

## BRIEF GUIDE TO SPECIFYING A FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

Unless you have a formal qualification in designing fire alarm systems, an end user should not determine the location or quantity of devices within a fire alarm system. In Scotland we are governed by legislation: Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, which states that “the **level of fire cover** should be nominated by a responsible person after carrying out a fire risk assessment.”

The fire alarm is then designed, installed, commissioned and maintained in accordance with the current code of practice- BS5839: Part 1 2002, for commercial, retail, local authority and industrial premises.

The **level of fire cover** is categorised as P1, P2, L4, L3, L2,L1 or category M

### **CATEGORY M:**

M System designed to be operated manually (no Automatic Fire Detection) this would consist of audibility throughout the building to a specified audibility level, with manual call points at every door which opens to fresh air and at every change of level, also areas that meet with a minimum travel distance to a fire alarm call point.

### **CATEGORY P:**

Designated to protect property and is normally requested by insurers

P1 Automatic Fire Detection installed throughout all areas including void areas.

P2 Automatic Fire Detection installed only in defined areas designed to satisfy a specific fire risk objective

### **CATEGORY L:**

Designated as Life Protection Fire Systems, L Automatic Fire Detection is designed to primarily protect human life. categories:

L4 is category M plus Automatic Fire Detection installed in escape routes comprising circulation areas and space such as corridors and stairways

L3 is category M plus Automatic Fire Detection installed in escape routes and rooms opening into these routes including voids

L2 Automatic Fire Detection installed in defined areas of higher risk of ignition, in addition to L3 including voids

L1: Category M plus Automatic Fire Detection installed throughout all areas including voids

L5 A non-prescriptive system in which protected area(s) and/or the location of detectors is designed to satisfy a specific fire risk objective (other than that of L1 to L4)