

Care and maintenance of automatic sprinkler systems

Replaces BS EN Clause 20 and supplements Clause 21

TB203.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

A satisfactory sprinkler system maintenance regime including a thorough review of hazard is critical to the continued dependable performance of all sprinkler systems.

This Technical Bulletin outlines procedures for care and maintenance of sprinkler systems to ensure that they remain fully operational and that periodic assessments are carried-out to verify that protection is appropriate to the hazards.

This Technical Bulletin intends to re-introduce optimum requirements for maintenance derived from a selection of practices from the previous BS 5306-2 edition of the *Sprinkler rules* and new recommendations from the industry.

This issue of TB203 replaces TB203:2014:1 and should be applied in place of BS EN 12845: 2015 – clause 20 ‘Maintenance’ and clause 21 ‘Third party inspection’.

This version of TB203 has adopted the same headings and structure as BS EN 12845 Clause 20 ‘Maintenance’. The paragraph numbering system is also equivalent where the content of the two documents are similar, for example:

- BS EN 12845 Clause 20.1 ‘General’ → TB203.1 ‘General’;
- BS EN 12845 Clause 20.2 ‘Users’ programme of inspection and checking’ → TB203.2 ‘Users’ programme of inspection and checking arrangements’; and
- BS EN 12845 Clause 20.3 ‘Service and maintenance schedule’ → TB203.3 ‘Service and maintenance schedule’.

This Technical Bulletin should also be read in conjunction with the following parts of BS EN 12845:

- Clause 19 ‘Commissioning’.
- Clause 21 ‘Third party inspection’
- Annex F ‘Additional measures to improve system reliability and availability’ and
- Annex J ‘Precautions and procedures when a system is not fully operational’.

TB203.0.1 Definitions

TB203.0.1.1

Three-year tank

A suction tank designed and protected against corrosion such that the need for emptying the tank for maintenance is reduced to a period of not less than three years.

TB203.0.1.2

Ten-year tank

A suction tank designed and protected against corrosion such that the need for emptying the tank for maintenance is reduced to a period of not less than ten years.

TB203.0.1.3

Alarm receiving station

An alarm receiving station approved to Loss Prevention Standard LPS 1020 or equivalent, for transmission of fire signals to the fire authority within which the sprinklered property is situated.

- Approved sprinkler contractor*
A sprinkler installing company certificated to an appropriate level to Loss Prevention Standard LPS 1048 or to an equivalent scheme.
- Certificate of Conformity (C of C)*
A certificate issued by a nationally accredited approval and certification body or an approved sprinkler contractor, verifying compliance with defined installation rules and recording any non-compliances.
- Fire safety official*
The employee or agent of the owner or user of the sprinkler system(s) nominated to undertake specified tasks relating to the upkeep of the sprinkler protection.
- Inspection*
A visual inspection of a sprinkler system or portion thereof, to verify that it appears to be in operating condition and is free from physical damage.
- Insured*
Person or persons, companies or bodies corporate who may be either or both owners or occupiers of the sprinkler protected premises, and who have an insurable interest in the building, contents or business interruption risk.
- Sprinkler servicing contractor*
An approved sprinkler contractor with servicing as part of their approval scope appointed by the user to undertake a test, service and maintenance schedule to TB203.3.
- Sprinkler protection user*
The person responsible for or having effective control over the sprinkler system provision and its upkeep.
- Weekly test card*
Record card(s), giving both specific advice and space for recording of weekly testing of sprinkler system alarms and quarterly testing of water supplies.

TB203.1 GENERAL (REVISIONS TO BS EN CLAUSE 20.1)

- TB203.1.1 Person(s) responsible for the sprinkler system**
The user shall appoint an individual and a substitute, who after they have been given the necessary instructions, shall ensure that the system remains in working condition. The name, address and telephone number of the person responsible for the system, as well as those substitutes, shall be prominently displayed in the sprinkler valve room.
- TB203.1.2 Programmed work**
The user shall ensure that a programme of inspection and checks is carried out (see TB203.2), arrange a test, service and maintenance schedule (see TB203.3 and TB203.4) and keep records, including a logbook, which shall be held on the premises.
The user shall arrange for the test, service and maintenance schedule to be carried out under contract by a sprinkler servicing contractor.
Any alarm receiving station(s) shall be notified of any system tests which will result in the transmission of an alarm. The alarm receiving station(s) shall be requested to verify that alarm signal(s) have been received. The alarm receiving station(s) shall be informed immediately that the test procedures have been completed.
After an inspection, check, test, service or maintenance procedure the system, and any automatic pumps, pressure tanks and gravity tanks shall be returned to the normal operational condition.

Where manufacturers recommend more frequent servicing and maintenance of their products than required by this Technical Bulletin, their recommendations shall be complied with.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.1.1

Where certificates of conformity have been issued for the system, the requirements of the certificate of conformity issuer shall be observed in order to maintain the certificate validity.

If appropriate, the user should notify interested parties of the intent to carry out tests and/or of the results.

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TB203.1.3 Precautions while carrying out work

See BS EN 12845 Annex J for precautions to be taken while the system is not operational or after a sprinkler operation.

