



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

May 2009 Report

CEN held an important meeting in May at which a committee drafted changes to EN 12845, the European sprinkler system design standards. It will take at least one more meeting for the committee to complete its work so that the changes can go to the national members of CEN for their vote. Keith MacGillivray has become active in Scotland, where he is effectively coordinating several sprinkler campaigns. He also represented the EFSN at a European meeting in London which clashed with the CEN meeting.

CEN TC/191 WG5 TG2

CEN Technical Committee 191 produces the European standards for fixed fire-fighting systems, such as sprinkler, water mist, gas and powder systems. It also writes standards for the components. Within this committee Working Group 5 is responsible for water-based systems and Task Group 2 for the drafting of changes to the European sprinkler design and installation standard, EN 12845. I attended a two-day meeting in Cologne where those present worked on the latest package of proposed changes to this standard, collectively known as Amendment 3. While there are many minor changes the most notable are the introduction of ESFR sprinklers, Control Mode Special Application sprinklers and extended coverage sprinklers. The plan is for the package to be finalised later this year and sent to the national members of CEN for voting. Meanwhile Amendments 1 and 2, which were more editorial in nature, have been approved by national vote and should soon be published.

Task Group 1 deals with product standards. As yet it has not started work on product standards for the sprinklers to be introduced to EN 12845 but the chairman of Working Group 5, who also chairs Task Group 2, has recognised that they are needed. Many commonly used sprinklers are not yet in EN 12845 but the members of Task Group 2 intend to include them. As soon as Amendment 3 is finalised Task Group 2 will begin a Revision of EN 12845, a process that can take longer than an Amendment but which Task Group 2 hopes to accelerate. One of the first subjects likely to be addressed in this Revision is residential sprinklers.

European Fire Academy

The European Fire Academy, which was set up by various fire chiefs a few years ago and which tries to influence European thinking on fire issues, held a meeting at London Fire Brigade. I was invited but was in Cologne so Keith MacGillivray attended. He gave a presentation on residential sprinklers and on sprinklers in hotels. There was considerable support for sprinklers from fire chiefs and from burns victims associations represented at the meeting. A representative of the European

Commission reported on the HOTREC hotel fire safety initiative. The next European Fire Academy meeting will be in Berlin.

HOTREC

HOTREC is the umbrella association for the national associations of the European hotel and restaurant industry. Under pressure from the European Commission, which itself was responding to our campaign in the European Parliament, it has produced a voluntary scheme which will be discussed at a meeting in Brussels on 5th June. While the draft of this scheme is very positive about sprinklers, it needs some changes to give it teeth. I have been invited to the meeting in Brussels.

Greece

At a conference on access for those with disabilities, held at the University of Thessalonica, I presented a paper on the need for sprinklers to make buildings safe from fire for everyone, in particular those with disabilities.

UK

With others I met Sadiq Khan MP, the new fire minister. He was polite but not prepared to commit to sprinkler-friendly initiatives. An election is due in the UK and so we will seek to get sprinklers into the election manifestos of the major parties. Meanwhile the government has commissioned research into the benefits of sprinklers in high risk buildings, by which it means buildings of high property risk. A report is due in the autumn and will be a tool to persuade businesses, architects and others to call for sprinklers. In addition reports are due this year on the benefits of water mist or sprinkler systems in prisons; and of sprinklers in car parks. Lastly, the National House-Building Council has funded research on the benefits of sprinklers as an alternative to the traditional dwelling layout. A review of BS 5588 Part 1, which covers dwellings, is to start later this year and the NHBC research will inform the committee, of which I hope to be a member.

In Scotland Keith MacGillivray has agreed with the Institution of Fire Engineers to host a joint sprinkler conference, covering technical subjects, in November 2009 or January 2010.

I attended a meeting chaired by the NFSN where together with some of the water companies we drafted legislative proposals to give water for sprinkler systems greater statutory status. Some water companies connect sprinkler systems to their mains while others refuse, so that a pump and tank must be installed in single-family houses thereby making the system much more expensive and less likely to be installed. Our proposals would make it much harder for water companies to refuse a connection.

Online Seminars

On Monday, 11th May Alex Playfair of SPP Pumps gave an online seminar on sprinkler system pumps. This was the final seminar in our first series. We have had about a dozen participating locations at each seminar. The second series will begin in the autumn and will repeat some of the first series but in other languages.

Corrosion Paper

I updated a paper on the corrosion of sprinkler systems. This is intended to be a paper giving a neutral overview of corrosion mechanisms, how serious they are, and measures to combat corrosion. The paper benefits from input from members of the EFSN Technical Committee. Nevertheless it is a work in progress, as industry knowledge and awareness of this subject evolves.

Next Steps

- 1) Agree contractual terms with French Country Manager.
- 2) Participate in HOTREC hotel fire safety meeting in Brussels.
- 3) Participate in launch of sprinklers in care homes campaign in Stockholm.
- 4) Attend the SCI2009 conference in Madrid.
- 5) Meet French fire brigade training school to define sprinkler training module.
- 6) Advance preparations for the 2010 Conference in Brussels.