

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLD STORAGE CONTRACTORS (European Division)



COOL COMMENTS

Issue 3

December 2002

LIFTING THE LID ON ROOF VOIDS

As fire safety engineers IFC staff are frequently involved in undertaking site surveys, either for the purpose of risk assessments, determining regulatory compliance or establishing structural fire behaviour. Such surveys frequently take the engineering staff into the roof space of almost all building types ranging from domestic housing, through cathedrals and palaces, to the roof voids of food factories and insulated storage buildings. Of these the roof voids of food factories and storage buildings present the most serious risk, frequently with little or no regard having been given to compliance with travel distances, or more accurately in today's performance based world, travel times.

As an infrequently visited place, or a place where people only enter in 'ones or twos' for short periods, roof spaces seem to have acquired a degree of immunity from the normal requirements. However, under the European led employment legislation the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 it is a requirement of management to ensure that the working environment is 'safe' in respect of fire for all employees wherever they are working, or in how few numbers.

The application of the single storey building philosophy is probably completely incorrect in an insulated or clean room building, where a walk-on roof void is installed, because this instantly transforms it into a ground and first floor situation and as such travel distances/time, signage and protected stair access should all be considered. The relationship between travel distance and travel time needs to be seriously considered as 'limbo dancing' under, and through trusses cannot be undertaken at normal walking pace, especially if the roof void is in near darkness and filling with smoke!

Whether, you are a designer, or a premise owner, don't forget your roof void when you next perform your risk assessment under the 1997 Workplace Regulations, as you may subsequently be audited and the assessment be found to be wanting. Even if the omission is not discovered during an audit the Coroner could be the final arbiter as to whether your assessment was adequate, should you unfortunately experience a fire and the worst ever scenario occurs.

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*IACSC (European Division)
wishes all our members a
very Merry Christmas and
prosperous New Year in 2003*

If you would like to receive future copies of Cool Comments by e-mail .pdf or for us to email a regular copy to your contacts on behalf of yourselves and the association please send an e-mail to ifc@intfire.com. Details will be held as strictly confidential but will help promote you and the association and its members.

ANNUAL MEETING IACSC (USA)

The Annual meeting of IACSC was held in the salubrious surroundings of The Breakers hotel in Palm Beach, USA. The meeting was well organised and well attended, and included three representatives from the European Division - Bev Russell, Mike Ford and Jimmy Bittles.

The usual round of exhibition stands provided excellent sources of information and this year a company from Australia POLYPHEN was presenting an overview of their proposed new panel core - a blend of EPS Bead and Modified Phenolic Resin. They are carrying out tests with FM Global Insurance and have high hopes for this product - they would be very pleased to attend our proposed Conference next June!

There were several presentations in the course of the two-day conference with particular focus and detailed information on the developments / construction of the various temperature - controlled distribution centres of a major US food company. A very interesting overview on the whole process!

The Annual Board meeting was held at the same time, and amongst other items the Board unanimously recommended to IACSC members that the Association should be re-titled "International Association of Cold Storage Construction." This has the advantage of retaining our initials IACSC, whilst at the same time broadening the scope of our organisation to embrace a greater range of companies.

Contractor members have been asked to vote on the recommendation, and if agreed, the new title will be promulgated at the next Annual meeting of IACSC, which will be held at the Westin La Paloma hotel in Tucson, Arizona during 25-27 April 2003.

The IACSC Conference will back on to the Annual meeting of IARW (International Association of Refrigerated Warehouse Keepers) and would be of particular interest to many of our European Division members - a date for your diary!

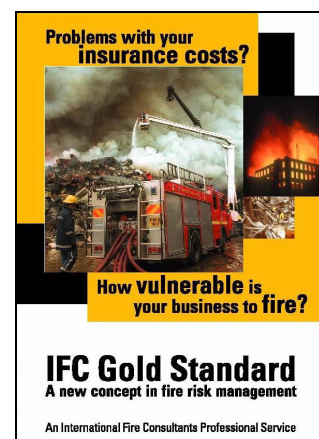
Don't forget the IACSC USA Website / e-mail address is email@iacsc.org and www.iacsc.org where information on our activities and details of our publications is available.

