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Introduction

Your comments on this draft are invited and will assist in the preparation of the consequent standard.

For international and European standards, comments will be reviewed by the relevant UK national committee before submitting the consensus UK vote and comments. If the draft standard is approved, it is usual for the resulting published standard to be adopted as a British Standard.

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**Built environment – Framework for competence of individual fire risk assessors –
Code of practice**

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on **XX Month 202X**. It was prepared by Technical Committee CPB/1, *Competence in the built environment*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

Relationship with other publications

This British Standard addresses competence for individual fire risk assessors. The process for undertaking fire risk assessments is set out in PAS 79-1 for non-residential buildings and PAS 79-2¹⁾ for residential buildings. The process for undertaking fire risk appraisals of external wall construction and cladding of existing blocks of flats (FRAEWs) is set out in PAS 9980.

This British Standard is based upon the recommendations regarding competence (i.e. skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours) and assessment given in the Fire Sector Federation's approved code of practice [1] and industry benchmark standards [2], and BS 8670-1.

Information about this document

A key component of fire safety in most buildings and workplaces is undertaking a fire risk assessment to identify hazards and situations that could lead to fires starting or developing, to prevent harm to people or buildings. Fire risk assessment is therefore a vital part of the whole fire prevention process to identify, remove, control or mitigate fire threats.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the importance of undertaking a fire risk assessment has resulted in the task being made a legal requirement in many residential premises and workplaces to protect health and safety of occupants and visitors. This importance has been underlined by investigations, reports and changes to building safety systems arising from the tragic Grenfell Tower fire.

This British Standard supports anyone undertaking a fire risk assessment by providing clear guidance that will enable them to recognize defined levels of competence. The foundation for this guidance is the basic principle of a duty of care not to exceed personal competence when undertaking fire risk assessments.

This publication can be withdrawn, revised, partially superseded or superseded. Information regarding the status of this publication can be found in the Standards Catalogue on the BSI website at knowledge.bsigroup.com, or by contacting the Customer Services team.

Where websites and webpages have been cited, they are provided for ease of reference and are correct at the time of publication. The location of a webpage or website, or its contents, cannot be guaranteed.

Use of this document

This British Standard can be used as a benchmark against which to assess the competence of individual fire risk assessors.

More generally, it is expected to be of use to, for example:

- persons or organizations needing to appoint a fire risk assessor;
- dutyholders or those with a responsibility for fire safety undertaking fire risk assessments;

¹⁾ PAS 79-2 is withdrawn but is available for download at <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards/pas-79-22020>. It is to be replaced by BS 9792, which is in preparation at the time of public consultation of BS 8674.

- organizations that will assess the competence of fire risk assessors, including professional bodies, trade bodies and those that regulate by statute or facilitate voluntary self-regulation;
- training providers and awarding organizations;
- national accreditation and qualification regulation authorities;
- government agencies;
- employers; and
- insurers.

It is anticipated that this British Standard can be used to assure stakeholders, including residents, that persons undertaking fire risk assessments are assessed by common and directly comparable methodologies and processes.

Those who do not have a duty under legislation to assess the risk from fire in their premises might still wish to do so, and are encouraged to follow the principles outlined in this standard.

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of recommendations and guidance. It is not to be quoted as if it were a specification. Users are expected to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Users may substitute any of the recommendations in this British Standard with practices of equivalent or better outcome. Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this British Standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this document are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Where words have alternative spellings, the preferred spelling of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is used (e.g. “organization” rather than “organisation”).

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Introduction

The objective of this British Standard is to provide individual fire risk assessors, with performance criteria to assure conformity to acceptable standards of competence.

The criteria recognize three levels of competence, which are expected to support individuals who undertake fire risk assessments across a wide range of occupied buildings and workplaces, from small shops to larger public entertainment venues and from low occupancy non-residential workplaces and buildings under construction, to multi-occupied large residential premises and specialized housing.

Each level of competence requires certain skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours to enable the fire risk assessor to adapt dynamically and operate successfully to meet the specific situation and circumstances presented, and progressively be able to mentor and supervise others. This British Standard sets out minimum criteria for each of the core levels in a way that assumes that the previous level's criteria have been met.

The core levels provide a tiered career pathway. Initially, it is expected that a fire risk assessor will participate in supervised learning and development in order to achieve the competence associated with Foundation level. The fire risk assessor can then demonstrate their ability to operate competently before progressing to the next level.

The primary purpose of this British Standard is to define the competence required to undertake a systematic process for fire risk assessment, taking into account a building's construction, use and occupation, with the primary aim of securing life safety in the event of fire. The process of undertaking fire risk assessments is covered in other standards [e.g. PAS 79-1 and BS 9792 (currently in preparation)].

NOTE Legal requirements to undertake a fire risk assessment apply to many buildings. In England and Wales, these requirements are imposed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended) [3]. In Scotland, similar requirements are imposed by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 [4] in conjunction with the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 [5]. In Northern Ireland, the requirements are imposed by the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 [6] in conjunction with the Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 [7].

All of the criteria described rest on the founding principle that no individual fire risk assessor ought to exceed their own competence when undertaking a fire risk assessment. Recognizing this personal responsibility is imperative to achieving safe outcomes.

The primary aim and founding principle enable other benefits to be gained. Securing life safety often aids property and environment protection from fire and identifying competency criteria at different levels provides a personal development pathway.

In addition, an understanding and knowledge of the fire risk assessor's tasks and activities allows a better awareness of the role and provides the basis for the creation of training, learning and development and quality assurance activities.

The primary tasks and activities of the fire risk assessor are to assist the dutyholder in achieving compliance with legislation by:

- a) identifying hazards and risks associated with fire both in general and specialist buildings and processes;
- b) explaining solutions and providing answers to questions from dutyholders and people who have responsibility for fire safety management;
- c) where hazards and risks are identified as being intolerable and presenting a serious risk to life, taking immediate action to inform the dutyholder;
- d) reporting on issues relating to fire risk including, specifically in relation to residential risks, awareness of reporting arrangements for residents and occupants;
- e) evaluating existing fire risk assessments including appropriateness for the risk;

- f) auditing management of fire safety systems; and
- g) recommending fire safety measures to manage residual risks, including, where the risk of fire spread requires, temporary measures that might be required until permanent measures are implemented to reduce the risk.

The fire risk assessment criteria enable a competent person to undertake a fire risk assessment within a building or premises to determine the level of fire risk presented. There is no predetermined level of fire risk for any specific type of building or premises, although terms such as “high”, “moderate” and “low” are frequently used and occur in this British Standard to provide context. Fire risk assessments are based upon the probability of a fire occurring and its likely consequences, with factors such as occupancy, hazards, construction and complexity all being taken into account during the assessment process.

Having three core levels of competence, which broadly relate to “high”, “moderate” and “low” levels of risk, can assist dutyholders appoint a suitable fire risk assessor and further guidance in this regard can be found, for example, on regulator or industry web sites. It is however emphasized that appointment of a fire risk assessor always remains the responsibility of the dutyholder. The standard does not therefore consider the selection process used to appoint a fire risk assessor.