

**Code of  
Practice**



**Fire Industry Association**



**Code of Practice for the Selection,  
Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance  
of Fire Blankets Manufactured to BS EN 1869**

# Code of Practice for the Selection, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Fire Blankets manufactured to BS EN 1869

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## 1. SCOPE

This code of practice gives guidance on:

- Selection of fire blankets.
- Positioning of fire blankets.
- Regular inspection of a fire blanket.
- Regular maintenance of a fire blanket.
- Life of a fire blanket.
- Reasons to render a fire blanket unserviceable.

## 2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

BS EN 1869 Fire Blankets.

## 3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### 3.1. Container

The box, packet or cabinet (including closures) in which a fire blanket is normally housed.

### 3.2. Fire Blanket

A fire blanket is a safety device designed to extinguish small incipient (starting) fires. It consists of a sheet of fire retardant material which is placed over a fire in order to smother it. Fire blankets, for use in kitchens and around the home, are usually made of either fibreglass or woven-nylon coated with silicone-based flame retardant and folded in to a quick-release container for ease of storage.

### 3.3. Hand hold devices

Hand hold devices often made of woven material, securely attached to the blanket which can be seen and accessed from outside the container which allow the user to release the fire blanket from the container ready for deployment.

### 3.4. Manufacturer's instructions

Instructions written by the manufacturer to aid users deployment of the fire blanket; including any instruction which aids the service provider to carry out maintenance of the blanket.

### **3.5. Service provider**

Person with the training and experience, with access to the relevant tools, equipment and information, manuals and knowledge of any special procedures recommended by the manufacturer of the fire blanket, to carry out the relevant maintenance procedures.

### **3.6. Responsible Person**

Person or persons responsible for, or having effective control over, fire safety provisions adopted in or appropriate to the premises or building or risk where a fire blanket is installed.

*NOTE: For the purposes of this document, the term “responsible person” includes a nominated representative.*

## **4. SELECTION OF FIRE BLANKETS**

BS EN 1869 fire blankets come in three sizes (1.1m x 1.1m; 1.2m x 1.2m and 1.8m x 1.2m) and should be selected to extinguish or aid extinction of the fire types shown below.

***4.1. To smother and extinguish fires involving clothes being worn a 1.8m x 1.2m fire blanket should ideally be selected.***

***4.2. To smother and extinguish small fires on a surface; some examples are shown below; a smaller blanket should ideally be selected.***

- Spilled candle wax on a counter.
- Science experiments involving solids on a lab bench.
- Spilled liquids on a worktop or workbench.
- Food in a frying pan or on a baking tray.

***4.3. To smother and contain fires in small containers where the blanket creates a “lid”; where use of a portable fire extinguisher may be necessary to fully extinguish the fire after the blanket has been deployed; some examples are shown below; a smaller blanket should ideally be selected.***

- Food in a small sauce pan.
- Science experiments involving liquids in a beaker.
- Waste in a small bin.

**4.4. To contain small fires whilst electrical equipment is switched off and before first-aid fire-fighting; some examples are shown below; a smaller blanket should ideally be selected.**

- Toast in a toaster.
- Food on a griddle.
- Sugar in a candy floss maker.

Every opportunity should be taken to instruct personnel in the use of fire blankets, and to demonstrate their performance.

*NOTE: Attention is drawn to legal obligations concerning training for the use of fire equipment.*

## **5. POSITIONING OF FIRE BLANKETS**

Fire blankets should be available for immediate use at all times.

### **5.1. Location and accessibility**

#### **5.1.1. Normally and most suitably fire blankets should be located:**

- In the room where a fire blanket is likely to be required.
- Mounted on the wall.
- Where they will be readily seen.

**5.1.2. The position and type of a fire blanket should be indicated on a sign so that, if the fire blanket is removed, this can be identified during a safety inspection, and a replacement ordered.**

*NOTE 2: Attention is drawn to Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 [6] and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 [7] in respect of indicating the location of fire-fighting equipment.*

#### **5.1.3. Fire blankets should not be located:**

- Where a potential fire might prevent access to them.
- Over or close to heating appliances.
- In concealed positions behind kitchen furniture and/or equipment, behind doors, in cupboards, drawers or deep recesses.
- Where they might be damaged.