TB203.1.4 Replacement sprinklers

A stock of spare sprinklers shall be kept on the premises as replacements for operated or damaged sprinklers. Spare sprinklers, together with sprinkler spanners as supplied by the supplier, shall be housed in a cabinet or cabinets located in a prominent and easily accessible position where the ambient temperature does not exceed 27°C.

The number of spare sprinklers per system shall be no less than:

- (a) 6 for Light Hazard (LH);
- (b) 24 for Ordinary Hazard (OH);
- (c) 36 for High Hazard, Process (HHP) and High Hazard, Storage (HHS).

The stock shall be replenished promptly after spares are used.

Where installations contain high-temperature sprinklers, sidewall or other variations such as different orifice sizes, sprinkler patterns or contain multiple controls, the spares shall incorporate an appropriate proportion of these types of products.

TB203.1.5 Pressure bearing components

Inspection, testing and maintenance of pressure tanks and pressure bearing components shall fulfil the national requirements for pressure equipment.

The UK national requirement is:

The Pressure Equipment Regulations 1999

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19992001.htm>

Pressure Equipment (Amendment) Regulations 2015

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/399/pdfs/ukxi_20150399_en.pdf

which implements the common European approach: European Pressure Equipment Directive 97/23/EC

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31997L0023&from=EN>

TB203.1.6 Sprinklers

Sprinklers subjected to contamination, such as those in spray booths, may require frequent attention and replacement may be necessary.

TB203.2 USERS' PROGRAMME OF INSPECTION AND CHECKING (REVISIONS TO BS EN CLAUSE 20.2)

TB203.2.1

General

The installer shall provide the user with a documented inspection and checking procedure for the system. The programme shall include instruction on the action to be taken in respect of faults, operation of the system, with particular mention of the procedure for emergency manual starting of pumps, and details of the weekly routine of TB203.2.2.

TB203.2.2

Weekly routine

TB203.2.2.1

General

Each part of the weekly routine shall be carried out at intervals of no more than seven days.

TB203.2.2.2

Checks

The following shall be checked and recorded:

- (a) all water and air pressure gauge readings on installations, trunk mains and pressure tanks;
- (b) all water levels in elevated private reservoirs, rivers, canals, lakes, water storage tanks (including pump priming water tanks and pressure tanks);
- (c) the correct position of all stop valves which control the flow of water to the sprinkler system(s) from the water supply, up to and including the installation control valves stop valves but excluding the water undertaker's stop valve on a town main supply to the system.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.2.2.2

The air pressure in the pipework in dry, alternate and pre-action installations should not fall at a rate of more than 1,0 bar per week or at a rate specified by the manufacturer, whichever is the lesser.

TB203.2.2.3

Water motor alarm test

Each water motor alarm shall be sounded for no less than 30s.

TB203.2.2.4

Automatic pump starting test

Tests on automatic pumps shall include the following;

- (a) water pressure on the starting device shall be reduced, thus simulating the condition of automatic starting;
- (b) when the pump starts, the starting pressure shall be checked and recorded;
- (c) check that there is cooling water flowing through open circuit cooling systems
- (d) check diesel pump oil pressure;
- (e) fuel and engine lubricating oil levels in diesel engines shall be checked; (f) check the correct operation of any automatic ventilation louvres.

TB203.2.2.5

Diesel engine restarting test

Immediately after the pump start test of TB203.2.2.4, diesel engines shall be tested as follows:

- (a) the engine shall be run for 30 minutes, or for the time recommended by the supplier. The engine shall then be stopped and immediately restarted using the manual start test button;
- (b) the water level in the primary circuit of closed circuit cooling systems shall be checked.

Oil pressure (where gauges are fitted), engine temperatures and coolant flow shall be monitored throughout the test. Oil hoses shall be checked and a general inspection made for leakage of fuel, coolant or exhaust fumes.

TB203.2.2.6 *Trace heating and localised heating systems*

Heating systems to prevent freezing in the sprinkler system shall be checked for correct function.

TB203.2.2.7 *Fire and rescue service and remote central station alarm connection*

The equipment for automatic transmission of alarm signals from a sprinkler installation to a fire and rescue service or remote manned centre (see BS EN 16.3) shall be checked for:

- (a) continuity of the connection; and
- (b) continuity of the connection between the alarm switch and the control unit, if the circuits are continuously monitored.

Also refer to TB236 and in particular, clause TB236.1.2 regarding verifying remote central station alarm connections.

TB203.2.3 **Monthly routine**

TB203.2.3.1 *General*

Each part of the monthly routine shall be carried out at intervals of no more than one calendar month in addition to the tasks identified in the weekly routine (TB203.2.2).

TB203.2.3.2 *Batteries*

Check the electrolyte level of all battery cells, (including diesel engine starter batteries and those for control panel power supplies) and carry out all other maintenance procedures specified by the battery manufacturer. Check the battery charging voltage and make sure it has not changed. Report any changes to the sprinkler service contractor.

TB203.2.3.3 *Water storage tank security*

The access ladder to all sprinkler water storage tanks shall be checked for correct housing and security and any tank ball valve covers shall be secured and locked.

TB203.2.4 **Yearly routine**

TB203.2.4.1 *Third party inspection (BS EN Clause 21)*

The sprinkler system shall be periodically inspected at least once a year by a third party. The inspection report shall assess whether the system is in accordance with this standard, with regard to maintenance, operation and adequacy for the risk involved. Where appropriate a list of deviations shall be issued for action. The criticality of each action shall be indicated.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.2.4.1

Inspections should be undertaken by an independent third party (eg not the system owner, building occupier, system installer or service and maintenance provider).

