



Code of Practice for Fire Safety of Furnishings and Fittings in Places of Assembly

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DEPARTMENT OF THE

ENVIRONMENT

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**Padraig Flynn, T.D., Minister
for the Environment**

Foreword

I recently had the pleasure of launching a Code of Practice for the management of Fire Safety in places of assembly. I am very pleased now to launch this further Code of Practice relating to the fire safety of furnishings and fittings in places of assembly.

This document contains recommendations for people in control of premises on how seating, curtains, floor coverings, stage scenery, decorations and similar items can be made more safe from fire. It is intended to reduce the risk of fires being started in places of assembly through carelessness with small ignition sources such as cigarettes and matches and to retard the spread of fire when it occurs.

I thank the Fire Services Council for their assistance in the development of the Code.

The recommendations in the Code represent a further major contribution to fire safety in public places.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Padraig Flynn'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Padraig Flynn, T.D.,
Minister for the Environment.**

March, 1989.

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INTRODUCTION

Section 18(2) of the Fire Services Act, 1981 states:-

"It shall be the duty of every person having control over premises to which this section applies to take all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire on such premises, and to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the safety of persons on the premises in the event of an outbreak of fire".

This Code of Practice gives guidance, in respect of furnishings and fittings, to persons in control of places of assembly to assist them in discharging their statutory duty in regard to the safety of persons on the premises. The Code sets out standards and, where required, the tests necessary to establish compliance with these standards. In particular, it recommends that foam and other filling material for use in seating should comply with tests similar to those prescribed for foam, fillings etc., for use in domestic furniture.

The items covered by the Code include seating, curtains and blinds, floor coverings, stage curtains (other than safety curtains), stage scenery and properties, cinema screens and miscellaneous fittings and decorations.

The premises to which the Code applies are those put to any of the following uses:

- amusement arcade
- art gallery
- assembly hall
- bingo hall
- casino
- concert hall
- conference hall
- cinema
- dance hall (including discotheque)
- ecclesiastical building
- exhibition hall
- funfair building
- grandstand
- gymnasium
- indoor bowling alley
- indoor games court
- library to which the public are admitted
- museum
- non-residential college or school
- non-residential club
- premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor other than an off-licence
- radio or television studio to which the public are admitted
- restaurant, cafe, canteen
- riding school
- skating rink
- sports pavilion
- stadium
- swimming baths (including any swimming pool, changing rooms, or similar facilities)
- tent or marquee to which the public are admitted
- theatre.

The Code applies to these premises whether they are separate buildings, or form part of premises used also for other purposes, e.g. a restaurant, dance hall or premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor etc. contained within a hotel.

Persons in control should satisfy themselves that furnishings and fittings which they are having installed in places of assembly have passed the required tests and that they comply with the standards recommended in this Code. They should ensure that they are supplied with certificates of the type indicated in the Code which will give formal confirmation that the standards recommended have been complied with. These certificates should be retained by the persons in control and should be available for inspection, if required, by an authorised officer of the fire authority.

In addition to this Code and the Code of Practice on the Management of Fire Safety in Places of Assembly (published February 1989), separate Codes are being prepared in relation to:

- Fire Safety in Hotels, Guesthouses etc.
- Structural Fire Precautions and Means of Escape
- Building Services.

It should be noted that compliance with this Code does not absolve Management of their responsibility to comply with any separate measure which a Fire Authority may require in specific cases.

The Code relates to furnishings and fittings in places of assembly. Where new or replacement furnishings and fittings are being provided they should comply fully with the standards specified in this Code. As regards existing furnishings and fittings which may not fully comply with the recommendations, these should be replaced by furnishings and fittings which meet the recommendations as quickly as possible. Where items such as extensive seating and floor coverings requiring major investment are involved, arrangements to achieve full compliance on a phased basis might be appropriate provided action to achieve full compliance is completed by 1st March, 1994. In the meantime, during the phasing-in period special care should be taken by persons in control of places of assembly to ensure that any shortcomings arising from deficiencies in the fire safety standards of furnishings and fittings are compensated for by greater diligence being exercised in relation to the management of fire safety in the premises. The measures recommended in this regard are contained in the Code of Practice for the Management of Fire Safety in Places of Assembly.

