



Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation

Safety Alert

Subject: Composite plastic panels and products

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DIO Sponsor: Bryan Dunn

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Contact if different from above Sponsor:

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This Safety Alert is to be read by the following so appropriate action can be taken:

1. **DIO's Maintenance Management Organisations and their Supply Chains**
2. **DIO Regional Delivery Manager (or equivalent for non-NGEC contracts)**
3. **Head of Establishments**
4. **Others**

Others interested in the content of this Safety Alert might include:

Assurance Managers, Estate Facility Managers, Assurance Managers in Regional (Service) Delivery Health & Safety Advisors, Top Level Budget Holders, Prime Contractors, Project Managers, Infrastructure Managers and Property Managers with responsibility for MOD projects and Property Management Works Services (including the legacy work of EWCs/WSMs).

When it takes effect: Immediately

When it is due to expire: When updated or rescinded.

Health and Safety

This Safety Alert does not necessarily cover all aspects of the subject matter and readers should make themselves aware of other potential issues. Readers should also not rely on DIO Publications as their only means of becoming aware of safety issues, but they should consult widely across other media to maintain awareness.

Aims

1. The aim of this Safety Alert is to bring to the attention of appropriate persons or organisations the use of composite products that have a wood and plastic mix composition and have the potential for personal injury and/or property damage. The products that causing concern are used primarily for fencing and decking.

Introduction

2. Compliance with the contents of this Safety Alert will enable Defence to continually reduce fire risk on the Estate.
3. Any work required as a result of this Safety Alert must be carried out in accordance with the Management of Health & Safety in Ministry of Defence - JSP375 & Estate Management in Ministry of Defence - JSP 850

Background

4. Composite fencing and decking materials are being widely used by local authorities which will result in areas of housing stock having this material near dwellings. The use of these composite materials is also becoming more common in private dwellings and commercial premises.
5. There is a potential for rapid and significant fire spread due to the tremendous heat flux produced when the material is involved in fire that could affect and extend into any adjoining building or structures. Also, significant quantities of smoke are produced when this material burns which could affect ground level and airborne visibility.
6. The pictures below illustrate the extent of fire spread and smoke production from approximately 100 meters of composite fencing panels involved in a recent incident. The fire risk concerns have recently been brought to our attention via a National Fire Chiefs Council Safety Alert. The link is included for reference https://www.ukfrs.com/action_notes/186.

Part A

7. This Safety Alert concerns use of all composite wood and plastic mix products used on the Estate as a modern replacement for wood products (fencing, decking etc) as detailed within the link above.
8. SEFMs & EFMs and their equivalents should, in the first instance,
 - a. initially contact their HoE's and relevant others to establish if such materials have been installed or is in store on the estate. Building custodians, MMOs and others involved in estate management should be able to identify if they have infrastructure such as fencing or decking that looks like wood, or if such products are in storage awaiting use. In some cases, it may have been used as a result of a self-help. The Site MMO should also to be asked if they have such products in storage awaiting use.
 - b. confirm and record the type of composite material, quantity, location, manufacturer and any other product details, used for fencing or decking or in storage.

9. Where a return isn't received from the SEFM and EFM community, or the return is unable to determine manufacturer the DIO Regional Delivery Manager, or equivalent, shall proceed to requesting the MMO for the above details in step 10.
10. The Maintenance Management Organisation (MMO), on direction from the DIO Regional Delivery Manager, or Equivalent, shall initiate the following task:
 - a) Establish all locations and quantity that have this type of composite product fitted.
 - b) Establish any known any fire rating or standards of the product fitted.
11. The MMO is to notify the DIO Regional Delivery Safety Alerts Team (DIO-RDSafetyAlerts@mod.gov.uk) through their respective DIO Regional Delivery Manager.
12. The requested data is required within 4 calendar months from issue date of this Safety Alert.

Part B

13. Until the further information is made available and any required remediation works agreed, a permanent notice should be fitted to the materials warning of risk of fires starting and spreading due to sparks, heat, flame, cigarettes from chimineas, fire pits, BBQs, petrol lawnmowers, build-up of recyclables or fire loading and proximity to oil or gas tanks etc. A template for the notice is shown, A minimum of A4 size should be considered appropriate.



Part C

14. The SEFM or MMO is to notify the DIO Regional Delivery Safety Alerts Team (DIO-RDSafetyAlerts@mod.gov.uk), through their respective DIO Regional Delivery Manager or equivalent, of the completed actions resulting from Step 8 or 10 (finding the products) and implementing the actions in Part B..
15. Any location where this material has been used will need to be risk assessed specifically in relation to the enhanced fire risk potential of this material and in relation to notional boundaries and buildings, and certification of the product.





https://www.ukfrs.com/action_notes/186.