London Fire Statement
from the Confederation of Fire Associations-International

The Confederation of Fire Associations-International (CFPA-I) extends its deepest sympathies to the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire and expresses high praise for the work of the emergency services who have been working extremely hard and tirelessly to manage this terrible situation.

This was a devastating fire. As details emerge, we understand there was a refurbishment including exterior cladding and a communal heating system. We are hopeful that the pending investigation will reveal all of the factors that led to this tragic and avoidable loss of life.

The quick fire spread seen in the Grenfell Tower fire is eerily similar to that seen in other similar high-rise fires that have occurred throughout the world, including Australia and the United Arab Emirates. Although the details of the construction of the building are not yet known, reports have indicated that a composite metal cladding with foam insulation was used in the recent refurbishment. At this time, it is not known whether the external cladding had been tested and approved in accordance with the most current fire safety standards.

CFPA-I remains deeply concerned that there are many high-rise buildings around the world that have flammable materials installed with the potential for external fire spread.

It is the view of CFPA-I that building regulations and associated guidance in many locations have not always included safeguards to prevent the use of materials and methods that have poor fire performance capabilities. Even in the absence of strong governmental oversight, architects, engineers, contractors and building owners must embrace fire protection as a fundamental and essential consideration. This includes the proper balance of active and passive fire protection measures, and the on-going inspection, testing and maintenance of all fire and life safety systems.

Many insulating materials are available for use in building construction and their fire performance characteristics can range from being non-combustible to very flammable – it is a matter of choice, and clearly some choices are safer than others.

While we must wait for a full investigation into the cause of the fire and the reasons for such rapid fire spread in this tragic incident, CFPA-I and its member organisations will continue to campaign for improvements in fire safety legislation and in ensuring the safety of the public and our built environment.

This includes:

- Appropriate alarms, training and evacuation procedures
- Smoke detection and alarm systems in all residential buildings
- Controls on the use of flammable façades
- Proper design, installation and maintenance of fire doors
- Proper design, installation and maintenance of fire and smoke barriers and the protection of structural components
- Fire sprinkler protection for all residential and high risk buildings
- Regular updates of building regulations
- Initiatives to ensure full compliance with fire and life safety regulations
- Robust programs for the inspection, testing and maintenance of fire protection systems.

About CFPA-I:

The Confederation of Fire Protection Associations-International (CFPA-I) is a body of leading fire protection organizations from around the world that have joined forces to collectively direct their resources at reducing the global fire problem and increasing life safety. By sharing experience, research, technical know-how, and fire statistics, the group aims to maximize the effectiveness of fire prevention and protection and foster improved international fire safety codes and standards. Significant advances have been made in recent years in fire safety and the CFPA-I have provided an exceptional forum to disseminate this knowledge. CFPA-I is an assembly of authoritative, knowledgeable organizations that have made impressive contributions in the field.

See more: www.cfpa-i.org

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