



Calling for non-combustibles has just become 'cool'

We are completely on-board with any legislation or action plan that drives increased passive fire safety within the construction industry in the UK. Worldwide, it is our goal as a company to highlight the risks, the problems and the importance of this very topic. But it has struck us as slightly ironic the number of 'construction professionals' in an IFSEC article published this month who now are calling for increased usage of non-combustibles and stricter rules for their use when it was the same groups who allowed the sub-standard building practices prior to (and after!) the Grenfell tragedy.

The truth is, mandating the use of non-combustibles as external cladding is only half the story, in fact maybe not even a third of the story. It is an 'easy', media

friendly and palatable, sticking plaster trying to fix a systemic design issue within the construction industry worldwide, but very prominently in the UK. It's troubling to us that the principles of those same construction professionals who are planning, designing and building our homes and workplaces doesn't reach far enough to say that, as they most definitely have the knowledge to see it. Or do they?

We conducted research in 2019 to ascertain the knowledge levels surrounding passive fire protection amongst construction professionals in the UK, Germany & France and some of the findings were staggering.





The terms were **active fire protection** (systems which protect structures and people including sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms), **passive fire protection** (whereby the spread of fire is slowed or contained through the use of fire-resistant walls, floors and doors, amongst others), **fire resistance** (a set of products that prevent fire spreading to other parts of the structure) and **reaction to fire** (products designed to slow the growth of fire in its early stages to aid escape).

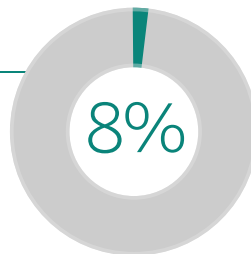
Architects were asked about their understanding of four common terms relating to buildings and fire.

Only 8% were able to correctly define these four basic fire protection terms.

Passive technologies such as flame-retardant treated materials e.g. firewall were considered by over a quarter (29%), plasterboard by 21% and plywood/OSB by 8%.

58% of architects were unable to explain what 'reaction to fire' protection is and almost three quarters (71%) were unable to define fire resistance.

None of the architects interviewed said they'd had comprehensive fire protection training; most had some training and 8% say they've never had fire protection training.



One in three architects (35%) were unable to correctly define the concept of active fire protection, yet when asked about fire protection options they'd considered in projects, smoke alarms were named by 38% and sprinklers by 33%. =

Just over half (52%) of all architects couldn't give an accurate definition of passive fire protection, where fire protection is 'built in'. However, 54% did cite fire doors as a consideration, which is part of the passive approach.

So now knowing this, maybe it's time to create a realistic definition of what a 'professional' is, when we're discussing fire protection, and start using a much more consultant & specialist approach. By gaining insight and true expert opinion we could actually prevent a tragedy like Grenfell ever happening again. We must - because unfortunately the current legislation will fail us, as will the 'increased' legislation being called for.

"...we could actually prevent a tragedy like Grenfell ever happening again."

Get in touch

For enquiries speak to one of our customer support team.

Telephone: + 1 902-201-0499

Email: info@zeroignition.com

zeroignition.com