

**Guidance
Note**



Fire Industry Association



**Code of Practice for the Commissioning
and Maintenance of Fire Blankets
Manufactured to BS EN 1869**

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1. SCOPE

This code of practice gives guidance on:

- Regular inspection of a fire blanket.
- Regular maintenance of a fire blanket.
- Life of a fire blanket.
- Reasons to render a fire blanket unserviceable.

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

BS EN 1869 Fire Blankets.

3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1. Container

The box, packet or cabinet (including closures) in which a fire blanket is normally housed.

3.2 Fire blanket

A fire blanket is a safety device designed to extinguish small incipient (starting) fires. It consists of a sheet of fire retardant material, which is placed over a fire in order to smother it.

Small fire blankets, for use in kitchens and around the home, are usually made of either fibreglass or woven-nylon coated with silicone-based flame retardant and folded in to a quick-release container for ease of storage.

3.3 Hand hold devices

Hand hold devices, often made of woven material, are securely attached to the blanket that can be seen and accessed from outside the container, which allow the user to release the fire blanket from the container ready for deployment.

3.4 Manufacturer's instructions

Instructions written by the manufacturer to aid users' deployment of the fire blanket, including any instruction which aids the service provider to carry out maintenance of the blanket.

3.5 Service provider

Person with the training and experience, and access to the relevant tools, equipment and information, manuals and knowledge of any special procedures recommended by the manufacturer of the fire blanket, to carry out the relevant maintenance procedures

3.6. Responsible person

Person or persons responsible for, or having effective control over, fire safety provisions adopted in or appropriate to the premises or building or risk where a fire blanket is installed.

Note: For the purposes of this document, the term 'responsible person' includes a nominated representative.

4. Process of commissioning

The commissioning of a fire blanket should be carried out by a service provider as defined in 3.5. Upon removal from its packaging and transit protection, and immediately prior to placing in its designated place, the fire blanket should undergo this sequence of commissioning service actions:

1	External examination of container	Examine the container for serious damage that could impair the safe operation of the fire blanket or the life of the blanket held inside.
2	Operating instructions	Check the operating instructions for correctness and legibility, ensuring that the text is in English. (See Annex A for example of required operating instructions.)
3	Wall-mounting	Wall mount the fire blanket securely, ensuring that the hand hold devices are readily accessible, as designed. Most blankets require to be wall mounted in the container, to allow the blanket to be easily deployed when required.
4	Deployment	Check that the blanket is able to be easily released from the container as the manufacturer intended, by following the operating instructions.
5	Visual inspection	Check that the fire blanket has not been used; is not obviously damaged or has any hand hold devices missing or unsatisfactorily affixed to the blanket. Check the manufacturer's label
6	Reassembly	Reassemble the fire blanket in accordance with the folding instructions of the blanket manufacturer. Replace with new any safety element designed to show whether the blanket has been deployed. Ensure the blanket is clean and dust free
7	Affix maintenance label	Affix the maintenance label to the blanket in an appropriate position on the container and complete the details

5. MOUNTING

5.1 Fire blankets should be mounted so as to position the hand hold devices approximately 1.5 m from the floor.

5.2 The positioning of kitchen furniture and/or equipment should not preclude access to the blanket.

6. VISUAL INSPECTION BY THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON

6.1 The responsible person should carry out visual inspections of all fire blankets regularly. These visual inspections should be carried out at least monthly. When circumstances require, inspections should be carried out more frequently.

Note 1: Fire legislation in England & Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and its associated Guidance Notes, suggest that good practice is to determine whether the fire blanket has been used and to check for damage on a weekly basis.

6.2 When carrying out these visual inspections, it should be ensured that:

6.3 Each fire blanket is correctly located in the designated place.

6.4 Each fire blanket is unobstructed and visible.

6.5 The operating instructions of each fire blanket are clean and legible and face outwards.

6.6 Each fire blanket container is not obviously damaged and that the hand hold devices are visible and undamaged.

6.7 The tamper indicators of each fire blanket, where fitted, are not broken or missing.

6.8 The responsible person should record the results of these visual inspections and arrange for corrective action, where necessary, by a service provider. In the event of doubt, the responsible person should arrange for a service provider to examine the fire blanket.

Note 2: Responsible persons have obligations under fire legislation in England & Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, to use a service provider to maintain extinguishing equipment in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair, where it is necessary to provide such equipment to safeguard employees in the event of fire.

7. BASIC SERVICE

7.1 The responsible person should ensure that basic service be carried out at 12 monthly intervals. The maintenance intervals given for basic service have for practical purposes a tolerance of ± 1 month. Intervals should be taken from the date of installation or the last basic service. Intervals may be shortened, on the recommendation of the service provider, where inspection reveals environmental and/or special hazards or at the request of the responsible person.