Inspections undertaken by insurers for their commercial and underwriting purposes cannot be assumed to fulfil the intent of this requirement.

(REVISIONS TO BS EN CLAUSE 20.3)

TB203.3.1 **General**

The tasks identified in this section shall be undertaken by a competent person, eg by an engineer from a sprinkler servicing contractor.

TB203.3.1.1 *Procedures*

In addition to the schedule given in this clause any procedures recommended by component suppliers shall be carried out.

Diesel engines shall be serviced and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.1.1

Appendix A of TB203 provides a schedule of the minimum routine tasks which are considered necessary to fulfil this requirement for fire pumps and associated equipment.

TB203.3.1.2

Records

A signed, dated report of the inspection shall be provided to the user and shall include advice of any rectification carried out or needed, and details of any external factors, eg weather conditions, which may have affected the results.

TB203.3.2

Quarterly routine

TB203.3.2.1

General

The following checks and inspections shall be made at intervals of no more than 13 weeks, and shall include all the tasks identified in the weekly (TB203.2.2) and monthly (TB203.2.3) routines.

TB203.3.2.2

Review of hazard

The effect of any changes of structure, occupancy, storage configuration, heating, lighting or equipment of a building or hazard classification or installation design shall be identified in order that the appropriate corrective action may be taken immediately.

The review shall be carried out by one of the following procedures:

- (a) an inspection by a competent person, for example by an engineer from a sprinkler servicing contractor; or
- (b) the user shall submit a completed return to the sprinkler servicing contractor detailing any changes as specified in TB203.3.2.3.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.2.2

Review of hazard should be a continuous process undertaken by the user. Where changes occur that might change the effectiveness of the sprinkler protection, immediate remedial action should be taken. At quarterly intervals the process should be formalised either by a review by a competent person or by submission of a completed return to the sprinkler servicing contractor responsible for the review of hazard during the yearly routine as specified in TB203.3.4.

The quarterly review of hazard may be undertaken by a competent person who is not an employee of the user, for example an engineer from a sprinkler servicing contractor.

TB203.3.2.3

Details

The entire premises should be checked thoroughly during the review of hazard which shall include the following:

- Have any structural alterations been made since the last review which necessitate modifications to the sprinkler system (including low level office installation and partition relocation)?
- Are there any new buildings, mezzanines or extensions?
- Has there been a change of use to all or any part of the protected building?
- Is the ambient temperature range still within acceptable limits for the design of the sprinkler system?
- Has any painting or decoration been undertaken since the last inspection?
- Are frost protection measures adequate?
- Have there been any significant changes to plant or equipment (quantity and location), or changes in production?
- Is the storage type still consistent with the sprinkler system design (ie free-standing storage has not changed to rack storage)?

- Is the design of the rack sprinklers consistent with the storage category?
- Are flues (horizontal and vertical) within the storage racks kept clear as designated by the design requirements?
- Are minimum clearances maintained between stored items and sprinkler heads (See BS EN Clause 12.1 and 12.5.1)?
- Has the nature of goods stored or their packaging changed? Does this alter the category of stored goods?
- Have there been any changes to storage arrangements (plastic pallets, shelving, drum dollies, boxes or totes)?
- Have there been any changes in storage height?
- Where a smoke or heat detector system interacts with a sprinkler system, is a suitable maintenance contract in force?
- Have there been any problems with the sprinkler system?
- Have there been any alterations to the sprinkler system?

TB203.3.2.4

Flow alarms

Flow alarm devices (flow switches and/or pressure switches) shall be checked for correct function.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.2.4

Flow switches in systems designed and installed to comply with Annex F may be in inaccessible locations and therefore difficult to test. Flow switch functional tests in systems designed and installed to comply with Annex F should be carried out by a competent person, for example an engineer from a sprinkler servicing contractor.

TB203.3.3

Half-yearly routine

TB203.3.3.1

General

The following checks and inspections shall be made at intervals of no more than six months and shall include all the tasks identified in the weekly (TB203.2.2), monthly (TB203.2.3) and quarterly (TB203.3.2) routines.

TB203.3.3.2

Alarm valves

The moving parts of dry alarm valves, pre-action valves, and any accelerators and exhausters, shall be exercised in accordance with the suppliers' instructions.

TB203.3.3.3

Water supplies

Each water supply shall be tested to verify pressure and flows.

Where flow test equipment is installed at the installation control valve sets, they shall be tested to verify the pressures and flows specified are achieved.

Pump(s) if fitted shall start automatically. It shall be verified that both pump starting pressure switches operate correctly.

Each water supply pump in the installation shall be tested at the full load condition (by means of the test line connection coupled to the pump delivery branch downstream of the pump outlet non-return valve) and shall give the pressure/flow values stated on the nameplate.

Appropriate allowances shall be made for pressure losses in the supply pipe and suction tank head gain.

Low water level switches in suction lift header tanks shall be tested for correct function.

TB203.3.3.4

Electrical supplies

Any secondary electrical supplies from diesel generators or other sources shall be verified by the user to the sprinkler service contractor to be operating satisfactorily.

