



35 recommendations from the False Alarms research work

- 1: There should be a change to recommendations that support codes of practice, to refer to the potential benefits of certain multi-sensor detectors in providing greater immunity to false alarms.
- 2: Perform research work to investigate multi-sensor capabilities and compare with single sensor smoke detectors.
- 3: Perform research work characterising the performance capabilities of old used smoke detectors taking into consideration environmental influences and other risk factors to identify any degradation in performance with time.
- 4: During the next BS 5839-1 revision, propose a review of old detectors and possible need for replacement.
- 5: In public areas, where appropriate, MCPs to have protective covers fitted possibly with break seal protection.
- 6: In areas where objects might collide with an MCP, it should be fitted with side impact or other forms of protection.
- 7: A review of MCP protection during the next BS 5839-1 revision.
- 8: MCPs at risk of being triggered should be fitted with protective covers.
- 9: Increase awareness of the recommendations in BS 7273-4 with regards to the use of green 'break glass' units for the fire alarm industry, FRS and other stakeholders.
- 10: A review of NHS Scotland/DoH guidance to reconsider advice regarding early operation of MCPs on smell of smoke.
- 11: SFRS to put in place arrangements with ARCs with ex-directory connections to ensure correct address/postcode is passed to appropriate control.
- 12: Fire alarm contractors and ARCs should check customer names and postcodes for accuracy.
- 13: Where the ARC connection is provided only for property protection, there is scope, in the case of lower risk premises for the use of a time-related system with a "day/night" arrangement, whereby, during normal working hours, the ARC connection is isolated, but is restored automatically at the end of the working day.
- 14: During the next revision of BS 5839-1 propose more robust guidance to prevent false signals to ARC during weekly tests.
- 15: All systems which have an automatic connection between the ARC and FRS to be fitted with a more robust method that inhibits the alarm signal from the premises to the ARC during the weekly test.
- 16: A more detailed investigation of sprinkler system/fire detection interactions and fault data is recommended before any specific guidance can be proposed.
- 17: Revision to BS 9251 and BS 5839-1 to strengthen existing guidance on time delays.

18: Where practical, businesses should be encouraged by the FRS or through their own fire risk assessment to implement the use of staff alarms/investigation periods (in accordance with BS 5839-1) before calling out the FRS to an AFA.

19: Fire alarm contractors to remind the user of their responsibilities during service visits and the implementation of this by fire alarm contractors is strengthened by certification and inspection bodies.

20: Training bodies to emphasise the responsibility of the fire alarm contractors to detail all false alarms experienced during each FDFAS service.

21: Fire alarm contractors to ensure that logbooks are being completed regularly and comprehensively as part of the maintenance visit and the implementation of this by fire alarm contractors is strengthened by certification and inspection bodies.

22: Logbooks should be easily accessible to responsible persons who should make entries of all events and follow-up investigations.

23: Whilst performing fire risk assessments, the FRA should enquire as to the experience of false alarms and, where possible, should ensure that appropriate actions are taken to reduce their number. Recommendations to be strengthened by certification and inspection bodies.

24: The zone plan should be periodically reviewed and kept up to date.

25: Fire alarm contractors to retrospectively implement the recommendations of BS 5839-1:2013 with regards to zone plans.

26: Guidance to a much wider audience as to what an FDFAS system is capable of doing to minimise false alarms.

27: End users/responsible persons should be aware that the fire alarm system integrity is compromised when in fault or when parts of it are isolated.

28: BS 5839-1 revision recommends that fault/isolations should be under strict management control and that the times of fault and isolation should be kept to a minimum.

29: To check FDFAS control equipment for fault or isolation disablement conditions when premises are audited by the FRS or during any operational incident. FRS to review current operational procedures in response to such states being discovered.

30: Improve knowledge exchange between FRS with fire alarm companies.

31: Scottish Government Sector Specific Guidance to be updated with relevant findings from this research work to reduce false alarms.

32: Periodic liaison meetings between BRE, FIA, FPA, BAFE, RISC Authority and SFRS so that SFRS issues and messages can be disseminated.

33: FRS to consider the use of specialist fire alarm investigators to investigate the causes of false alarms.

34: False alarms reported specifically as "fault" or "unknown" need to be investigated further by a specialist to identify the underlying causes.

35: FRSs to correctly specify the causes of false alarms as "unknown" rather than "fault" when the false alarm cannot be identified (even if a fault is suspected).