



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

September 2008 Report

September was a busy month, with the highlight being the re-launch of the EU Sprinkler Forum at a reception in the European Parliament. We have now gained considerable political momentum.

In September the EFSN held its first online seminar. It was a success with people participating at many locations across the world.

For the first time I attended CEN Technical Committee 191 Working Group 5 meeting, where the priorities for European standards-writing activities for water-based fixed fire-fighting systems are agreed.

Reception in European Parliament

On 17th September we re-launched the EU Sprinkler Forum with a well-attended reception in the European Parliament. Nick Ross, a well-known British broadcaster, spoke at the event, as did Glyn Ford MEP and Iain Cox, the new Chairman of the National Fire Sprinkler Network in the UK and Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Chief. We also showed a DVD of a parallel burn test, provided by Strathclyde Fire & Rescue Service. The press were present and several MEPs gave interviews. We have since had many compliments about this event; its message left a strong impression on those present, many of whom attend such receptions several times a week. We recorded the names of the MEPs and their assistants who attended and now have a core group of interested politicians to advance our cause. To keep the issue alive I have written an article which we hope to have published for Glyn Ford in the European Parliament magazine. The assistant to its editor came to the reception. Meanwhile the reception received a mention on the back page of the European Voice, a newspaper published by The Economist and widely read by lawmakers in Brussels.

One particularly influential MEP present was Arlene McCarthy, who chairs the Internal Market and Consumer Affairs Committee. She held the workshop on hotel fire safety in July; has commissioned research into legislative possibilities and is planning another meeting in December. This pressure has helped the European Commission to act and it has held several meetings with the European hotel industry. We understand that HOTREC, the European Hotel and Restaurant association, has committed to a European initiative to improve hotel fire safety. In the past HOTREC was strongly opposed to any such initiative. I will report more details next month.

Our next move for the EU Sprinkler Forum will be to organise a meeting in the European Parliament in mid-December. Meanwhile Glyn Ford is organising a meeting for us both with the General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation to secure the support and active participation of the ETUC.

CEN TC/191 WG5

In Brussels I attended the annual meeting of CEN TC/191 Working Group 5, which sets out the programme for its three Task Groups in the field of water-based extinguishing systems.

TG1 - Components

A corrigendum and 2 amendments have been incorporated into EN 12259 Part 1, which is for sprinklers. Amendments have also been incorporated into Parts 2 & 3, which are the standards for wet and dry alarm valves. Work has not yet started on Part 6, which would be a standard for pipe couplings, nor on Part 8, which would be a standard for pressure switches. TG1 has asked that Part 7, pipe hangars; and Part 10, multiple jet controls be removed from the list of current work items, since TG1 meeting time is limited and other items are considered to be of higher priority. It has also asked that Part 11, medium and high velocity water sprayers, which has already been drafted, be removed from the mandated list and given the advisory status of a Technical Report, since these items cannot be commoditised by a standard. The finalisation of Part 5, which is for deluge valves, has been delayed by conflicting demands for changes from a series of different CEN consultants. At the CEN TC/191 plenary meeting in October, WG5 will ask for a work item to include ESRF sprinklers, large K-factor sprinklers and control mode special application sprinklers in EN 12259 Part 1.

TG2 – Installation Rule

This Task Group writes EN 12845, the design and installation standard for sprinkler systems. The first and second Amendments, which mainly contain editorial changes and the correction of mistakes, have been sent for vote with a deadline of 21st January 2009. Further desirable changes have been prioritised as first, second and third priority. First priority items will be included in a third Amendment for implementation mid 2009. The other items will be part of the first Revision, which will take another three years. TG2 has also written EN TS 14816, the design and installation standard for water spray systems. This Technical Specification was approved by vote in August 2008. A few editorial corrections will be made and it is expected it will soon be published.

TG3 – Water Mist

EN TS 14972, the design and installation standard for water mist systems, was approved as a Technical Specification in April 2008 and is now published. TG3 is working on an Amendment to include fire test protocols for further applications.