TB203.3.3.5

Stop valves

All stop valves controlling the flow of water to sprinklers shall be operated to ensure that the stop valve and any monitoring are in working order, and securely refastened in the correct mode. This shall include the stop valves on all water supplies, at the alarm valve(s) and all zone or other subsidiary stop valves.

TB203.3.4

Yearly routine

TB203.3.4.1

General

The following checks and inspection shall be made at intervals of no more than 12 months and shall include all the tasks identified in the weekly (TB203.2.2), monthly (TB203.2.3), quarterly (TB203.3.2) and half yearly (TB203.3.3) routines.

TB203.3.4.2

Diesel engine failed-to-start test

The failed-to-start alarm shall be tested to be in accordance with TB210.9.7.2.

Immediately after this test, the engine shall be started using the manual starting system.

TB203.3.4.3

Float valves on water storage tanks

Water storage tank float valves shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and checked to ensure they function correctly.

TB203.3.4.4

Review of hazard

Where the quarterly review of hazard (TB203.3.2.2) takes the form of returns submitted by the user, at least one review per year shall be carried out by a site visit by a competent person, for example an engineer from a sprinkler servicing contractor reporting on details defined in clause TB203.3.2.3.

TB203.3.4.5

Sprinklers, multiple controls and sprayers

Sprinklers, multiple controls and sprayers affected by deposits (other than paint) shall be carefully cleaned. Painted or distorted sprinkler heads, multiple controls or sprayers shall be replaced.

Any petroleum jelly coatings shall be checked. Where necessary the existing coatings shall be removed and the sprinklers, multiple controls or sprayers shall be coated twice with petroleum jelly (in the case of glass bulb sprinklers to the sprinkler body and yoke only).

TB203.3.4.6

Pipework and pipe supports

Pipework and hangers shall be checked for integrity and condition and rectified or replaced as necessary.

Bitumen-based paint on pipework, including the threaded ends of galvanized pipework and hangers, shall be renewed as necessary.

Protective wrapping on pipes shall be repaired as necessary.

Verify with the user that the sprinkler system is satisfactorily earthed. Sprinkler pipework shall not be used for earthing electrical equipment and any earthing connections from electrical equipment shall be removed and alternative arrangements made.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.4.6

Bitumen-based paint may need renewal at intervals varying from one to five years, according to the severity of the conditions.

TB203.3.4.7

Replacement parts

The number and condition of replacement parts held as spare shall be checked.

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TB203.3.4.8 *Fire and rescue service and remote central station alarm*
The electrical installation shall be checked.

TB203.3.4.9 *Water supply stop valves, alarm and non-return valves*
All water supply stop valves, alarm and non-return valves shall be examined and replaced or overhauled as necessary.

TB203.3.4.10 *Pump suction chambers and screens*
In natural water supplies, settling chambers and screens shall be taken out and inspected as necessary.

TB203.3.4.11 *Flow alarms*
Flow alarm devices (flow switches and/or pressure switches), other than those fitted to systems covered under Annex F, shall be checked for correct function.

TB203.3.5 Three-yearly routine

TB203.3.5.1 *General*
The following checks and inspections shall be made at intervals of no more than three years and shall include all the tasks identified in the weekly (TB203.2.2), monthly (TB203.2.3), quarterly (TB203.3.2), half yearly (TB203.3.3) sections and yearly (TB203.3.4) routines.

TB203.3.5.2 *Water storage tanks and cisterns*

- (a) 'Three-year tanks' shall be:
 - (1) drained;
 - (2) cleaned as necessary;
 - (3) examined internally and externally for corrosion and fitness for purpose;
 - (4) have the fabric attended to as necessary and restored in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations,
- (b) 'Ten-year tanks' shall be:
 - (1) inspected and examined, if any repairs are necessary they shall be carried out in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations;
 - (2) if the condition or cleanliness of the tank indicate the need, the tank shall be drained, cleaned and have the fabric attended to as necessary and restored in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.5.2

Submersible, camera equipment remotely operated vehicles may in some cases provide a useful means of conducting a tank inspection, without the need for divers to enter a tank. Limitations upon what can be discerned from a two dimensional remotely obtained image must be considered. Costs of these inspections need to be considered and the information gained from such inspections may not eliminate the need to drain the tank to carry out any remedial works. Such an inspection cannot substitute a full structural survey.

Significant tank refurbishment works should generally aim to restore tanks to condition and structural integrity to at least equivalent to that originally installed and consistent with applicable tank approval criteria. Works and structural survey should be undertaken by suitably competent and experienced suppliers. Works undertaken should be compatible with the design of the tank. For example, fitting a liner to a previously unlined tank may not be appropriate, as corrosion problems due to condensation formation between tank and liner may occur. Fitting a liner will not improve the structural integrity of the tank shell and may even conceal further depreciation in the tank shell condition which could result in the collapse of the tank

without any prior indication of leakage. Scope of works should be agreed with owners and Authorities (including fire insurers).

TB203.3.5.3 *Pump suction chambers, screens and strainers*

In natural water supplies, pump suction strainers and settling chambers and their screens shall be inspected and cleaned as necessary.

TB203.3.5.4 *Foot valves*

Foot valves shall be serviced.

