

Information Paper

The role of codes, standards and approvals in delivering fire safety

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Manufacturers of products have always faced the need to demonstrate compliance with a wide range of codes and standards to trade, but as new and emerging markets open up the range of such requirements is also increasing and, with it, the potential for confusion between the performance of products when tested to standardised methodologies and the evidence needed to meet different local requirements.

This Information Paper identifies the key processes used to test and approve fire suppression products. It discusses the risks of assuming compatibility between different codes and standards, which may ultimately impact on the safety of both people and property in fire. It also looks at the key differences between the types of documentary evidence used to support products placed on the market in the form of test reports compared with third-party certification, and the potential impact of these differences on the traceability and independence of the data and ultimately the quality of products.

In addition, this Information Paper discusses the importance of appropriate design, installation and maintenance of systems within the built environment, with possibilities for mitigating risks for the building owner or occupier. It is aimed at specifiers, designers, regulators and manufacturers.

1 Which building codes?

The building codes and associated design and installation and product performance standards in practice are based on the fire protection requirements set for the risk. Traditionally, there have been two types of safety requirements relevant to fire suppression products:

- life safety
- property protection.



Figure 1: Understanding the role of data in delivering fire safety solutions is critical to achieving successful design solutions

1.1 Life safety requirements

The minimum level of performance in fire to ensure life safety is generally established by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) for the territory in which the building is being used. This is typically set by legalisation at a national level, which may then be augmented to meet local or regional requirements identified by regulators for addressing specific applications and risks.