

JD/KL/NSI 005 25

1st May 2025

To: All NSI Fire Gold and Fire Silver SP203-1 approved companies and applicants

Dear Colleague,

**PUBLICATION OF BS 5839-1:2025 Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings.
Part 1: Design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of systems in non-domestic premises – Code of practice**

We would like to draw your attention to the publication of BS 5839-1:2025 which came into effect on 30th April 2025 and supersedes BS 5839-1:2017 which is now withdrawn.

This is a full revision of the standard and includes the following significant technical changes with respect to BS 5839-1:2017:

- a) The document has undergone some restructuring, with Clause **4** being moved to a new Introduction and Clause **33** being merged with Clause **31**.
- b) A new Section **7** has been introduced on extensions and modifications.
- c) As a Code of Practice, variations from the recommendations of BS 5839-1 might be acceptable subject to the agreement of all interested parties. However, it is now considered, in the light of several fatal fires, variations from the recommendations of certain clauses are unacceptable. Those considered unacceptable are now set out explicitly in Clause **6**.
- d) The siting recommendations for manual call points have been simplified.
- e) It is now recommended that, in rooms in which people sleep, preference is given to forms of automatic fire detection other than heat detectors (or sprinkler heads performing the same role as heat detectors).

Technical Bulletin 0070 highlights the major changes incorporated into BS 5839-1:2025. However, this is not a definitive list of all changes and reference should be made to BS 5839-1:2025 for further information.

Implementation timescale for approved and applicant companies

Existing NSI approved companies with Fire Gold or Fire Silver approval to the BAFE SP203-1 scheme will have until 31st October 2025 to transition to BS 5839-1:2025. During the transition period, any non-conformances found against the revised standard will be raised as an "Auditor Note". Any non-conformances found after the transition period will be raised as formal non-conformance reports (Major or Minor non-conformance reports).

For applications received prior to 1st June 2025, applicant companies applying for NSI Fire Gold or Fire Silver approval to the BAFE SP203-1 scheme will be subject to the transition arrangements, as detailed above, for existing companies.

For new applicants and existing approved companies seeking an extension to their existing scope to include SP203-1, applications received from 1st June 2025 for approval to the BAFE SP203-1 scheme will be audited against the revised standard and any non-conformances found will be raised as formal non-conformance reports (Major or Minor non-conformance reports).

Systems designed to BS 5839-1:2017

Where a company has designed a system to the recommendations of BS 5839-1:2017 but it has not yet been installed and/or commissioned, the design certificate shall refer to BS 5839-1:2017.

Where the installation and/or commissioning of a system designed to BS 5839-1:2017 has not commenced at the time of publication of BS 5839-1:2025, the installation and/or commissioning process shall be in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1:2025, Section 4: Installation and/or Section 5: Commissioning and Handover.

Where installation/commissioning is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1:2025, the applicable installation/commissioning/acceptance certificates shall refer to BS 5839-1:2025.

How do I obtain a copy of BS 5839-1:2025?

A copy of BS 5839-1:2025 can be purchased directly from BSI or from NSI for a discounted rate (please contact accounts@nsi.org.uk). Alternatively, it will be accessible through the NSI Standards on Subscription service as soon as we receive the authorised digital version



from BSI. Please be aware that BSI's copyright protection measures can sometimes add a short delay to the release timeline.

Questions or queries?

If you have any questions or queries regarding the new standard, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Davidson'.

John Davidson
Approval Schemes Manager
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