MAKING THE UNINSURABLE - INSURABLE

The last edition of 'Cool Comments' mentioned the launch of IFC's Gold Standard. Accompanying this edition is a brochure describing the IFC Gold Standard in greater detail. The whole objective of Gold Standard is to lower the potential for fire to as near zero as possible, to reduce that impact of fire on the ability of the company to continue trading, and to reduce the incidents of disproportionate damage in the event of a fire.

Whilst being designed for all building types, the IFC Gold Standard is particularly suitable for use in structures where sandwich panels predominate. In these buildings the implementation of many of the recommendations given in the IACSC Guide will form a major part of the strategy. Preventing the delamination of panels, regardless of their core type, forms a major objective in the control of disproportionate damage. Management of personnel and details of the construction are considered in-depth in order to reduce the vulnerability of such businesses to arson.

It is International Fire Consultants Ltds understanding that the objectives and approach incorporated in the Gold Standard are welcomed by most leading insurers.



Should the brochure not be attached to the copy of Cool Comments that you are reading or you feel this is a useful service that your clients would appreciate details of, then please phone +44 (0)1844 275500 and request further copies from either Graham Wiles or Paul McGahey. Any leads or suggestions in this regard would be most appreciated. Emails please to: ifc@intfire.com

LIAISON WITH THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY

Horror stories of hugely increased premiums and demands by the insurers that non-combustible panels should replace combustible core panels in perfectly reasonably constructed insulated structures around the UK continue to surface. Brokers and insurers have appeared implacable in their unreasonable demands and many clients of IACSC members find themselves painted into an impossible corner with little room for manoeuvre. There is talk of major food companies arranging their own insurance, and smaller companies considering doing without insurance. We are not alone in these difficulties - employer's liability and professional indemnity insurance are also attracting vastly increased premiums.

It was against this background that we held our most recent liaison meeting with the Association of British Insurers (ABI) and several of their member companies. We strongly presented our case for continued use of a range of panel cores (combustible and non-combustible) in temperature - controlled insulated structures based on the recommendations for stability and improved construction in our IACSC Guide, as well as on the functions and operations in the structures themselves - and at last we are very pleased to report that we seem to be making some progress.

The ABI asserted very strongly that they are only "facilitators and providers of platforms" - it is their members who set their own risk parameters and establish their insurance criteria. The insurance committee members who were present agreed - perhaps reluctantly, that their pendulum had swung too far to the right and that they "would be taking a more measured approach in the future". They accepted that our IACSC recommendations had merit, and in particular liked the concept of our panel-labelling scheme. However, they insisted that, with some possible exceptions, panels should continue to be processed through and gain approval of the LPC 1181 Fire Test.

We pointed out that the goal posts for 1181 had been moved fairly arbitrarily on a number of occasions over the past 18 months, and the requirements were becoming so complex that no type of panel would be able to pass the test. They agreed to look at the various aspects that we raised, and we await the outcome.

However, it would seem that some movement is taking place in their doctrinal technical views. An article, written by Terry Day of LPC technical fame, has just been published in the Fire Prevention magazine December 2002. He makes some very interesting observations:

- *"The importance of a broad-based risk-based assessment for the suitability of building products to specific end-use applications cannot be over emphasised"*
- *"For low-risk applications, it may be possible to accept sandwich panels that do not meet the requirements of the LPS 1181 standard"*
- *"Approved Document 'L' recommends a higher standard of thermal insulation and air-tightness for the external envelope....."*
- *"Most of the food factory fires resulted from cooking risks or the malfunction of equipment. Stand-alone cold stores may be considered as a lower risk, subject to the risk assessment, which would take into account the financial exposure, building size etc"*
- *"The practice of placing so much emphasis on the fire properties of sandwich panels and other building fabric needs to be replaced with a broad based risk assessment covering all relevant factories. Sandwich panels on their own do not start a fire."*

We welcome Mr Day's very pertinent magazine article and we hope it will be the beginning of the changes in the insurer's attitudes towards temperature - controlled insulated structures, which were heralded at our meeting with them in September 2002.

Watch this space!!!!

Fire Safety Issues Associated with Insulated Cladding & Sandwich Panels

by

Peter Jackman

IEng MIFireE MBEng AIWSc

Technical Director of **International Fire Consultants Ltd**

Targeted Education

A series of fast moving, concentrated one day courses, which will benefit:

- Contractors
- Specifiers
- Technical Sales
- Insurers
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- Architects and Designers



£125.00* per delegate (ex VAT) Lunch and refreshments included.