## 5.2. Visibility and Mounting

- Wherever practicable, fire blankets should be clearly visible and predominately red. Where this is not possible, through either position or colour, the fire blanket should be indicated by a location sign.
- Fire blankets should be mounted so as to position the hand hold devices approximately 1.5m from the floor.
- Ideally Fire blankets should be sited in the same room as the fire hazard concerned and no further than 10m from where they are likely to be needed.
- The prospective operator should not be required to pass through doorways to reach the nearest fire blanket.

## 6. PROCESS OF COMMISSIONING

The commissioning of a fire blanket should be carried out by a service provider as defined in 3.5. Upon removal from its packaging and transit protection, and immediately prior to placing in its designated place, the fire blanket should undergo this sequence of commissioning service actions:

1	External examination of container	Examine the container for serious damage that could impair the safe operation of the fire blanket or the life of the blanket held inside.
2	Operating instructions	Check the operating instructions for correctness and legibility, ensuring that the text is in English. (See Annex A for example of required operating instructions).
3	Wall-mounting	Wall mount the fire blanket securely, ensuring that the hand hold devices are readily accessible, as designed. Most blankets require to be wall-mounted in the container to allow the blanket to be easily deployed when required.
4	Deployment	Check that the blanket is able to be easily released from the container as the manufacturer intended, by following the operating instructions.
5	Visual inspection	Check that the fire blanket has not been used; is not obviously damaged or has any hand hold devices missing or unsatisfactorily affixed to the blanket. Check the manufacturers label.
6	Reassembly	Reassemble the fire blanket in accordance with the folding instructions of the blanket manufacturer. Replace with new any safety element designed to show whether the blanket has been deployed. Ensure the blanket is clean and dust free.
7	Affix maintenance label	Affix the maintenance label to the blanket in an appropriate position on the container, and complete the details on the maintenance label, as recommended in 7.2.

## 7. VISUAL INSPECTION BY THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON

The responsible person should carry out visual inspections of all fire blankets regularly. These visual inspections should be carried out at least monthly. When circumstances require, inspections should be carried out more frequently.

*NOTE 1: Fire legislation in England & Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and its associated Guidance Notes suggest that good practice is to determine whether the fire blanket has been used and to check for damage on a weekly basis.*

When carrying out these visual inspections, it should be ensured that:

- Each fire blanket is correctly located in the designated place.
- Each fire blanket is unobstructed and visible.
- The operating instructions of each fire blanket are clean and legible and face outwards.
- Each fire blanket container is not obviously damaged and that the hand hold devices are visible and undamaged.
- The tamper indicators of each fire blanket, where fitted, are not broken or missing.

The responsible person should record the results of these visual inspections and arrange for corrective action, where necessary, by a service provider. In the event of doubt the responsible person should arrange for a service provider to examine the fire blanket.

*NOTE 2: Responsible persons have obligations under fire legislation in England & Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland to use a service provider to maintain extinguishing equipment in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair, where it is necessary to provide such equipment to safeguard employees in the event of fire.*

## 8. BASIC SERVICE

The responsible person should ensure that basic service be carried out at 12 monthly intervals. The maintenance intervals given for basic service have for practical purposes a tolerance of  $\pm 1$  month. Intervals should be taken from the date of installation or the last basic service. Intervals may be shortened, on the recommendation of the service provider where inspection reveals environmental and/or special hazards, or at the request of the responsible person.

The basic service of a fire blanket should be carried out by a service provider as defined in 2.4. The fire blanket should undergo this sequence of commissioning service actions:

1	External examination of container	Examine the container for serious damage that could impair the safe operation of the fire blanket or the life of the blanket held inside.
2	Operating instructions	Check the operating instructions for correctness and legibility, ensuring that the text is in English.
3	Wall-mounting	Check that the fire blanket is wall mounted ensuring that the hand hold devices are readily accessible, as designed. Most blankets require to be wall-mounted in the container to allow the blanket to be readily and easily deployed when required.
4	Age	Check the age of the fire blanket.
5	Deployment	Check that the blanket is able to be easily released from the container as the manufacturer intended by following the operating instructions.
6	Visual inspection of the blanket	Check that the fire blanket has not been used; is not obviously damaged or has any hand hold devices missing or unsatisfactorily affixed to the blanket. Check the blanket is manufactured to BS EN 1869.
7	Reassembly	Reassemble the fire blanket in accordance with the folding instructions of the blanket manufacturer. Replace with new any safety element designed to show whether the blanket has been deployed.
8	Maintenance label	Complete the details on the maintenance label.
9	Report	Write an inspection report advising the responsible person of the state of maintenance of the fire blanket.



