



# YOU NEED BAFE

– quality for the fire protection industry



Now more than 1,000 companies recognise the value of third-party certification for their fire protection services...

# BETTER TO BE **BAFE** THAN SORRY



**B**AFE is widely recognised throughout the UK as the key registration body to find quality companies providing fire protection services. Over 1,000 companies are now registered and as the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) says in its guidance notes: *'Third-party certification schemes for fire protection products and related services are an effective means of providing the fullest possible assurances, offering a level of quality, reliability and safety that non-certificated products may lack. This does not mean goods and services that are not third-party approved are less reliable, but there is no obvious way in which this can be demonstrated.'*

BAFE has recently launched the long awaited scheme for companies who carry out fire risk assessments (SP205) and there are now three third-party certification bodies approved by UKAS to deliver the scheme. This will provide much needed assurance for end-users about the quality of their fire risk assessments to meet their obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire) Order 2005, the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

BAFE is the independent third-party registration body for the fire protection industry. For more than 25 years we have been developing schemes for UKAS accredited certification bodies to assess and approve companies to recognised standards. Our aim is to support property managers, architects and specifiers to ensure that they get quality fire protection for their premises, staff and service users. There are now over 1,000 registered companies in the BAFE schemes, which is an increase of 600 in the last four years

We ensure that the investment made by quality companies to gain third-party certification and BAFE registration is fully recognised by specifiers and end-users and that appropriate disciplines are in place to ensure that the use of the BAFE logo and the quality of work is properly controlled. For all those responsible for specifying fire protection, BAFE adopted third-party certification schemes provide the vital reassurance that the services being specified or bought are effective, reliable and competently designed, installed and maintained.





If you are specifying the **supply and maintenance of portable extinguishers**, look for one of the 320 companies accredited to BAFE Schemes SP101/ST104. Companies are certificated to ISO9001 and all technicians are assessed by the experienced BAFE team and meet the training requirements laid out in BS5306. Portable fire extinguishers remain a crucial part of fire protection and need routine maintenance to ensure that they will work properly when needed, because they can be subjected to damage that the inexperienced person may not see – before it is too late.

For **fire alarm systems** companies should hold BAFE modular SP203-1 scheme approval. This scheme continues to grow and now has over 600 registered companies in all parts of the UK. It has recently been upgraded to ensure that equipment used in a system also complies with recognised third-party certificated standards. This scheme is now the key measure of competence for all sizes of quality fire installations and is specified by many public and private bodies as part of the new and existing building protection.

The BAFE SP203-3 scheme has been developed for the third-party certification of those organisations involved with the design and/or installation and/or commissioning and/or maintenance of **fixed gaseous fire suppression systems**. This scheme has also recently been rigorously revised, including the requirement for components to be third-party certified.

The BAFE **emergency lighting** scheme (SP203-4) is also modular and sets out staff competence criteria to be met. It is the first scheme to ensure that emergency lighting systems are well-designed, installed, commissioned and, importantly, maintained in line with current British Standards. A number of major British organisations now specify that contractors are certificated to this scheme.



**THE DCLG SAYS:**  
‘We support third-party certification schemes as an effective means of assuring the quality, reliability and safety of products and services, and recognise the valuable role BAFE plays in bringing to the marketplace recognised registration schemes for these products and services.’

The new scheme for ‘Life Safety Fire Risk Assessment’ (SP205) is now fully operational and is described in more detail later in this publication.

There are also a number of smaller BAFE schemes recognising quality standards for other fire protection products and services. BAFE schemes are proactively monitored by industry experts to ensure that they remain up-to-date and relevant. We actively pursue companies who fail to meet the requirements of their registration or who falsely claim to be BAFE registered. The BAFE council is made up of organisations that are committed to raising quality standards in the fire protection industry and the staff are based on the site of the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire.

# NEW **BAFE** SCHEME FOR FIRE PROTECTION

## New BAFE scheme for fire protection

### SP205 Life Safety Fire Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of public and commercial property owners to have a full fire risk assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire) Order 2005, the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and then implement the findings.

