

Memo-Servicing & Technical Info

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INSPECTION OF BS EN 1869 FIRE BLANKETS

Check the standard to which the blanket is manufactured.

Blankets manufactured to BS476 should be replaced.

Asbestos fire blankets were in common use, but most have been removed. If the blanket is asbestos, or you believe it is asbestos it is recommended that you remove it in its container, seal in a plastic bag (double-bagged and labelled) and dispose of appropriately. Some asbestos blankets are dust suppressed but there is no way of knowing which.

Blankets manufactured to BS6575* and BS EN1869 may be inspected as follows:-

Take the blanket from its container, ensuring that it can be easily and quickly removed. Unfold and inspect. Ensure that the blanket is placed or laid only on clean dry surfaces at all times to avoid damage to the fabric or coating and/or contamination by dirt or foreign bodies.

Inspect for signs of damage or deterioration. Damage may take the form of cuts or holes in the fabric or coating and particular care must be taken to check the integrity of the fabric or coating at the points where the blanket is folded.

Inspect the container for damage.

Most fire blankets will be located in kitchens and particular care must be taken to ensure these are not contaminated by cooking oils or grease as this may reduce their effectiveness in containing a fire.

If the blanket and container is in an acceptable condition refold and replace. Mark service label as indicated below.

If the blanket or container is damaged or in unacceptable condition replace and label accordingly.

Ensure the container is securely fitted to the wall and can be easily accessed. The blanket should be fitted at a minimum height of 1.5 metres and a maximum height 2 metres e.g. eye level.

The blanket must always be in a position where it can be reached safely without access being impeded by a possible fire involving any cooking appliances. It should not be hidden away behind kitchen appliances, in cupboards, drawers, deep recesses etc or where it could suffer damage.

Ideally Fire blankets should be sited in the same room as the fire hazard and no further than a few metres from where they are likely to be needed. The user should not have to pass through doorways to reach the nearest fire blanket.

*If found, blankets manufactured to BS6575, given their great age, are unlikely to be fit for service and should be replaced by a BS EN 1869 blanket.

The maintenance label

The maintenance label should be indelibly marked on a durable label fixed firmly to the container without obscuring any manufacturers' markings or instructions/pictograms. The following information should be given on the maintenance (service) label –

- (a) Type of action (commissioned, inspected, condemned).

- (b) Name and postal address of the maintenance supplier. (This will normally be printed at the top of the label, together with their contact details).

- (c) A mark clearly identifying the competent person (service technician).

- (d) The date of the maintenance. It is only necessary to indicate the month and year.

The information required above should be readable without any special equipment (bar codes or similar).

VISUAL INSPECTION BY THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON

It is recommended that the “Responsible Person” (who is the technicians’ customer) carries out regular visual inspections of their extinguishers at intervals of at least once a month and where circumstances require at more frequent intervals: fire blankets should be inspected at the same time.

The inspections should include that –

- (a) Each blanket is correctly and securely located in the designated place.
- (b) Each blanket is unobstructed and visible with the correct sign
- (c) The operating instructions and pictograms of each blanket are clean, legible, in English and face outwards.
- (d) Each blanket container is not damaged, and any hand-hold loops/devices are visible are not damaged.
- (e) Any tamper indicator fitted to the blanket/container is not damaged or missing.

The Responsible Person should record the results (e.g. in a fire logbook) of these visual inspections and arrange for corrective action, where necessary by a competent person.