TB203.3.6 **Five-yearly routine**

TB203.3.6.1 *Dry pendant pattern sprinkler heads*

Representative samples of the oldest or 'worst condition' dry pendant pattern sprinkler (those with a dry drop pipe section) shall be removed at regular intervals for functional testing. The minimum sample size shall be 5% or twenty heads (whichever is the greater) of each batch of dry pendant pattern sprinkler heads installed on site. Testing shall be undertaken at the intervals specified by the manufacturer. If no such interval is specified then testing shall be undertaken at intervals of five years or less.

The testing shall be undertaken as specified in TB203.3.8.3.

TB203.3.7 **Ten-yearly routine**

At no more than ten-year intervals, 'ten-year tanks' shall be:

- (1) drained;
- (2) cleaned as necessary;
- (3) examined internally and externally for corrosion and fitness for purpose;
- (4) have the fabric attended to as necessary and restored in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.7

Significant tank refurbishment works should generally aim to restore tanks to condition and structural integrity to at least equivalent to that originally installed and consistent with applicable tank approval criteria. Works and structural survey should be undertaken by suitably competent and experienced suppliers. Works undertaken should be compatible with the design of the tank. For example, fitting a liner to a previously unlined tank may not be appropriate, as corrosion problems due to condensation formation between tank and liner may occur. Fitting a liner will not improve the structural integrity of the tank shell and may even conceal further depreciation in the tank shell condition which could result in the collapse of the tank without any prior indication of leakage. Scope of works should be agreed with owners and Authorities (including fire insurers).

TB203.3.8 **After 25 years (or sooner if considered necessary by system condition) (replaces BS EN Annex K)**

In addition to the routine service and maintenance activities specified elsewhere in this document, the provisions and activities specified in TB203.3.8 shall be undertaken as required and at intervals not greater than those specified herein. All defects detected which might adversely affect the performance of the sprinkler system shall be eliminated.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.8

These requirements are considered to be minimum requirements. Where any deviation from these requirements is considered as may be appropriate to the circumstances, the insurer (and authority, if applicable) shall be consulted upon the acceptability of the proposed variation on a case-by-case basis.

TB203.3.8.1 Inspection/Flushing points downstream of the alarm valve(s) (replaces and supplements parts of annex K)

Once the system has reached the age of 25 years (or sooner if necessitated by diminished performance or detected by other means), a flushing connection at the remote end of the distribution pipe array shall be opened until the water runs clear. For installations comprised of several terminal pipe arrays this may need to be repeated for each section until the engineer is satisfied that all have been adequately flushed. The pipework shall be visually inspected internally for the presence of any foreign bodies or evidence of microbial activity (e.g. presence of tubercles). Further investigation shall be undertaken if found to be necessary either by observation of expelled water quality or where diminished performance is detected by or other means.

In wet installations sample sprinkler heads shall be removed from near the end of range pipes and the pipe and head waterway shall be inspected.

In installations that can operate in the dry mode, sprinkler heads shall be removed from the most remote range pipe that is not fitted with a remote test valve. The pipe and head waterway shall be inspected similarly.

On systems with multiple installations, every installation shall be re-inspected and flushed at least every ten years.

If the presence of sufficient foreign matter (eg bodies with a diameter of 5mm or greater) is found, or any of the following have occurred:

- there is a defect in the water intake arrangements for any non-potable water source;
- body(s) with breadth of 5mm or greater are discharged in routine water tests;
- foreign materials (with breadth of 5mm or greater) are found in pumps, check valves or alarm valves;
- blocked sprinklers;
- blocked piping found or occurring as a result of building or installation modifications;
- failure to flush underground piping (including town mains) prior to commissioning or following modification;
- repeated nuisance activation of dry alarm valves;
- persistent pin hole leaks;
- dry systems; any increase in the time it takes for water to reach the remote test valve (BS EN 15.5.2) reference to the original commissioning value

then steps shall be taken to ensure that all contaminants and debris are removed from all potentially affected system installations (installations sharing or with communicating water supplies). System performance shall be verified.

TB203.3.8.2 Pressure testing (replaces parts of Annex K)

The pressure test recommended by Annex K is not recommended by this technical bulletin.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.8.2

Following the replacement of pipework and sprinklers that have been removed for inspection and testing, the installation requires carefully re-commissioning. This should include appropriate inspection and testing to identify any leaks. In such circumstances, pressure testing shall be subject to the agreement of the client and all authorities having jurisdiction.

TB203.3.8.3 All sprinkler heads (replaces parts of Annex K)

At twenty five years (or sooner if required by sprinkler head approval conditions or manufacturer's specification) a number of sprinkler heads shall be removed by a competent sprinkler maintenance provider. Dry drop pendant heads shall also be tested as follows, but at reduced intervals (see TB203.3.6). The sprinkler heads shall be inspected and tested by an independent test house. Table TB203.T1 specifies the minimum number of heads to be removed for testing, corresponding to the total installation sizes.

Table TB203.T1 Number of sprinklers to be inspected	
Total number of sprinklers installed	Number of sprinklers to be inspected
≤5 000	20
≤10 000	40
≤20 000	60
≤30 000	80
≤40 000	100

The findings of the visual inspection may be used to vary the testing regime, within the limits that follow. All batches submitted for inspection and testing shall be subjected to:

- Visual inspection (100% of samples)
- Function testing based upon BS EN 12259-1 clause 4.6:
- Minimum sample numbers: 75% of number specified by TB203.T1
- Function testing shall normally be undertaken at 0.35 bar.
- Maximum permissible non-operation rate (complete failure to open): 0 %
- Maximum permissible lodgement rate ≤1 in 12 (except for ESFR heads, where no lodgements are permissible). Lodgement is considered to have occurred when one or more of the released parts lodge in the deflector frame assembly in such a way as to cause the water distribution to be significantly impeded for a period of more than 1 minute).