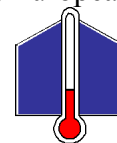
*2nd delegate from the same company
£100.00 (ex VAT)

First Course: 11th February 2003
(Each class strictly limited to 10 delegates)

Contact: International Fire Consultants Ltd
20 Park Street
Princes Risborough
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Fax: +44(0) 1844 274002
E-mail: ifc@intfire.com



In conjunction with the
International Association of
Cold Storage Contractors
(IACSC) European Division



Continued Professional Development Certificates will be issued

IACSC (EUROPEAN DIVISION) ANNUAL CONFERENCE

We plan to hold our next Annual Conference at the Haycock Hotel near Wansford, Peterborough on either 17/18 or 18/19 June 2003. So far as we can ascertain the proposed dates do not clash with any other major events - so please block it off in your diaries.

We shall be focusing on the launch of our important new National Building Specification for Temperature - Controlled Insulated Structures, and also presenting on the development of our National Vocational Qualifications for our industry - a very important aspect for our contractor members, and also their suppliers, since NVQ's will soon be an indispensable element of work in our industry. There will also be presentations on new legislation and aspects of construction, a mixture that will attract representatives from our industry as well as designers and architects. Representatives from our US cousins have also agreed to attend. We will send out more details and a booking letter in due course.

SANDWICH PANEL CASE

A recent court case has confirmed that architects and building designers have a duty to expressly warn the owners of the building about the risks associated with the use of combustible sandwich panels.

The case concerned a fire in a bakery in which the fire spread rapidly through panels with expanded polystyrene insulating

cores (EPS). The building designers claimed to have given the owners a verbal warning about the fire risk associated with these panels. However, the owners ignored the warning because the polystyrene panels were considerably cheaper than the safer alternative.

The court were of the view that a 'competent and prudent' firm would have put any such warning in writing and it considered that, on the balance of probabilities, no such warning was given.

IACSC/IFC LABELLING SCHEME

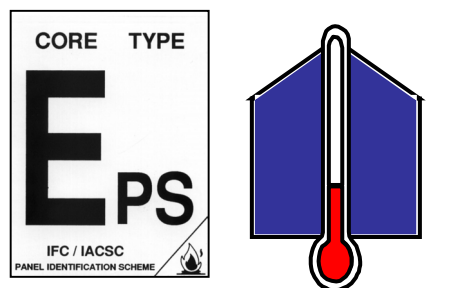
The scheme has already been carried out the labelling of both Safeway's and Exel Logistics depots.

If you have clients that may benefit from this scheme please contact, Graham Wiles or Paul McGahey on:

Phone: +44 (0) 1844 275500

Fax: +44 (0) 1844 274002

E-Mail: ifc@intfire.com



BUILDING FACADES: LIABILITY AND DAMAGE LIMITATION

Building owners, designers and occupiers have a legal duty to ensure their buildings are safe.

If injury or damage is caused, for example by part of the façade falling, then liability arises. The Building Research Establishment has produced a free, DTI-funded leaflet advising on legal liability and damage limitation.

ASBESTOS REGULATIONS DELAYED, BUT STILL ON THE WAY

The new asbestos regulations were due to come into force in October but have now been delayed after comments from the Conservative Party. The regulations will impose a duty on property owners and managers to survey their buildings; identify whether asbestos is present within the property fabric; compile an asbestos register and management plan; and to remove any high risk asbestos products from buildings in order to reduce the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres.

CONSULTATION ON FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

In July this year the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) issued a consultation document on the Reform of the UK Fire Safety Legislation. This document set out the proposals for a new legislative framework for the United Kingdom.

Comments from interested parties had to be submitted by the 22nd November 2002.

It is expected that the new legislation made via a Regulatory Reform Order under the Regulatory Reform Order Act 2001 will be in place by spring 2004.

