10 Active Working Group review

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Working Group Members:
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2017 Meeting dates
- 21 February
- 23 May
- 18 October

2016 has seen several changes and developments in the fixed firefighting system sector which we expect to be significant to Insurers and their clients. Some of which are expected to have a positive impact and others, less so.

In the face of sustained opposition from FPA, RISCAuthority and in our capacity of technical representatives to ABI, BSI has published its BS 8489 'commercial and industrial' water mist series of standards. We believe this development will open the door to an approach to fixed firefighting which will ultimately result in significantly reduced levels of fire protection and fire safety. RISCAuthority is working to limit the potential impact in this area by working with insurers, users, specifiers and suppliers to educate, inform and drive up standards as far as possible. 'Insurer Questionnaires' for water mist systems, to allow proposed designs to be interrogated and reverse engineered have been re-written in view of this development.

A new requirement in BS EN 12845 and LPC Rules for annual 'Third party sprinkler inspections"; which has the potential to facilitate detection and remedy of several sprinkler system issues, which are significant to performance of systems. BAFSA cite data from an analysis of sprinkler systems which failed (Information File 16B *Maintenance of sprinkler systems: commercial and industrial – the fundamentals*, November 2008); 67% owing to the system being switched off, 11% inadequate maintenance, 5% wrong system type, 3% component damaged; all of which we would expect to be detected by a competent inspector. There is no good reason why such practice should not also be adopted for other types of fixed firefighting system (eg Gaseous, mist, deluge, local application) also. Whilst ostensibly an additional cost for users, improved outcomes may in fact result in a better value proposition overall.

Several improvements to the *LPC Rules for automatic sprinkler installations* (still a highly effective and proven technical risk reduction tool) have been made or are nearing completion. These include:

- Major update to TB209 for ESFR protection
- New Technical Bulletin (TB237) providing guidance on flushing of underground pipework
- Additional design solution for TB234 High Hazard Storage scenarios where excessive clearance to the ceiling (a challenge for fire protection) is an issue
- Re-instatement of material dropped from BS EN 12845
- Clarifications to numerous points (based on user feedback and novel circumstances)

Future work is likely to include:

- Development of an 'Insurer Questionnaire' (IQ) for reverse engineering of gaseous fixed firefighting systems
- TB for sprinkler protection of residential por tions of buildings (eg above commercial premises)
- Checklist for tank maintenance minimum requirements
- Improved specification of requirements for pre-action systems

Recognising that the Active Working Group has a full workload on *LPC Rules* upkeep, RISCAuthority proposes to form another Working Group, which will focus on all other fixed firefighting system types. The group is expected to start to meet in the new year.