design requirements for the storage of flammable substances.

It does not list those publications which detail the design and performance specification of what may be termed the system components often employed in developing the overall fire safety provision for the building; eg fire doors; glazing; extinguishing systems; smoke control systems etc. These are typically agreed commercial product performance standards to which the individual components conform. It is the manner and extent to which they are called up in the guidance for the building application or use, which provides the flexibility in the complete fire safety package for the building.

The standard does not assess or make comment on the advice given in the documents listed. But by identifying that available it will be of use in discussions between those designing or using the building and the relevant enforcing authority in establishing the appropriate levels of fire safety to be achieved. The point being there are invariably a number of ways of satisfying the various legislative fire safety requirements for a building.

The recent Inter-departmental Scrutiny of Fire safety Legislation expressed as one of their concerns the plethora of fire safety guidance available, much of it seemingly authoritative, but which was not necessarily consistent. This standard is a first step to addressing this issue by attempting to identify all the guidance available and in doing so, aid debate by helping to distinguish the relationship between guidance and regulatory requirement.

Conclusions

The value of the standard is dependent on it being as up to date and comprehensive as possible. I would therefore be grateful for notification of any apparent omissions or revisions to the guidance listed, so that they may be included in subsequent issues of the standard.