BAFE has launched a new scheme for organisations that provide Life Safety Fire Risk Assessment (SP205) after a two year period of consultation within the industry. The first three certification bodies (NSI, SSAIB and ECA Certification) have now been fully accredited by UKAS, the government body that assesses certification bodies, to deliver the scheme.

Individual competencies for fire risk assessors have also been developed by a competency council, headed by Chief Fire Officer Iain Cox QFSM from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and these skills will be incorporated into the BAFE scheme requirements. The Competency Council has issued a 'Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor' that can be found at:

[www.bafe.org.uk/news-detail.php?id=0000000041](http://www.bafe.org.uk/news-detail.php?id=0000000041)

## KEY POINTS

### Key points of BAFE scheme SP205

- ✓ This scheme has been developed by a group of industry experts to help the building 'responsible person' meet the requirements of UK legislation;
- ✓ Launched in May 2012 for companies who provide fire risk assessment services;
- ✓ SP205 specifies that companies have the required technical and quality management capabilities;
- ✓ Risk assessment staff need to meet appropriate standards;
- ✓ The scheme has been designed to meet the requirements of companies large and small, recognising that there are many individuals working as assessors;
- ✓ BAFE has been working closely with the Competency Council to monitor and develop risk assessor competence criteria;
- ✓ SP205 is delivered by UKAS accredited certification bodies that assess and routinely monitor companies against the scheme criteria.

BAFE scheme SP205 has been developed for organisations that provide fire risk assessment services for others. This scheme is designed to give assurance to those commissioning fire risk assessments and give confidence in the quality and relevance of the services being provided. It is essential that the fire risk assessor is a competent person, and the fire risk assessor has a duty of care to the organisation on which legislation imposes a requirement for the fire risk assessment and subsequent updates.



The Department of Health has its own guidance document (Health Technical memorandum 05-03 'Part K; Guidance on Fire risk assessments in complex healthcare establishments') that provides guidance to assist with the undertaking of fire risk assessments in complex healthcare premises to meet their statutory duty. This is implemented within appropriate health service premises through health fire officers. Companies certificated to the BAFE SP205 scheme could work within these guidelines or provide fire risk assessments in other premises.

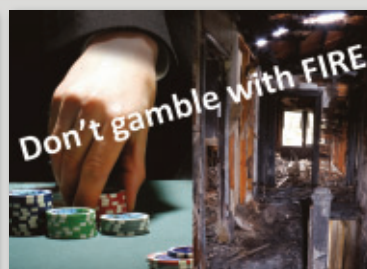
However, the ultimate responsibility for the adequacy of the fire risk assessment rests with the duty holder (which is normally a company) or responsible person rather than with the fire risk assessor. This scheme recognises the importance of providing fire risk assessments that comply with an acceptable set of criteria.

BAFE registered companies will have an annual surveillance audit by their certification body to ensure that they continue to comply with the scheme requirements. Once certificated, they will be able to use the BAFE logo applicable to the scheme on promotional material, letterheads, websites, etc. Their details will be shown on the BAFE website:

[www.bafe.org.uk](http://www.bafe.org.uk) .



# SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE OF PORTABLE EXTINGUISHERS FIXED GASEOUS FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS EMERGENCY LIGHTING LIFE SAFETY FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT FIRE DETECTION AND ALARMS





## HEADLINES LIKE THESE ARE BECOMING ALL **TOO** FAMILIAR...

### **What does this scheme offer to specifiers and building owners/managers?**

Under the legal provisions that apply in the UK, the duty holder or responsible person for a building is required to make a fire risk assessment to clarify the fire precautions required to ensure the safety of staff, customers and property. This is for all business premises. At present there is no other independently audited means to ensure the competence and reliability of a company commissioned to carry this out. BAFE scheme SP205 will provide reassurance to the duty holder that they are doing everything possible to meet their obligations.

