



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

July 2007 Report

In July Bernadette met officials in the Czech Republic to discuss requirements for sprinklers in their building code. There are several requirements and the officials were interested in our campaign for sprinklers in care homes.

In the UK I attended two meetings of the committee writing BS 9999, a standard which will offer relaxations in passive fire safety measures for fitting sprinklers in buildings.

Czech Republic

Through Bo Andersson of the Swedish Rescue Agency Bernadette was invited to meet officials in the Czech Interior Ministry. The officials were interested in our campaign for sprinklers in care homes. A new building code, regrouping several documents, will take effect in the Czech Republic in January 2008. The key requirements for sprinklers in this code are: in all hotels and residential buildings higher than 30m; in retail premises with a fire compartment larger than 1,000m²; in exhibition halls with a fire compartment larger than 5,000m²; in the second and lower underground floors of car parks with a capacity of more than 50 vehicles; in car parks with a capacity of more than 200 vehicles which are below assembly buildings and in automatic car parks where fire service intervention is difficult.

BS 9999

In July I attended two meetings of the committee which is reviewing the 400 comments on the Draft for Development, or DD 9999. Over 20 of these comments were from the EFSN. It is the intention that the first draft of BS 9999 will be released for three months of public comment at Christmas. This standard is very important to the development of sprinklers in the UK because it advises what relaxations in the usual, passive fire safety measures may be applied if other measures, such as sprinklers, are applied. The passive industry is lobbying hard firstly to suppress the standard and secondly to withdraw the trade-off concept. Other committee members agree with me and the standard is set to go ahead, recognising trade-offs. It is my intention to use this standard as a reference in other European countries.

UK Schools System Design Standard

To ensure a standard approach and value for money, Jim Knight MP, the Schools Minister within the renamed Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) asked for a design standard to be written. I attended the first meeting of the committee drafting this standard. Rather than write a design standard the document will largely refer to BS EN 12845 and the accompanying Technical Bulletin 221 written by the

Fire Protection Association. The main issues of discussion were the hazard classification and water supplies required for sprinklers in schools. This standard is to be finalised in a few months to be released with Building Bulletin 100 on school fire safety. In August Bernadette and I will attend a meeting at the DCSF to review a new draft of BB 100, which is expected to emphasise the need for sprinklers.

IFE Conference

At the Institution of Fire Engineers conference I met people from a number of countries, including New Zealand, Malaysia and Ireland. In New Zealand sprinkler systems combined with domestic plumbing are being promoted by the fire service. There is considerable interest in the concept in the UK so it is useful to hear from people with first-hand experience of the progress in New Zealand. Take-up has been slow because neither plumbers nor sprinkler contractors are interested. In Malaysia there is apparently a requirement to fit sprinklers in all commercial buildings of more than 10,000 ft² (909m²). This is way ahead of Europe. I will publish the details when I receive them. Through the Irish fire chiefs that I met I hope to find an opportunity to address the Irish fire safety community.

Other Meetings

At the National Fire Sprinkler Network meeting there was an interesting presentation on the CO₂ released by fires. The environmental cost and impact of fires has not been assessed but we will use this as another argument for fitting sprinklers.

At a meeting with London Fire Brigade we agreed the programme for an event in City Hall in November. The event will first focus on the need for sprinklers in schools, evaluating recent progress, then go on to discuss the need for sprinklers in care homes and more generally to reduce the economic and environmental impact of fire.

Glasgow Fire-Safe City Campaign

This campaign continues with a meeting planned in August between the City Council, Strathclyde Fire & Rescue Service, Bernadette Hartley, Vipond Fire Protection Ltd (which is a major sponsor of the campaign) and other parties. Meanwhile the EFSN has received permission to place the DVD of the parallel burn test on its web site.

Next Steps for Alan and Bernadette

- 1) Alan to meet Marc Rumeau, President of FFMI (French Fire Trades Association).
- 2) Bernadette and Alan to meet with officials in London to discuss BB100, the fire safety guidance for schools in England and Wales.
- 3) Bernadette to attend a meeting of the Glasgow Fire-Safe City campaign.
- 4) Alan to prepare a presentation for a seminar in Greece.