Pumps

A special meeting on pumps was held with pump expert national standards body representatives of Task Group 1, which writes the sprinkler component standards, including EN 12259 Part 12: Sprinkler System Pumps; and Task Group 2, which writes the sprinkler system design standard, EN 12845. The aim of the meeting was to agree changes to both standards to make them both workable and mutually consistent. In the process the participants identified the need for an additional component standard to address pump controllers and pump drivers, since Part 12 only addresses the pump characteristics and properties.

Online Seminars

On 8th September I gave the first EFSN online training seminars. As it was the first seminar its title was “Introduction to Sprinklers”. 14 locations paid and logged in, from as far away as Iceland and South Africa. This was an encouraging start. All the online seminars will be held on the second Monday of every month, starting at 15:00 Central European Time. The next online seminar will be held on Monday, 13th October and has the title, “Sprinkler System Hydraulics”. Details of the seminars are now on www.eurosprinkler.org. Participants can register and pay online using a credit card. Seminars cost €200 for non-members and €100 for EFSN members. All you need is an internet connection to participate. The full list of seminars is:

- Introduction to Sprinklers
- Sprinkler System Hydraulics
- Commodity Classification
- General Storage
- ESFR Sprinkler Systems
- Design of Sprinkler Systems in Earthquake Zones
- High Rise Building Fire Sprinkler Protection

2010 Conference

After discussion with our Conference Committee, we agreed that we could not use the Renaissance Hotel because the conference building is not sprinklered. This was the only hotel in Amsterdam with sufficient sprinklered bedrooms to accommodate our conference. In September I visited two fully sprinklered hotels in Brussels which are large enough to accommodate our conference, both in terms of bedrooms and conference space. The rates are also less expensive than in Amsterdam. We have therefore decided to change venue to Brussels and to advance the date by a week to 21-22 April 2010.

European Fire Academy

This is an organisation of Fire Chiefs from different European countries, which seeks to exchange experiences and to influence policy on all matters connected with fire. It also has good connections with burns victims associations. At a meeting in Brussels in September I was asked to participate in a seminar of sprinkler experts being organised by the Amsterdam Fire Brigade in October.

New Members

In September Hughes Associates of Italy and Ovidiu Mihalache, a Romanian consultant, joined the EFSN.

Web Site

A new version of the www.eurosprinkler.org web site is almost ready to go live. It will include news bulletins in French and German, a calendar of events, photographs, streamed video clips, a members' login forum, non-members' login forum and links to the web sites of all EFSN members. The first translations, by EFSN member QuicksilverTranslate, have been posted on the test site and I will shortly send them to the EFSN French and German-speaking distribution lists.

Portugal

In September APSEI, the Portuguese fire trades association, wrote an article based on a presentation I had given about hotel fire safety. I prepared a presentation on sprinkler systems in hospitals for a conference in Lisbon in November that is jointly organised by NFPA and APSEI. My presentation includes several photographs of sprinklers fitted in Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago and University College Hospital in London. I was recently given a tour of both hospitals.

London Fire Brigade

London Fire Brigade is looking to see that the Government initiative to see sprinklers fitted in schools is applied in practice. It will write to the Lead Member and Deputy Lead Member for Children's Services in each London Borough to remind them of the official guidance in Building Bulletin 100, with its accompanying sprinkler evaluation tool and cost-benefit analysis. We agreed that the sprinkler industry would look into the case for fitting sprinklers in care homes as alternative to employing adequate night staff for an evacuation. BAFSA has since agreed to lead on this idea. Meanwhile LFB will see if it can place an article in a care home trade magazine. I had earlier met Councillor Brian Coleman, who is the new Chairman of the London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority. He gave his full support to sprinklers, in particular in schools.

Next Steps

- 1) Attend plenary meetings of TC/191 in Prague and TC/127 in Brussels.
- 2) Review accounts with auditors.
- 3) Participate in meeting of sprinkler experts in Amsterdam.
- 4) Prepare next EU Sprinkler Forum meeting in European Parliament.