

# Impairments to fire protection and detection systems.

**Impaired fire control equipment can leave your facility seriously exposed to a major fire loss that you would normally expect to be able to detect early, respond to effectively and contain to a limited area. Knowing about such impairments and managing them proactively is a necessary part of your fire control programme.**

Follow these guidelines and use the QBE FCI Toolkit (Fire Control Impairment Toolkit) to plan for, manage and reinstate impaired fire control systems.

Contact your QBE Client Risk Manager or Underwriter or send an email to [RMProperty@uk.qbe.com](mailto:RMProperty@uk.qbe.com) to request a copy of the FCI Toolkit. It comes with 3 handy 'Red Tags' to hang on the impaired equipment. You can have more tags if you need them, just ask.

## Managing an impairment

When a fire protection or fire detection system is shutdown the ability of your premises to withstand a fire is impaired. This is when an operation is at its most vulnerable to damage and disruption.

Adequate control of fire protection and fire detection impairments is critical. Whether an impairment is planned or occurs accidentally precautions must be taken to provide temporary protection, reduce hazards and ensure prompt reinstatement.

To minimise the risks during this vulnerable period, QBE recommends the adoption of a formal Impairment Handling procedure as described in the FCI Toolkit and outlined on page 2 of this document.

Make sure everyone who could be involved with impairing fire protection or fire detection systems is aware of your 'impairment' rules and their responsibilities to minimise the risks during the impairment period. This includes employees and contractors. Proper training is critical to ensuring effective planning beforehand, rigorous supervision during the impairment period and proper reinstatement when completed

## Notification to QBE

Impairments should be notified to QBE using a Fire Control Impairment (FCI) Notification form. Available as a Word template from QBE, it should be completed and e-mailed electronically to QBE at [impairments@uk.qbe.com](mailto:impairments@uk.qbe.com). Once the impairment is complete, notification should be sent to the same e-mail address to confirm reinstatement.

QBE requests notification before planned impairments and as soon as practical after emergency impairments. QBE will track impairments and if necessary assist you to manage the impairment and the reinstatement.

It is advisable to use a tag system to indicate which valve / system is isolated. The tag is a visual reminder to all employees and will quickly identify which system requires reinstatement, especially in an emergency. Handy ready-made 'Red Tags' come with the FCI Toolkit. If you require more tags, these are available from QBE on request via [RMProperty@uk.qbe.com](mailto:RMProperty@uk.qbe.com)

## Impairments to fire protection and detection systems

The outline below provides a summary of the key actions to be taken. See the FCI Toolkit for a more detailed bullet-point list.

### Before impairment

- > Plan for an impairment well ahead of time by performing a detailed risk assessment and ensuring local and nearby hazards can be protected, contained or eliminated to a sufficient degree
- > Make sure you have the right materials and people on hand before the impairment begins to minimise the shutdown period
- > Notify key people in Operations, Emergency Response Teams and the local Fire & Rescue Services (if appropriate). Also notify your remote alarm monitoring station
- > Issue a FCI Notification Form to QBE and hang Red Tags on the impaired equipment
- > For an emergency impairment, for example due to a sprinkler leakage or breakage or activation, stabilise the situation fully and set up the precautions before notifying QBE.

### During impairment

- > Keep a watchful eye for fire hazards arising in or close to the area where the fire control equipment is impaired
- > Make sure employees and contractors know that the fire control is impaired and prevent them from performing unnecessary hazardous activities. Halt hazardous production processes and prohibit 'hot work' in the area
- > Work on the job continuously until completed if possible. If it must be left overnight, ensure Security patrol the area and other precautions are maintained.

### Reinstatement on completion

- > When the impaired fire control equipment is reinstated, inspect the area and witness a performance test or sprinkler alarm test to verify that it has been properly returned to service
- > Re-lock valves open, reset control panels, inform your remote monitoring station
- > Sign off the FCI Notification form and send it to QBE as confirmation that the impairment is completed
- > Remember to remove the Red Tags.

### When should you notify QBE?

Impairments to fire protection and detection systems that are required due to faults, repairs or alterations extending beyond 4 hours should be notified to QBE using the FCI Notification form. This ensures QBE is kept aware of fault trends or system alterations and can offer impairment advice if desired.

Impairments due to regular maintenance, tests and inspections do NOT need to be notified to QBE. However, impairments should be notified to QBE if any repairs are needed or if the maintenance period is extended beyond the end of one working shift.

Planned Impairments should be notified to QBE a day or more in advance. These will usually be related to known repairs or alterations.

Emergency Impairments due to sprinkler activation or sprinkler/pipe leaks or false alarms should be stabilised first. In such cases it is essential that the correct impairment procedures are implemented as soon as possible after the emergency incident and before notifying QBE.

### Guidance and enquiries

For further guidance and general enquiries contact: [RMProperty@uk.qbe.com](mailto:RMProperty@uk.qbe.com).

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