

Technical Bulletin



Fire Industry Association

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**User Responsibilities: Fire detection &
fire alarm systems**

1. Overview:

This document outlines the responsibilities of premises management concerning fire detection and fire alarm systems in non-domestic premises, in accordance with BS 5839-1, the code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning, and maintenance of such systems.

2. Responsibilities of Premises Management:

2.1 Designation of a Named Premises Manager

- A single, named member of premises management should be appointed to oversee all aspects of the fire detection and fire alarm system within the premises.
- Their role includes ensuring that the system is regularly tested and maintained in compliance with BS 5839-1, maintaining proper records, and ensuring that all relevant individuals within the protected premises are informed of their roles and responsibilities concerning the system.

2.2 Servicing and Maintenance Agreement:

- The Named Premises Manager should arrange a service and maintenance agreement with a competent provider.
- Open communication between the Named Premises Manager and the provider is crucial, with necessary and sufficient information being provided in the system logbook, including dates and times of weekly tests, records of faults and false alarms, and the categories and causes of false alarms.

2.3 Documentation Management:

- All documents related to the fire detection and fire alarm system, such as system drawings, specifications, user instructions, maintenance instructions, and handover certificates, should be maintained and accessible to servicing organizations, enforcing authorities, and insurers.
- Other documentation, such as inspection & servicing certificates, modification certificates and the logbook, should also be retained.

2.4 Daily Check of Control Panel:

- The Control and Indicating Equipment (CIE) should be checked at least once every 24 hours to ensure that no faults are displayed.
- If a fault occurs, it should be promptly investigated and corrected by contacting the service provider.

2.5 Clear Space around Detectors and Manual Call Points:

- Detectors should have a clear space of at least 500 mm around and below them to prevent obstruction.
- Call points should be conspicuous and unobstructed.
- Any changes to the premises should not hinder the system's effectiveness, such as the installation of partition walls that could interfere with audible alarms or obstruct smoke movement towards detectors.

Training and Instruction:

- All relevant persons should receive instruction in the correct use of the system, including the use of all controls associated with initiating fire alarm signals, silencing alarms, and resetting the system.
- They should also be able to interpret pre-alarm and fault indications.
- In multi-tenanted buildings, representatives from each occupier should receive instructions.

2.6 Weekly Testing:

- Weekly testing should be carried out by premises management or their chosen personnel, such as fire marshals or technicians from the service provider.
- Every week, during normal working hours, a different manual call point should be activated, and this test should be conducted at roughly the same time each week.
- All building occupants should be made aware of the test, and if the system is connected to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC), the ARC should be informed, and the signal confirmed on completion of the test.
- Test results, including the manual call point used, should be documented in the system logbook.
- The weekly test should last at least 5 seconds but not normally exceed 60 seconds, primarily serving to check the system's ability to process a fire alarm signal and activate sounders.

2.7 Monthly Testing (if applicable):

- The weekly test should be repeated monthly to ensure occupants working outside of normal hours are also familiar with the fire alarm signal.
- If the premises use an automatically started standby generator as part of the fire detection and fire alarm system's power supply, this should be tested in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and run on load for at least one hour.
- After the test, fuel, oil, and coolant levels should be checked and topped up as necessary.

Compliance with these responsibilities is essential for ensuring the effective and reliable operation of fire detection and fire alarm systems in non-domestic premises.