UP AND COMING EVENTS

December

12 December

Building Regulations Part B, London
Contact: Alison Payton
Tel +44 (0) 20 7304 6829
E-mail: a_payton@imeche.org.uk

2003

January

27-28 January

Fire and Materials 2003,
San Francisco, USA
Contact:
www.intercom.dial.pipex.com

27-31 January

Conference and Seminar for
Certificate in Fire Design Studies,
Northampton
Contact: Gillian McKenzie
Tel: +44 (0) 1604 404 121
E-mail: cpd@abe.org.uk

February

10-14 February

Conference and Seminar in Building
Control Studies, Northampton
Contact: Gillian McKenzie
Tel: +44 (0) 1604 404 121
E-mail: cpd@abe.org.uk

13-14 February

Amsterdam Circle of Chief
Economists' meeting on Strategic
Issues in Insurance, Amsterdam
Tel: +41 22 707 6600
E-mail:
secretariat@genevaassociation.org

17 February

Evaluation of Professional
Competence 2002, Northampton
Contact: Gillian McKenzie
Tel: +44 (0) 1604 404 121
E-mail: cpd@abe.org.uk

March

11 March

Construction Faculty Dinner 2003,
The Savoy

23-26 March

IFE 2003, Ex-cel, London
Contact: Fresh RM
Phone: +44 (0) 207 886 3096

April

9-10 April

'Part B' Designing and Checking for
Compliance – Two day workshop,
Northampton
Contact: Gillian McKenzie
Tel: +44 (0) 1604 404 121
E-mail: cpd@abe.org.uk

May

19-22 May

International Fire Expo
Contact: www.fire-expo.co.uk

19 May

International Fire Expo Conference

CONTACT US:

If you have any items, suggested improvements or
general comments please feel free to contribute by
faxing, e-mailing or simply telephoning the Editor.

Fax: +44 (0) 1844 274002
Phone: +44 (0) 1844 275500
E-mail: ifc@intfire.com

BOOKING FORM

FAX BACK: 01844 274002

**Fire Safety Issues Associated with Insulated
Cladding & Sandwich Panels**

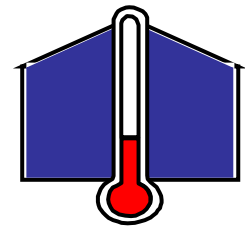
Peter Jackman IEng MIFireE MBEng AIWSc
Technical Director of **International Fire Consultants Ltd**

First Seminar: 11th February 2003; 10.00 - 16.00 hrs

Venue: International Fire Consultants Ltd, 20 Park Street, Princes Risborough, Bucks, HP27 9AH

Course Content Includes:

- Comparison of materials used in the construction of insulated envelope panels and cladding
- What do the regulations and insurers require?
- The IACSC Guide – The industries response
- Review of the tests called up by the interested parties
- Possible method for selecting panels using a risk based assessment



NOTE: Each course strictly limited to 10 delegates on a first come first served basis. Future seminars will be arranged to accommodate, where possible, delegates schedules

Our cheque for the sum of £..... is enclosed/in the post, made payable to International Fire Consultants Ltd [£125.00 + VAT, 2nd delegate from the same company £100.00 + VAT]

COMPANY:

ADDRESS:

Post Code: Tel No: Fax No:

E-mail:

Contact Name: Job Title:

SIGNATURE:.....**DATE:**

Courses could, with prior arrangement, be held at clients offices/premises, (please tick if appropriate and you would like us to contact you to discuss a fee estimate);

Please return completed form and fee to Christine Barfield on Fax No: +44 (0)1844 274002.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

1. Booking form to be returned to International Fire Consultants Ltd, 20 Park Street, Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 9AH, marked for the attention of Christine Barfield.
2. Booking form to be completed in full and signed by contact name
3. Payment to accompany completed booking form or cleared funds 5 days before the course.
4. Cheques made payable to International Fire Consultants Ltd (IFC).
5. Telephone bookings to be followed by confirmation in writing, with payment
6. Late bookings by telephone, payment on day of seminar/course to International Fire Consultants Ltd with completed booking form
7. Cancellation:
 - a) 14 days (2 weeks) written notification – 50 % fee returnable (administration charge).
 - b) Less than 14 days (2 weeks) written notification - fee non-returnable.
 - c) Non attendance - fee non-returnable
 - d) Substitution of delegate(s) can be made at any time, but please notify IFC/Lecturer
8. Cancellation by IFC - full fee returnable. Cancelled seminar will be rearranged at the earliest possible time (fee can be held for rearranged dates at your request).
9. Monies received for bookings subsequent to the preferred course being fully booked will be held on behalf of the delegate and if a subsequent course is not arranged will be refunded in full.

It may be necessary to alter timings or programme details for reasons beyond the control of the organisers who thereby reserve the right to do so.