DEFINITIONS

Class 0:	<p>(a) The classification achieved by material which is non-combustible throughout as defined in BS 476: Part 4: 1970 (1984).</p> <p>or</p> <p>(b) by material which meets the following requirement:</p> <p>The material shall have a surface spread of flame of Class 1 throughout when tested in accordance with the procedure specified in BS 476: Part 7: 1971, and, when tested in accordance with the procedure specified in BS 476: Part 6: 1981, shall have an index of performance (I) not exceeding 12 and a subindex (i_1) not exceeding 6.</p>
Class 1:	<p>The classification achieved by a material tested in accordance with the procedure specified in BS 476: Part 7: 1971.</p>
High Life Risk Area:	<p>Any area which has such amount of combustible contents and/or is of such construction (e.g. low ceiling height or limited fire ventilation) that, in the event of fire, ease of escape could be reduced.</p>
Open Stage:	<p>A stage which is not separated from an auditorium by fire resisting construction incorporating a safety curtain.</p>
Separated Stage:	<p>A stage which is separated from an auditorium by fire resisting construction incorporating a safety curtain.</p>
Upholstery:	<p>Any filling, padding or stuffing encased in fabric(s) or non-fabric cover(s).</p>

SECTION 1: GENERAL

- 1.1 Section 18(2) of the Fire Services Act, 1981 places a statutory duty on every person in control of a place of assembly to guard against the outbreak of fire on the premises and in the event of an outbreak to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the safety of persons on the premises.
- 1.2 To discharge that duty as far as the furnishings and fittings of places of assembly are concerned, persons in control of the premises should satisfy themselves that these items have passed the tests and meet the standards recommended in the relevant sections of this Code of Practice. By doing so, they will have ensured that the possibility of seats, curtains, carpets, etc., being ignited by small ignition sources such as cigarettes, matches, etc., will have been considerably reduced.
- 1.3 Persons in control of places of assembly should review all existing furnishings and fittings by reference to the standards recommended in this Code and take the necessary steps to immediately remedy any deficiencies. Where items such as extensive seating and floor coverings requiring major investment are involved, arrangements to achieve full compliance on a phased basis might be appropriate provided action to achieve full compliance is completed by 1st March, 1994. In the meantime during the phasing-in period, special care should be taken by persons in control of places of assembly to ensure that any shortcomings arising from deficiencies in the fire safety standards of furnishings and fittings are compensated for by greater diligence being exercised in relation to the management of fire safety in the premises. The measures recommended in this regard are contained in the Code of Practice for the Management of Fire Safety in Places of Assembly. Where it is necessary to adopt a phased programme it may be helpful to consult with the local fire authority as to appropriate interim measures and phasing arrangements.
- 1.4 Persons in control of places of assembly who are having furnishings and fittings replaced should ensure that they comply with the requirements of this Code and that at time of purchase or installation they obtain certificates of the type specified in the relevant sections of this Code which will give formal confirmation that the Code's recommendations have been complied with. These certificates should be retained carefully by those concerned so that they can be made available, if required, for inspection by the fire authority - a copy of each certificate should be kept on the premises.

SECTION 2: SEATING

- 2.1 All seating should be constructed from materials which cannot easily be ignited by a lighted cigarette or a small flaming source. The standards required are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 2.2 Foam filling materials used in seating and cushions should comply with I.S. 419 : 1988 Clause 2. Non-foam and composite filling materials should comply with I.S. 419 : 1988 Clause 3.1.
- 2.3 Upholstery in seating should, when tested in accordance with I.S. 254 : 1983, pass the smouldering cigarette test and Ignition Source Grade No. 5 Test (it should pass the Ignition Source Grade No. 7 Test if it is intended for use in high life risk areas).
- 2.4 Rigid plastic seating should, when tested in accordance with I.S. 254: 1983, (modified as in Appendix "A"), pass the smouldering cigarette test and Ignition Source Grade No. 5 Test (or should pass the Ignition Source Grade No. 7 Test in high life risk areas). If upholstered the seating must also comply with 2.2 and 2.3 above.
- 2.5 A Test Certificate as in Appendix "B" should be completed for each item. Where there are a number of identical items of the same type, e.g. chairs, one Test Certificate will suffice for all items of that type.
- 2.6.1 Care should be taken that areas underneath seating, in particular enclosed areas underneath fixed seating, are kept clear of rubbish and waste and other combustible materials.
- 2.6.2 The covering materials of upholstery should be maintained free of cuts and tears and filling materials should not be exposed.
- 2.6.3 Plastic chairs should not be stacked in the public areas of premises while members of the public are present.

