

ADVISORY NOTE 37

ASFP position on use of Multiple assessment methods and data sets for passive fire protection for structural steel

At the time of writing this document there are two possible test method routes for determining the fire resistance performance of passive fire protection products.

For reactive (intumescent) coatings, testing is possible to BS476 (parts 21 and 22) or to BS EN 13381 Part 8.

For passive fire protection systems (Boards, sprays, mats and renders) testing is possible to BS476 (parts 21 and 22) or to BS EN 13381 Part 4.

The BS EN 13381 series contain 4 different assessment methods in the respective Annex E of either standard. These assessment methods are referred to as Regression, Constant Lambda, Variable Lambda and graphical methods.

There is no assessment method defined in any part of BS476. However, ASFP have historically provided a graphical assessment method, as detailed in the Yellow Book. Whilst the graphical method in the yellow book is similar to the method in BS EN 13381 parts 4 and 8, it has a number of notable differences. Later versions of the yellow book (4th and 5th Editions) also allow assessments in line with the direct field of application assessment procedures as identified in BS EN 13381 parts 4 and 8 as appropriate.

Both BS EN 13381 Parts 4 and 8 contain the following text in clause 13.1:

Only one method shall be used to provide the full scope of the assessment of the data from the testing of a product, i.e. different methods cannot be used to evaluate different portions of the test data.

The ASFP is aware that there are a number of interpretations of the above text. A number of ASFP members have historically been involved in the drafting of the Yellow book and BS EN 13381 series standards. The position that ASFP and members have advocated for within these committees is that only one assessment method recognized by the Yellow Book (and/or by inference BS EN 13381 series) should be utilized to provide the complete time period, temperature and section factor scope for a data set comprising of all tested specimens of the assessed product for each individual section shape and geometry.

All the data relevant to an individual shape / geometry assessment must be included to cover the required assessment scope in a single document. The Passive Fire Protection Forum (PFPF) “*Guide to undertaking Technical Assessments of Fire Performance of Construction products based on Fire Test Evidence*” stresses that it is the responsibility of the assessment holder (typically the manufacturer involved) to ensure that any and all data is included in the assessment report. Separate assessment

methods cannot be used for different fire resistance periods, section factor ranges or protection thickness ranges for the same product. Furthermore, certification holders should take steps to ensure that if a product is certified by more than 1 certification body, identical data sets and assessment methodologies should be used for any and all certifications of an individual product.

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