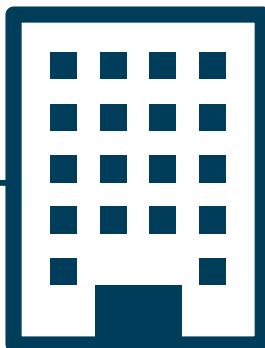


Technical  
Bulletin



Fire Industry Association



**Visual Alarm Devices (VAD) in  
full height toilet cubicles**

## **The issue:**

“Should I put VADs in full height toilet cubicles?” This is one of the most common questions relating to VADs in sanitary accommodation.

## **The facts:**

Visual warning of fire is called for in various guidance. Looking at Government published guidance that supports the Building Regulations:

Approved document M requires that reasonable provision be made for people to gain access to and use a building and its facilities. In particular it says that fire alarms in sanitary accommodation should emit a visual and audible signal.

Approved document B, that a suitable method of warning for instance visual and audible fire alarm signal, should be provided in buildings where it is anticipated that one or more persons with impaired hearing may be in relative isolation. For example, hotel bedrooms and sanitary accommodation, and where there is no other suitable method of alerting them.

The Scottish Technical Handbook, in some circumstances visual alarm signals should be used to either supplement or replace the audible alarm, such as where hearing protection is likely to be used or in situations where occupants have a hearing impairment.

And Technical Booklet R (Northern Ireland), sanitary accommodation is somewhere people are likely to be in relative isolation.

British Standards and other guidance:

The codes of practice that relate to the installation of fire detection and fire alarms. Provide the following recommendations on the provision of VADs;

The LPCB CoP 0001, “The most important areas for the provision of VADs are those where it is possible for a person to be alone or isolated from others with normal hearing.” It includes sanitary accommodation as one of these areas.

BS 5839-1:2017 clause 17.2b), “Visual alarm devices should be sufficient in number and distribution to be readily visible from all normally accessible locations, throughout the area in which they are provided, under normal ambient lighting levels.”

## **The conclusion:**

Where it is deemed necessary by way of a risk assessment, specification or legislation, to install VAD’s within the sanitary accommodation of a premises, then the light output should be sufficient to cover the whole area.

Where there are floor to ceiling height cubicles, in order to conform to clause 17.2b) of BS 5839-1:2017, VADs should be installed within each cubicle. To not install VADs in these situations would be subject to an agreed and justified variation to the Standard.

## **Sources:**

Approved Document B Volume 2

Approved Document M Volume 2

Technical Handbook: Non-domestic

Technical Booklet R

LPCB CoP 0001

BS 5839-1:2017

### *DISCLAIMER*

*The information set out in this document is believed to be correct in the light of information currently available but it is not guaranteed and neither the Fire Industry Association nor its officers can accept any responsibility in respect of the contents or any events arising from use of the information contained within this document.*



Fire Industry Association

Tudor House, Kingsway Business Park, Oldfield Road, Hampton, Middlesex TW12 2HD  
Tel: +44 (0)20 3166 5002 • [www.fia.uk.com](http://www.fia.uk.com)