Depending on the findings of the visual inspection some of the following tests may be justified (the remaining 25% of heads from the sample of heads removed from the installation are retained for this purpose):

- Operating temperatures (to BS EN 12259-1 clause 4.4)
- K-factor (to BS EN 12259-1 clause 4.5.1)
- Water distribution (to BS EN 12259-1 clause 4.5.2)
- Thermal response (to BS EN 12259-1 clause 4.15)

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.3.8.3 – SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS

Sprinkler heads that are observed by visual inspection to have been leaking through the waterway shall be considered unfit for service. All heads showing signs of leakage should be replaced.

Function test failures shall be considered serious failures. In such cases, all heads in an installation representative of those which failed should be replaced. Until this replacement programme has been completed the system shall be considered impaired. The parties (ie insurers) and authorities concerned shall be notified and appropriate interim fire safety precautions may need to be taken.

The significance of all other failures varies dependent upon many factors, for example: the original design of the sprinkler heads, the magnitude of the failure and the nature of the risk to be protected. The appropriate remedial action shall be agreed in consultation with the building owner, occupier(s) and the Authorities.

Failures observed in approved product should always be brought to the attention of the approving bodies. The FPA is also interested in monitoring such occurrences in support of continuous improvement. As such we would appreciate receiving

notifications of product failures, with as much detail as possible, which may be emailed to sprinklers@thefpa.co.uk.

TB203.4 SPRINKLER SYSTEM USER PERSONNEL

TB203.4.1 Appointment of fire safety official by the sprinkler system user

The sprinkler system user shall appoint a competent person who shall be nominated to undertake specified tasks relating to the sprinkler system care and maintenance, who shall receive formal training and instructions, whether permanent or contract staff.

TB203.4.2 Staff responsible for weekly testing and emergency actions

Only appropriately trained personnel shall be permitted to undertake weekly testing of ~~sprinkler systems or emergency actions.~~

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.4.2

It is important that the appropriate staff, including security staff, within a sprinklered property are given suitable levels of instruction on at least the following: (a) the purpose of the sprinkler system;

- (b) how the system operates in the event of a fire;
- (c) what to do if the system operates either in a fire or accidentally;
- (d) keeping sprinkler heads clear of obstruction;
- (e) the avoidance of damage to sprinkler heads and pipework;
- and (f) upkeep of records and documentation.

TB203.5 MAINTENANCE OF DOCUMENTATION

TB203.5.1

Record keeping

Appropriate records including the sprinkler system log book or folder shall be kept on site in a safe and secure location. When requested by the insurer, the records shall be made available by the fire safety official for inspection.

The records shall include the log book or folder for the sprinkler system containing the following information:

- (1) finished drawings and hydraulic data/calculations;
- (2) proprietary equipment specifications, data sheets, and maintenance requirements, including pump data provided by the pumpset supplier;
- (3) maintenance, inspection and test schedules;
- (4) where appropriate, the weekly test card;
- (5) the sprinkler servicing contractor records and reports; and, where issued:
- (6) Certificates of Conformity.

TB203.5.2

Upkeep of records

The records shall be kept up to date. Where changes are made, the following shall be recorded by an appropriate means (for example, by appending to or modifying existing documentation)

- (a) details of all alterations;
- (b) details of all work and inspections carried out on the sprinkler system;
- (c) details of any hazard analysis relevant to the sprinkler protection; (d) a full and up to date list of emergency contacts, including:
 - insurers (both landlord and tenants);
 - insurance brokers;
 - the property owner or their agent;
 - sprinkler servicing company;
 - the sprinkler installer;
 - the pump suppliers or pump maintenance company;
 - electrical contractor;
 - alarm receiving station contact numbers;
 - suction tank manufacturers;
 - sprinkler monitoring equipment.
- (e) details of calls to and from the central alarm station, taking the station off watch, restoring the station back on watch and notification of alarms or faults. The details recorded shall include, at least, the nature of the event, date and time of the call, the name of the caller and recipient, and the alarm receiving station reference.
- (f) details of staff training.

TB203.6

PLANNING FOR MAINTENANCE

Where maintenance of a sprinkler system or building fabric is anticipated that will result in impairment of the sprinkler protection, a written maintenance plan shall be prepared by the user and agreed with the authorities prior to commencement of the maintenance work. The requirements of BS EN Annex J 'Precautions and procedures when a system is not fully operational' shall be met. If the system is for life safety, see also the requirements of BS EN Annex F 'Special requirements for life safety systems'.

