
Expert Commentary on BS 7273-4:2015, Code of practice for the operation of fire protection measures — Part 4: Actuation of release mechanisms for doors

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Summary

[BS 7273-4](#) provides recommendations for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of electronic arrangements for the actuation of door release mechanisms that release alarm, self-closing fire doors; unlock electronically locked doors; or cause powered sliding doors to open. The code of practice was first published in 2007 and was revised in 2015.

The 2015 version of [BS 7273-4](#) is shorter and simpler than the previous version. This is the main change in the revision; the technical recommendations have not materially changed.

From the point of view of the user, a further significant change relates to the nomenclature of the three categories of actuation. These were previously described simply as Category A, Category B and Category C, which describe the extent to which the release arrangements fail safe. They are now described as Critical actuation (Category A), Standard actuation (Category B) and Indirect actuation (Category C).

In addition, by change of the status of the relevant annex from informative to normative, the code of practice now provides definitive recommendations as to the situations in which each category of actuation should, or should not, be used.

Background

[BS 7273](#) comprises a suite of codes of practice that address the interface between a fire detection and fire alarm system ("fire alarm system") and other systems involved in the fire protection of a building. Each part of [BS 7273](#) deals with a different type of other system.

Codes of practice for fire alarm systems go back as far as 1951. Often, there are standards and codes of practice for the various other systems with which the fire detection and fire alarm system needs to interface. However, there was a growing need for codes of practice to provide recommendations that would ensure the integrity and reliability of the interfacing arrangement.

This was first addressed in 1990 by the publication of BS 7273-1, which provides recommendations on the interface arrangement between a fire alarm system and a gaseous fire extinguishing system. Part 2 deals with the mechanical actuation of gaseous fire extinguishing systems. Part 3 is concerned with the interface between the fire alarm system and a pre-action sprinkler system, while Part 5 deals with the actuation of watermist systems by a fire alarm system. A future Part 6 will deal with the interface between fire alarm systems and any systems not included within the scope of the other parts, such as lifts, smoke control systems, gas shutoff arrangements, etc.