EAPFP backs European guide to intumescent coatings for constructional steel

The European Association for Passive Fire Protection (EAPFP) has joined with CEPE (the European Council of paint, printing ink and artists’ colours industry) and EAIPC (the European Association of Industrial Painting Contractors) to release a European Industry Best Practice Guide on the Application of Intumescent Coatings to Constructional Steel.

The Guide explains that the use of intumescent (reactive) coatings for structural steel is becoming increasingly widespread and highlights the importance of correct selection, application, installation and maintenance of these technical products, in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, to ensure that the intended in-service performance is achieved.

Recognising that many stakeholders are involved in the design and construction of buildings that use intumescent coatings, the document provides guidance to the owner (or the owner’s nominated representative); the applicator of the coatings; and the coatings manufacturer. It details the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group and provides guidance on product selection, verification of dry film thickness, product storage, substrate and coating preparation, application and dry film thickness and measurement. It also provides advice on ongoing maintenance.

Explaining that the intumescent coating system normally comprises a primer, intumescent coating and topcoat, the guide states that it is essential that equal attention is given to the selection of each of the components of the system to ensure their compatibility. It recommends that ideally any system should be supplied by the same manufacturer and that to ensure that the correct products are specified; factors such as the required fire resistance performance, the environmental conditions and the required service life of the system should be considered.

The guide draws particular attention to environmental conditions on site, stating that no application should take place on site when environmental conditions – such as air and steel temperatures, relative humidity, or dew point – are outside the limits laid down by the coating supplier.

It also contains detailed information on assessing the effectiveness of the application by means of comprehensive surveys of dry film thickness according to a prescribed plan. In this way, confidence is assured that the correct quantity of coating is applied.

The guide recommends that product selection should be based upon test evidence from an independent laboratory, backed up with manufacturer’s data, and that applicators should chose products with appropriate approvals such as a CE Mark, third party certification, or national approvals.

In addition to third party certification of products, the EAPFP also strongly advocates the use of third party certification of contractors for the installation of any passive fire protection product. By specifying a third party certificated company, managers can be assured of the competency of the contractor, since under certification a third party will verify that installations are satisfactory. The process is undertaken by a mixture of audits of records and randomly selected site visits, by the third party, at which workmanship is checked for compliance.

For further information on the EAPFP, or for a free download of the guide visit www.eapfp.com; tel: +44 (0)1420 471616; e-mail: admin@eapfp.com
Notes to Editors
EAPFP was formed in 1988 to act as a European voice on behalf of national associations representing manufacturers, contractors and other institutions involved in the fire protection to steelwork, timber, and other passive fire protection applications, including penetration seals and ductwork.

Countries represented by EAPFP members include Austria; Belgium; Cyprus; Denmark; France; Germany; Ireland; Italy; Netherlands; Norway; Russia; Slovak Republic; Spain; and UK.

The Association campaigns to raise the standard of fire safety in buildings and offers a range of publications and guidance notes in several languages. The EAPFP also has representation on the European Union Technical Committees involved in developing product standards across Europe.

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