

## Removal of the BS 476 Test Standards

### What is BS 476?

First published in 1932, BS 476 provided a testing method for assessing the fire resistance of building materials. Over the years, it expanded into multiple parts, covering various aspects of fire performance, including ignition resistance, flame spread, and heat release. The BS 476 series evolved in response to major fire incidents, changing regulatory needs, and advancements in fire science.

Significant updates occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, such as the publication of Part 7 (1971) and Parts 20 to 24 (1987), introducing more precise methods for testing flame spread and fire resistance. By the late 1990s, BS 476 was gradually replaced or supplemented by European standards (the BS EN 13501 series) as the UK moved toward European fire testing procedures.

The BS 476 series is divided into multiple parts, each focusing on a different fire performance characteristic. The key parts relevant to gypsum-based systems are:

- BS 476-4: Non-combustibility test for materials.
- BS 476-6: Fire propagation test, assessing heat release.
- BS 476-7: Surface spread of flame classification.
- BS 476-11: Heat emission.
- BS 476-20 to 24: Fire resistance tests.

### When did things change?

The biggest change to BS 476 occurred in the late 2000s, when several parts were proposed for withdrawal following the publication of British adoptions of European standards. There was concern that the status of 'withdrawn' could be interpreted to mean that the affected parts could no longer be used. However, these parts were still referred to in the government's guidance document Approved Document B (ADB) and were used extensively in other countries outside the EU with historic links to the UK.

The BS 476 standards remained available via BSi, but the foreword was amended with the statement: 'This standard has been superseded by the current BS EN XXX, but it has been retained based on legitimate need for the standards within non-EU markets.' As BS 476 was a conflicting national standard under CEN rules, updating and revising the parts wasn't possible, although industry still had the option to continue using them instead of the relevant BS ENs, where appropriate.

### The transition to European Standards

UK building regulations have been amended to align with EN 13501-1 for reaction to fire classification, requiring materials to be classified under the Euroclass system (A1 to F) rather than the traditional BS 476 classifications. Although the UK has left the European Union, BS 476 has not been reinstated as the primary fire testing standard.

Following a consultation in 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) announced the removal of the relevant parts of the BS 476 series from the statutory guidance to the building regulations Approved Document B: Fire Safety.

### What happens next?

The first tranche of standards covering reaction to fire was removed on 2nd March 2025, with a second tranche covering fire resistance being removed on 2nd September 2029.

- Standards removed on 2nd March 2025:  
BS 476-6, BS 476-7, BS 476-11

- Standards being removed on 2nd September 2029:  
BS 476-8, BS 476-20, BS 476-21, BS 476-22,  
BS 476-23, BS 476-24, BS 476-31.1

Note: BS 476-3 will remain as a current standard because it has not yet been superseded by a BS EN. Work is ongoing within CEN/TC 127 to convert CEN/TS 1187 to a full EN.

Whilst British Gypsum recommends working to the latest and most up to date BS EN test standards, it is the responsibility of the Project Design team to specify either BS or BS EN, and to ensure the relevant fire resistance test standard is made clear from the outset. This will remain the case until the BS 476 standards are completely withdrawn in 2029. Dry lining systems which have been tested to the correct standards should be specified and installed. Failing to comply with this may lead to costly design changes, such as reduced maximum partition heights, or incompatibility with other products such as fire stopping or door sets.

British Gypsum will continue to support existing projects where BS 476 is the specified test standard. Our BS 476 specifications can be found [here](#).