SECTION 3: CURTAINS, DRAPES AND BLINDS

- 3.1 Curtains, drapes, and blinds should be made from materials which do not easily ignite, or which, if ignited, transmit flame for a short distance only. The standards required are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 3.2.1 Curtains and drapes should comply with the requirements for Type B Performance of BS 5867 : Part 2 : 1980. In high life risk areas, and, on stages, they should comply with the requirements for Type C Performance, when subjected (prior to the test) to the appropriate washing/dry cleaning procedure in accordance with BS 5651: 1978.
- 3.2.2 Material used in the manufacture of blinds should meet the designation of "flameproof" when assessed in accordance with BS 3120: 1959.
- 3.3 A Test Certificate as in Appendix "C" should be obtained for each specified item.

SECTION 4: FLOOR COVERINGS

- 4.1 Floor coverings should be made from materials which do not ignite easily when subjected to small ignition sources, e.g. a lighted cigarette, match, etc. The standard required is as set out in the following paragraphs.
- 4.2 Textile floor coverings should comply with the performance requirements of "a low radius of effects of ignition" as defined in BS 5287: 1976.
- 4.3 A Test Certificate as in Appendix "D" should be completed for each specified item.

SECTION 5: SCENERY AND PROPERTIES

- 5.1 Scenery and properties should be constructed of materials which do not easily ignite from small ignition sources. The standards required are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 5.2 Scenery and properties on open stages should be constructed of the following:
- (a) Non-combustible or Class O material
 - (b) Timber or timber-based material of not less than Class 1 throughout its total thickness
 - (c) Plastic material of either Types 3, 4 or 5 as defined in Table B of Regulation N3 (8) of the Proposed Building Regulations.
 - (d) Textile material meeting the designation of “flameproof” as defined in BS 3120: 1959 when subjected to an appropriate dry cleaning/washing procedure in accordance with BS 5651 : 1978.
- 5.3 Scenery and properties on separated stages should be constructed of the following:
- (a) Non-combustible or Class O material
 - (b) Timber or timber-based material of not less than Class 1. It is permissible to surface treat the timber with a flame retardant.
 - (c) Plastic material of either Types 3, 4 or 5 as defined in Table B of Regulation N3 (8) of the Proposed Building Regulations.
 - (d) Textile material meeting the designation “flameproof” as defined in BS 3120: 1959 when treated with a flame retardant and not subjected to an appropriate dry cleaning/washing procedure of BS 5651: 1978 before test.
- 5.4 Where premises are used occasionally for stage performances, scenery and properties should meet the requirements as for open stages (as in 5.2 above) with the exception that textile material should meet the requirements of 5.3 (d) above.
- 5.5 Flame retardants should be of recognised manufacture and applied in accordance with the manufacturers’ instructions to achieve the recommended standard.

SECTION 6: MISCELLANEOUS FITTINGS, TEMPORARY DECORATIONS ETC.

- 6.1 Moveable partitions, temporary decorations, display stands and cinema screens should be constructed of materials which do not easily ignite. The required standards are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 6.2 Moveable partitions should be constructed of non-combustible, Class O or Class 1 materials. Surface treatments with flame retardants to achieve these standards are not acceptable.
- 6.3.1 Temporary decorations include items produced from fabrics, paper and plastic, artificial and dried foliage including Christmas trees and temporary decorations suspended from walls or ceilings. These items should meet the designation “flameproof” as defined in BS 3120:1959 when treated with a flame retardant and not subjected to an appropriate dry cleaning/washing procedure of BS 5651:1978 before test.
- 6.3.2 The materials used in the construction of display stands should comply with those for the occasional use of premises as set out in Section 5.4 above.
- 6.3.3 Materials used in the construction of cinema screens should comply with the designation of “flameproof” as defined in BS 3120: 1959.

APPENDIX 'A'

METHOD OF TEST FOR RIGID PLASTIC SEATING

The test shall be carried out in accordance with I.S. 254: 1983 modified as follows:

Sections 1 – 4 No change.

Exception: Section 4.4.

Add in

(e) Flaming droplets shall not be formed.

Section 5.1 Not applicable.

Section 6 Not applicable.

Replace by:

(a) In the case of chairs and stools, the test piece shall consist of the finished item without upholstery.

