

Why an International Standard on Fire Safety (IFSS) is Needed

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SUMMARY

Why an international standard on fire safety (IFSS) is needed

Workshop with real life case study of Grenfell Tower fire London.

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A global coalition of professional bodies, governments, academic institutions and others are coming together as a result of the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in London in June 2017, on a not-for-profit basis in the public interest to deliver a set of high level fire safety standards (IFSS) that all members of the coalition will adhere to and be ambassadors for the standards around the world to ensure consistency and adoption.

The growth in global population is driving the need for more and more high rise living vertical village towers which are mixed use, as well as more urban buildings which may pose a life safety risk. Occupiers, insurers and investors in these buildings need to be reassured the building complies with an international fire safety standard.

Fire safety has to be paramount in these and all other higher risk buildings. We are not so concerned by height but by risk - low level buildings could be high risk eg hospitals, care homes, student accommodation, hotels.

This workshop will examine what happened in the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 in London; what the government and industry response has been since; and what the lessons learned so far

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are.

The IFSS coalition will appoint a standard setting committee (SSC) of experts to write the standards and keep them under review and update them as necessary.

The IFSS standard setting committee will consider;

(these are suggestions for discussion at the first meeting)

1. the desire for non combustible cladding on all high risk buildings - should this be mandatory
2. the desire for sprinkler systems in all high risk buildings
3. the desire for fire and smoke detection central systems in all high risk buildings
4. the essential need for measures to deal adequately with smoke in all high risk buildings
5. the essential need for compartmentation to limit the spread of fire
6. the essential need for a fire strategy in all high risk buildings
7. the essential need for a fire risk inspection and assessment to be conducted at least annually on all high risk buildings and at least every five years on all other buildings
8. the essential need for fire engineers/professionals to be engaged early in the design of new high risk buildings and to ensure the final building delivered complies with the de-sign
9. the essential need for inspection during construction to ensure essential fire safety products and detailing is delivered as designed.
10. to consider the definition of high risk buildings
11. to consider extending the standards beyond life safety to building preservation in the interests of society (for certain buildings such as hospitals and historic buildings)
12. to consider the different building codes and regulations that already exist and to recommend changes to these as necessary to ensure consistency globally
13. to consider the different test standards for fire testing materials and combinations that already exist and to recommend changes to these as necessary to ensure consistency globally.

RICS with their experience of similar international standards offer to facilitate the meetings of the coalition and the SSC and to publish the standards on behalf of the coalition the final agreed standards. Please contact for further information Gary Strong gstrong@rics.org

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