### **What does this mean for fire risk assessment companies?**

If you carry out fire risk assessments then you should be considering BAFE registration to demonstrate to customers that your company has been third-party certificated to meet the required standards. There are a number of excellent accreditations to assess the competence of individual assessors, but it is important that customers know that the work is being done in a framework of a company organisation, large or small, that provides them with the reassurance that they are being dealt with professionally. Three well-known certification bodies have worked with UKAS, the government accreditation service, to achieve the requirements to certificate the new scheme and the first certification licences were granted in late 2012.

### **Public sector requirements for fire safety**

There is no sector of the community that does not have a need to ensure that safety is of paramount importance

in the wide range of public sector properties. For example, it is vital for educational establishments to ensure that fire risks and prevention are properly assessed. In 2009 the Association of British Insurers identified that '20 schools a week suffer an arson attack, disrupting the education of 90,000 schoolchildren, causing damage costing £65m'. (ABI news release ref. 141/09) Everyone responsible for fire protection has a responsibility to ensure that all steps are taken to ensure the ongoing quality of their facilities. The key factor is that property managers have the reassurance that they have professional advice.

BAFE has worked with the National Association of Health Fire Officers (NAHFO) and several of their specific requirements for fire alarms and fire risk assessments are already being used by certification bodies to ensure that relevant service providers match these specialist standards.

Defence Fire Risk Management Organisation (DFRMO) was set up in 2007 when the army assumed responsibility for fire fighting throughout the armed forces. Within their UK sites they now require that fire alarm and portable extinguisher contractors are BAFE registered and will shortly be specifying the same requirement for emergency lighting. Many local authorities now specify the use of BAFE registered companies to carry out their fire protection work. Through the routine monitoring of procurement tenders in the public sector it is clear that the majority of tenders are being placed with BAFE companies across the UK.



# THIRD-PARTY APPROVAL BENEFITS

## What are the benefits of third-party approval in today's market?

With the increasing legislative and cost pressures on company managers to ensure that their systems are fully operational, how can they best find the right supplier to meet their requirements? Traditionally, 'word of mouth' recommendation has been a useful method – perhaps the earliest form of 'third-party approval'. However, the technical competence needed for today's systems means that this is not enough, and there needs to be a verifiable way to ensure that a provider does – and continues to – meet the required standards.

As the DCLG says in its fire guidance notes, third-party accreditation schemes are an 'effective means of providing the fullest possible assurances'. As with all assurances, it is hoped that they are never needed, but in the event of a fire, security breach or other business risk, the time you need your systems to work is the time you must be sure they will work. Whilst cost is, of course, a factor, the greater cost of failure and putting staff, customers and property at risk must be a greater consideration. The growing recognition by suppliers of the value of gaining third-party certification to UKAS accredited schemes means that there will still be plenty of competition.

For a business manager to be able to demonstrate that they have done everything reasonable to comply with their legislative obligations in the event of a problem, using a supplier that has been routinely checked as meeting current standards makes sense. The fact that the number of companies registered to BAFe schemes has risen two and a half times in the last four years to over 1,000 is evidence that there is a strong demand for quality providers.



[www.bafe.org.uk](http://www.bafe.org.uk)



# Don't gamble with your fire risk assessment!...

If you are responsible for a business premises, the law requires that you have a fire risk assessment. To find competent providers, you need BAFE.

Under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Duty Holder or Responsible Person for a building is required to make a Fire Risk assessment to clarify the fire precautions necessary to ensure the safety of staff, customers and property.

[www.bafe.org.uk](http://www.bafe.org.uk)

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At present there are no adequate means to ensure the competence and reliability of a company commissioned to carry this out.

BAFE scheme SP205 has been developed specifically to address this situation, and will provide reassurance to the Responsible Person that they are doing everything possible to meet their obligations.

So don't leave everything to chance. Make sure that your suppliers are registered with BAFE.



Promoting Quality in Fire Safety