## 9. LABELLING

### 9.1.1. General

Any labelling that is applied to the fire blanket container should not obscure any marking required by BS EN 1869.

### 9.1.2. Maintenance label

The maintenance record should be indelibly marked on a durable label that is fixed firmly to the fire blanket container without obscuring any of the manufacturer's markings and instructions. Where there is no more space on the maintenance label and a new label is fixed, the date of commissioning should be marked on the new label.

The following information should be given on the maintenance label:

- Type of action (commissioning or basic service).
- Name and postal address of the maintenance supplier.
- A mark clearly identifying the service provider.
- The date (year and month) of the action in a) above.
- The date (year and month) of commissioning.

This information should be readable without any special equipment.

Any additional information for the benefit of service providers may be shown in a more compact form, such as bar codes.

*NOTE 3: The information on the maintenance label of each fire blanket may additionally be entered into a central record. In this way one aspect of the important information on fire prevention can be kept readily available.*

## 10. EVALUATION OF FITNESS – BLANKETS WHICH ARE TO BE CONDEMNED

Any fire blanket with a major defect or defects which make it unsafe for use should be immediately removed from its designated place, and marked “CONDEMNED” together with the reason for this assessment. The responsible person should be advised in the written report (see 9) that a permanent replacement is needed as soon as possible. Evaluation of whether the damage or wear to a fire blanket make it unsafe for use depends on the judgement of the service provider.

### *10.1. Reasons for condemning a fire blanket*

Potentially the most serious hazard presented by a defective fire blanket is its inability to either (a) be deployed or (b) starve a fire of oxygen, allowing the fire to burn uncontrollably after deployment. These could be caused by any of the following conditions:

- Wear, contamination or damage to the fire blanket material.
- Wear or damage to the fire blanket hand hold devices.
- Serious damage to the container.
- Fire damage to the container or fire blanket.
- Age. Follow manufacturers instructions or if there are none then if more than 7 years from date of commissioning consider replacing the blanket.

### *10.2. Additional reasons for condemning a fire blanket (unless rectified by the replacement of the appropriate components):*

- Illegible marking or operating instructions.
- Instructions not in English.

## 11. PROVISION OF A WRITTEN REPORT

The service provider should advise the responsible person in a written report:

- Of any fire blankets that have been condemned or are missing.
- Of any permanent replacement fire blankets required to replace those reported in a).
- Of any additional fire blankets required to ensure that the level of cover at the premises is appropriate for the risks present.
- That any replacement or additional fire blankets reported in b) or c) should be provided as soon as possible.
- Of the responsible person’s obligation under fire legislation to provide an appropriate level of fire-fighting equipment at all times.

## **12. MAINTENANCE DOCUMENTATION**

A certificate of inspection should be issued in all cases. The certificate of inspection should include the following information:

- The name, postal address and telephone number of the maintenance company.
- The date of maintenance.
- Identification of the maintenance technician.
- A list of all fire blankets included in the maintenance programme; including all nonconforming equipment, and recommendations for appropriate corrective action or reference to where this information can be found.
- The signature of the responsible person, which should be obtained upon completion of the service visit and prior to the service technician leaving the premises, or a record of the reason why this is not possible (e.g. unmanned sites).

## **13. PERMANENT REPLACEMENT OF A FIRE BLANKET**

It is the duty of the responsible person to arrange for permanent replacement fire blankets to be put into place as soon as possible after inspection has shown that some fire blankets should be replaced. The service provider is responsible for bringing this duty to the responsible person's attention in the written report.

**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.*



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