

A cautious welcome

The British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA) welcomes the changes to Fire Safety : Approved Document B (ADB) which come into force today, 26th November 2020, however we do question does the measure go far enough?

The changes with regard to the mandatory installation of automatic fire sprinklers in England, affect new build, material alteration, material change of use and extensions. The main points being

- The height threshold for the provision of sprinklers is reduced from 30m down to 11m.
- BS9251 or BS EN 12845 continue to be recommended for sprinkler system installations in flats.
- There will be no recommendation for sprinklers to be provided in common areas when these are fire sterile (lacking in combustible materials.)
- The new provisions will apply to extensions so that sprinkler protection and wayfinding signage will be necessary in any newly formed accommodation in buildings with a floor 11m or more above ground level.

BAFSA questions whether the requirement should have been extended to all new built flats, no matter the height. Evidence has shown that automatic fire sprinklers protect residents of flats from fire, they limit fire spread protecting means of escape for residents, they also protect Firefighters who attend such fires.

It is also a proven fact that automatic fire sprinklers reduce property and contents damage from fire by extinguishing or controlling the fire in its early stages.

This evidence applies equally to flats below 11 metres as well as those above that height, perhaps an opportunity missed?

However, this legislation will help to protect both the lives of future occupants and also help to preserve much needed accommodation for our growing population.

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BACKGROUND : [Approved Document B volume 1 and 2: circular 01/2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/circular-01-2020)

ABOUT BAFSA : The British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA) is the UK's leading professional trade association for the fire sprinkler industry and celebrate its 50th birthday in 2024. BAFSA's members install more than 85% of the sprinkler and watermist installations in the UK and include a significant majority of third-party certified sprinkler installers as well as manufacturers; suppliers; contractors; insurers; the fire and rescue services and others with an interest in the field. BAFSA's primary objectives include providing free and authoritative information on the benefits of sprinkler systems and how sprinklers can play a significant role in saving life and property from the devastating effects of fire. To this end, BAFSA works closely with the government, fire and rescue service, building control officers, insurers, architects and town planners. BAFSA is dedicated to making sure that sprinkler systems are installed to the highest professional standards. When properly installed by competent contractors, automatic fire sprinkler systems have a well proven track record for reliability and effectiveness; and BAFSA prides itself that all installer members must be certificated by one of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service's approved third party certification schemes.

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