The following procedures shall be included in the plan:

Before maintenance begins

- (1) notification of the authorities (including the insurers) and any central alarm station;
- (2) designation of named personnel to undertake specified tasks;
- (3) identification of resources required for the maintenance period;
- (4) consultation with key personnel;
- (5) inspection and review of passive and other active fire protection measures (including fire doors, gaseous extinguishing systems and portable fire extinguishing appliances);
- (6) rectification of impaired passive and active fire protection measures;
- (7) reduction of stocking levels of hazardous goods (eg flammable liquids, aerosols with flammable contents);

- (8) notification to the sprinkler servicing contractor of the company procedures and regulations with which they are required to comply (eg work permits, hot work prohibitions);
- (9) considerations to minimising the area of coverage isolated at any one time;
- (10) the provision and review of a written method statement prepared by the sprinkler servicing contractor;
- (11) procedures ensuring all the necessary tools, equipment and trained personnel are available;
- (12) consultation with staff about the work plan, increasing awareness and precautionary measures;
- (13) procurement and placement of additional portable fire extinguishing appliances in the affected areas, ensuring that personnel are trained in their use;
- (14) issue of permits to commence work;

While maintenance work is in progress

- (15) suspension of operations, in particular any hazardous processes, machinery and plant;
- (16) smoking controls;
- (17) implementation of regular fire patrols;

During and after re-commissioning the system

- (18) hydrostatic pressure testing of modified pipework or pipework extensions;
- (19) water supply performance tests if changes have been made to the water supply or the water supply connections;
- (20) notification to all key staff, authorities and the alarm receiving station of the reinstatement of the sprinkler protection;
- (21) checks to establish that all valves, switches and other equipment have been restored to their correct stand-by setting;
- (22) provision of a written statement or certificate by the sprinkler servicing contractor and countersigned by the system user signifying that the work has been completed and that the system is fully operational; and (23) revalidation of any Certificate of Conformity.

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TB203.6
 Statements and certificates should be filed in the sprinkler system log book.

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TB203.7 ACTION ON ALARM AND/OR SPRINKLER OPERATION (SUPPLEMENTS BS EN ANNEX J.4)

TB203.7.1 When the alarm sounds

- (a) staff should be instructed to call the fire and rescue service on hearing the alarm and follow the normal fire procedure for the premises. The fire and rescue service should be called, even if there is an automatic fire and rescue service connection, in order to confirm that a call has been received;
- (b) only after carrying out (a) should the cause of the alarm be investigated if it appears safe to do so;
- (c) on no account (other than the express command of the fire and rescue service) should sprinkler stop valves be closed unless it is certain that there is no fire or that it is out. Even if an extinguished fire is found in one area, the whole building should be searched before the valve is turned off – there may be more than one seat of fire; and
- (d) the decision to shut down an installation or zone which has operated because of a fire should be taken only by the fire and rescue service.

TB203.7.2

Reinstatement

Following shutdown after operation of an installation, the operated sprinkler heads shall be replaced by heads of the correct type and temperature rating, and the water supply restored. Unopened sprinklers around the area in which operation took place shall be checked for damage by heat or other cause and replaced as necessary.

TB203.7.3

False alarms

Leaks and damaged sprinkler heads can cause the alarm to sound. Repair and reinstatement should be carried out immediately.

False alarms can also be caused by pressure surges in town main water supplies. If this problem occurs the fire insurer should be consulted and the sprinkler servicing contractor should be asked to modify the system as necessary.

TB203.7.4

Actions following sprinkler operation

Components removed from the system should be retained by the user for possible examination by an authority.

TB203.7.5

Incident report

The fire insurer should be informed of any incident whether or not an insurance claim is made.

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APPENDIX A

MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS FOR SPRINKLER FIRE PUMPS AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

TB203.A.1 The items in the following list are identified as being the expected minimum service levels required in order to maintain pump-sets in compliance with the *LPC Rules for Automatic Sprinkler Installations*. Notes:

- Whilst this checklist serves as a general guide, not all items will be applicable to some makes and models of pump-set. Similarly, some pump-sets may have further maintenance activities specified by the supplier.
- **Reference should always be made to the original equipment manufacturer's specifications and requirements.**
- Service operatives shall have the appropriate competencies and capabilities to complete the work appropriately.
- Waste products from service and maintenance activities shall be disposed of correctly in accordance with environmental and health and safety legislation.
- Upon completion of the works a full copy of the service and maintenance report shall be made available to the client.
- Any issues which could impair the operation of the automatic sprinkler installation, identified during the service and maintenance activity shall promptly be brought to the attention of the client in writing. Comment shall be provided upon the criticality of issues identified so that the client can appropriately prioritise remedial works.

Table TB203.T2				
Installation		Interval		
		6 Months 'Interim'	12 Months 'Annual'	24 Months 'Biennial'
1	Confirm and record equipment details including pump set serial numbers, equipment types and full name plated pump duty details	Y	Y	Y
2	Visually check base plate plinth fixing bolts/packer and re-torque bolts	Y	Y	Y

