



Fire Industry Association

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MAINS POWERED FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS WITH NO STANDBY POWER SUPPLY

BACKGROUND

During recent years there has been a steady stream of questions to BFPSA about the continued acceptability of mains powered fire alarm systems with no standby power supply. Such systems were installed in large quantities in the 1950s and 60s and were subsequently phased out, mainly as a result of the Fire Precautions Act 1972 and the requirements of BS5839-1.

While the number of these systems still operational is rapidly reducing, owners of such systems that are still performing satisfactorily are often reluctant to replace them. In most cases, however, they no longer comply with the requirements of current legislation.

The Health and Safety (Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 relate to the requirements of safety signs and signals used at work.

Clause 2, Interpretation, of these Regulations states within Section (1) the following text:

“fire safety sign” means a sign (including an illuminated sign or an acoustic signal) which:

- (i) provides information of escape routes and emergency exits in case of fire;*
- (ii) provides information on the identification or location of fire fighting equipment; or*
- (iii) gives warning in case of fire”*

As a fire alarm may be signalled by a visual or audible signal, such devices are included within the Regulations.

Schedule 1, Part 1, Section 8 of the Regulations states:

“8 Signs requiring some form of power must be provided with a guaranteed emergency supply in the event of a power cut, unless the hazard has thereby been eliminated.”

By taking the requirements of these clauses into account, the use of mains powered fire alarm systems with no standby power supply is not acceptable if they are provided as a means of meeting health and

safety requirements in a place of work. In such places, fire alarm systems complying with the requirements of BS5839-1: 1988 or 2002 would normally be recommended.

FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Health and Safety (Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 (Statutory Instrument 1996 No. 341).

This is available from the Stationery Office Website: <http://www.hmso.gov.uk>

Click on Legislation, then United Kingdom, then Statutory Instruments then the relevant year and SI number.

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