
Expert Commentary on BS 9991:2015, *Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings – Code of practice*

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Summary

[BS 9991](#) was first published in 2011 and sat alongside [BS 9999](#). Upon publication of [BS 9991:2015](#), its predecessor [BS 5588-1:1990](#) was withdrawn.

The layout and content of [BS 9991:2015](#) has been restructured but remains very similar to the previous version – the concept of describing indicators of a prescriptive nature relating to their intended use remains a core part of the standard. The 2015 edition clarifies areas of fire precautions which previously were either not detailed sufficiently or changed due to the subsequent publication of other standards referenced.

[BS 9991:2015](#) gives expanded and updated recommendations for means of escape from basements, provides new recommendations for the use of lifts, power supplies, cluster accommodation and specialized housing, and gives new guidance for management regarding people with disabilities.

BS 9991:2015 has also changed the title of fire suppression systems to be more specific; these are now titled automatic water fire suppression systems (AWFSS).

BS 9991:2015 has expanded housing to include a table for housing typology, further defining houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), specialized housing, accessible and adaptable housing, and tall and very tall buildings.

BS 9991:2015 includes a new clause on power supplies, cabling and installation, and two new annexes dealing with managing building work and advice to occupiers. In addition there are six new figures and two new tables for classification.

When using the standard it is advisable to take extreme care when mixing different approaches in a building design with other standards – for example the fire safety engineering principles contained in [BS 7974](#) and its Published Documents (PDs).

Significant elements introduced by BS 9991-1:2015

2 Normative references (MODIFIED)

BS 9991-1:2015 has updated the list of normative references to reflect current editions of standards and standards that have replaced some that were previously listed.

3 Terms and definitions (MODIFIED)

There have been a number of terms that have been modified, either to make them more intuitive, or to prevent confusion with other terms used.

For example, housing types are defined separately: **specialized housing** – accommodation that provides independent living for occupants who are wholly or mainly limited to a specific section of the population and who are likely to require additional measures to secure their safety in the event of fire, including but not limited to accommodation provided for the elderly, children and people with a