7.2 The basic service of a fire blanket should be carried out by a service provider as defined in 2.4. The fire blanket should undergo this sequence of commissioning service actions:

1	External examination of container	Examine the container for serious damage that could impair the safe operation of the fire blanket or the life of the blanket held inside.
2	Operating instructions	Check the operating instructions for correctness and legibility, ensuring that the text is in English.
3	Wall-mounting	<p>Check that the fire blanket is wall mounted ensuring that the hand hold devices are readily accessible, as designed.</p> <p>Most blankets require to be wall-mounted in the container to allow the blanket to be readily and easily deployed when required.</p>
4	Age	Check the age of the fire blanket.
5	Deployment	Check that the blanket is able to be easily released from the container as the manufacturer intended, by following the operating instructions.
6	Visual inspection of the blanket	<p>Check that the fire blanket has not been used, is not obviously damaged, or has any hand hold devices missing or unsatisfactorily affixed to the blanket.</p> <p>Check the blanket is manufactured to BS EN 1869.</p>
7	Reassembly	Reassemble the fire blanket in accordance with the folding instructions of the blanket manufacturer. Replace with new any safety element designed to show whether the blanket has been deployed.
8	Maintenance label	Complete the details on the maintenance label.
9	Report	Write an inspection report advising the responsible person of the state of maintenance of the fire blanket.

8. LABELLING

8.1 General

Any labelling that is applied to the fire blanket container should not obscure any marking required by BS EN 1869.

8.2 Maintenance label

8.2.1 The maintenance record should be indelibly marked on a durable label that is fixed firmly to the fire blanket container, without obscuring any of the manufacturer's markings and instructions. Where there is no more space on the maintenance label and a new label is fixed, the date of commissioning should be marked on the new label.

8.2.2 The following information should be given on the maintenance label:

8.2.3 Type of action (commissioning or basic service).

8.2.4 Name and postal address of the maintenance supplier.

8.2.5 A mark clearly identifying the service provider.

8.2.6 The date (year and month) of the action in **a)** above.

8.2.7 The date (year and month) of commissioning.

This information should be readable without any special equipment.

Any additional information for the benefit of service providers may be shown in a more compact form, such as bar codes.

Note 3: The information on the maintenance label of each fire blanket may additionally be entered into a central record. In this way, one aspect of the important information on fire prevention can be kept readily available.

9. EVALUATION OF FITNESS – BLANKETS WHICH ARE TO BE CONDEMNED

Any fire blanket with a major defect or defects which make it unsafe for use should be immediately removed from its designated place, and marked 'CONDEMNED' together with the reason for this assessment. The responsible person should be advised in the written report (see 10) that a permanent replacement is needed as soon as possible. Evaluation of whether the damage or wear to a fire blanket make it unsafe for use depends on the judgement of the service provider.

9.1 Conditions indicating that a fire blanket is unsafe for use

Potentially the most serious hazard presented by a defective fire blanket is its inability to either (a) be deployed or (b) starve a fire of oxygen, allowing the fire to burn uncontrollably after deployment. These could be caused by any of the following conditions:

9.1.1 Wear, contamination or damage to the fire blanket material.

9.1.2 Wear or damage to the fire blanket hand hold devices.

9.1.3 Serious damage to the container.

9.1.4 Fire damage to the container or fire blanket.

9.1.5 Age. Follow manufacturer's instructions or if there are none then if more than seven years from date of commissioning consider replacing the blanket.

9.2 Additional reasons for condemning a fire blanket include the following (unless rectified by the replacement of the appropriate components):

9.2.1 Illegible marking or operating instructions.

9.2.2 Instructions not in English.

10. PROVISION OF A WRITTEN REPORT

The service provider should advise the responsible person in a written report:

10.1 Of any fire blankets that have been condemned or are missing.

10.2 Of any permanent replacement fire blankets required to replace those reported in a).

10.3 Of any additional fire blankets required to ensure that the level of cover at the premises is appropriate for the risks present.

10.4 That any replacement or additional fire blankets reported in b) or c) should be provided as soon as possible.

10.5 Of the responsible person's obligation under fire legislation to provide an appropriate level of fire-fighting equipment at all times.

11. MAINTENANCE DOCUMENTATION

A certificate of inspection should be issued in all cases.

11.1 The certificate of inspection should include the following information:

11.2 The name, postal address and telephone number of the maintenance company.

11.3 The date of maintenance.

11.4 Identification of the maintenance technician.

11.5 A list of all fire blankets included in the maintenance programme, including all nonconforming equipment, and recommendations for appropriate corrective action or reference to where this information can be found.

11.6 The signature of the responsible person, which should be obtained upon completion of the service visit and prior to the service technician leaving the premises, or a record of the reason why this is not possible (eg unmanned sites).

12. PERMANENT REPLACEMENT OF A FIRE BLANKET

It is the duty of the responsible person to arrange for permanent replacement fire blankets to be put into place as soon as possible after inspection has shown that some fire blankets should be replaced. The service provider is responsible for bringing this duty to the responsible person's attention in the written report.

DISCLAIMER

The information set out in this document is believed to be correct in the light of information currently available but it is not guaranteed and neither the Fire Industry Association nor its officers can accept any responsibility in respect of the contents or any events arising from use of the information contained within this document.



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