(b) In the case of bench seating the test piece shall consist of a one metre length.

Section 7 No change.

Section 8 Add in

The crib shall be placed under the test piece and positioned directly beneath the back rest at the central position such that the distance between the top of the crib and the underside of the seat is 100mm. In the case of items without backs the crib shall be placed beneath the centre of the seat.

APPENDIX 'B'

IGNITABILITY TEST CERTIFICATE FOR SEATING

1. Name and Address of Test Centre: _____

2. Date of Test: _____

3. Certificate No. _____

4. Seating submitted for test by: _____

5. Full Description of Finished Item of Seating including details of filling material, interliner and covering material:

6(a) I certify, that the item of seating specified at 5 above complies with I.S. 419: 1988 Clause 2/Clause 3.1 (Delete Clause Not Applicable) and when tested in accordance with I.S. 254: 1983 passed

(a) The Smouldering Cigarette Test and (b) Ignition Source Grade _____ Test

6(b) I certify, that the item of plastic seating specified at 5 above when tested in accordance with I.S.254:1983 as modified in Appendix "A" passed

(a) The Smouldering Cigarette Test and (b) Ignition Source Grade _____ Test

(Delete (a) or (b) as appropriate)

Signed: _____
(Signature)

on behalf of _____ Test Centre
(Name of Centre)

Position _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 'C'

TEST CERTIFICATE CURTAINS, DRAPES AND BLINDS

1. Name and Address of Test Centre: _____

2. Date of Test: _____

3. Certificate No. _____

4. Item supplied by: _____

5. Description of Fabric: _____

6. Description of Lining Fabric (if any) _____

7. Description of BS 5651: 1978 Dry Cleaning/Washing Procedure (if applicable) _____

8. I certify that the item of Curtain/Drape/Blind specified at 5, 6 and 7 above complies with:

(a) Type ___ (Please specify) Performance when assessed in accordance with BS 5867 Part 2: 1980 having been subjected to an appropriate washing/dry cleaning procedure in accordance with BS 5651: 1978 before test (where required).

(b) the designation "flameproof" when assessed in accordance with BS 3120: 1959 when subjected to an appropriate washing/dry cleaning procedure in accordance with BS 5651: 1978 before test (where required).

(c) the designation "flameproof" when assessed in accordance with BS 3120: 1959 without being subjected to an appropriate washing/dry cleaning procedure before test (where required).

Delete (a), (b) or (c).

Signed : _____
(Signature)

on behalf of _____ Test Centre
(Name of Centre)

Position: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 'D'

TEST CERTIFICATE: FLOOR COVERING

1. Name and Address of Test Centre: _____

2. Date of Test: _____

3. CertificateNo: _____

4. Floor covering submitted by: _____

5. Full Description of Floor covering: _____

6. I certify, that the floor covering specified at 5 above when assessed in accordance with BS 5287: 1976 has a low radius of effects of ignition.

Signed: _____

(Signature)

on behalf of _____ Test Centre

(Name of Centre)

Position: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 'E'

LIST OF SPECIFICATIONS REFERRED TO IN CODE

I.S. 254 : 1983	Irish Standard Specification "Flame Resistance Requirements for Upholstery".
I.S.419:1988	Irish Standard Specification "Fire Safety Requirements for Components of Furniture"
BS 476 :Part 4 : 1970(1984)	British Standards Institution Specification "Non-combustibility Tests for Materials".
BS 476 :Part 6 : 1981	British Standards Institution Specification "Method of Test for Fire Propagation for Products" .
BS 476 :Part 7 : 1971	British Standards Institution Specification "Surface Spread of Flame Tests for Materials" .
BS 3120 : 1959	British Standards Institution Specification "Performance Requirements of Flameproof Materials for Clothing and Other Purposes".
BS 4790 : 1972	British Standards Institution Specification "Determination of the Effects of a Small Source of Ignition on Textile Floor Coverings (hot metal nut method)".
BS 5287 : 1976	British Standards Institution Specification "Assessment and Labelling of Textile Floor Covering Tested to BS 4790".
BS 5651:1978	British Standards Institution Specification "Cleansing and Wetting Procedures for Use in the Assessment of the Effect of Cleansing and Wetting on the Flammability of Textile Fabrics and Fabric Assemblies" .
BS 5867 :Part 2 : 1980	British Standards Institution "Specification for Fabrics, Curtains and Drapes: Flammability Requirements".