3	Visually check condition of all equipment guards and ensure they are correctly secured in place	Y	Y	Y
4	Visually check condition of installation wiring and confirm no discernible defects are present	Y	Y	Y
5	Visually check control panel/starter enclosure and confirm no discernible defects are present	Y	Y	Y
6	Check and record incoming mains supply voltage for electric motor control panel (ie by 'phase healthy' indication and satisfactory pump performance)	Y	Y	Y
Pump				
7	Carry out pump set alignment check and record results	Y	Y	Y
8	Visually check and report on condition of pump gland/mechanical seal whilst stationary	Y	Y	Y
9	Fully replace the pump gland packing		Y	Y
10	Visually check pump gland leakage rate at duty condition and adjust	Y	Y	Y
11	Visually check and if required top up pump bearing oil level	Y	Y	Y
12	Confirm if pump and motor bearing grease nipples are fitted and re-grease	Y	Y	Y
13	Check and clean (by dismantling) the pump differential bypass line assembly	Y	Y	Y
Motor				
14	Confirm and record motor manufacturer's name plate details	Y	Y	Y
15	Confirm if motor bearing grease nipples are fitted and re-grease	Y	Y	Y
Engine				
16	Confirm and record engine manufacturer's name plate details	Y	Y	Y
17	Check and record hours run for diesel engine driven pump, before and after test	Y	Y	Y
18	Check and clean (by dismantling) diesel engine differential bypass valve cooling line assembly	Y	Y	Y

Table TB203.T2				
		Interval		
		6 Months 'Interim'	12 Months 'Annual'	24 Months 'Biennial'
Installation				
19	Check, record levels and if necessary top up diesel engine battery electrolyte levels	Y	Y	Y

20	Check condition of diesel fuel. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm with user that fuel of a specification suitable for use with the engine is used (see engine requirements; typically diesel fuel conforming to British Standard BS 2869). • Confirm suitable fuel storage and filling arrangements (eg good storage practice is observed, protection from moisture or particulate ingress is provided). If not in accordance with engine manufacturer's requirements advise accordingly. Provide data sheet for correct fuel to be used. Record advice given on service sheet. 	Y	Y	Y
21	Visually check and if required top-up the diesel engine oil	Y	Y	Y
22	Replace diesel engine oil and filter		Y	Y
23	Visually check and if required top up the diesel engine coolant mixture	Y	Y	Y
24	Replace diesel engine hoses and engine coolant mixture (as engine manufacturer's requirements)			Y
25	Visually check and report on condition of diesel engine heat exchanger electrodes (if equipment design permits). Record suitable note on service report if not possible.		Y	
26	Replace diesel engine thermostat if engine running temperature indicates this is required			Y
27	Visually check, clean and report on condition of diesel engine air filter	Y	Y	Y
28	Replace diesel engine air filter			Y
29	Visually check and adjust the drive belt tension	Y	Y	Y
30	Replace diesel engine drive belts as required by engine manufacturer			Y
31	Visually check and report on condition of diesel engine fuel lines and fuel filter	Y	Y	Y
32	Replace diesel engine fuel filter		Y	Y
33	Check and clean diesel engine crank case vent system		Y	Y
34	Visually check and report on condition of engine mounting isolators	Y	Y	Y
35	Where fitted, visually check and if required lubricate diesel engine drive shaft	Y	Y	Y
36	Remove and check engine water pump and seal if necessary			Y
Jockey Pump Set				
37	Confirm and record pump manufacturer's name plate details	Y	Y	Y
38	Carry out pump set alignment check, record results and confirm if within tolerance (if applicable to pump configuration)	Y	Y	Y
39	Visually check and report on condition of pump gland/mechanical seal whilst stationary	Y	Y	Y
40	Confirm if motor bearing grease nipples are fitted and re-grease	Y	Y	Y

41	Check functionality of pump casing air vent	Y	Y	Y
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Table TB203.T2				
Installation		Interval		
		6 Months 'Interim'	12 Months 'Annual'	24 Months 'Biennial'
42	Visually check and record pump set start and stop pressure (check with client prior to adjusting in case the settings are purposely different to requirements)	Y	Y	Y
43	Check and confirm correct functionality and operation of starter	Y	Y	Y
Remote Alarm Panel				
44	Confirm whether dedicated Remote Alarm Panel (RAP) is installed and its location	Y	Y	Y
45	Where possible check and confirm functionality of Remote Alarm Panel with assistance from the client's representative	Y	Y	Y
Fire Pump Testing				
46	Record pump set start/cut in pressure	Y	Y	Y
47	Conduct pump set performance test including:			
48	• Pump test to be conducted under load, minimum running time of 15mins for electric and 30mins for diesel	Y	Y	Y
49	• Record results at closed valve and at least 5 additional flow rates, between closed valve and name plate flow rate	Y	Y	Y
50	• Record pump suction pressure and discharge pressure, indicating the location of the pressure gauges	Y	Y	Y
51	• Check and confirm pump shaft speed and engine rev counter speed at each flow rate	Y	Y	Y
52	• Check and confirm motor current at each flow rate using calibrated clamp meter or similar	Y	Y	Y
53	• Check and record engine oil pressure, engine water temperature and exhaust gas colour at nameplate flow rate	Y	Y	Y
54	Check and confirm correct functionality and operation of starter/control panel	Y	Y	Y
55	Complete six attempt cranking sequence cycles and confirm correct operation (Note: whilst the TB 203/ BS EN 12845 requires this test every 12 months, carrying this test out every six months is beneficial to verify that all batteries are of adequate condition to start the pump in an emergency)		Y	Y
56	Check and confirm if pump house ventilation is adequate and functions correctly	Y	Y	Y
57	Visually check and confirm diesel engine exhaust system is installed correctly and functioning properly	Y	Y	Y
58	Complete a visual assessment of the pump set during performance test and record any issues requiring further attention	Y	Y	Y

