



PROTECTING THE WORLD'S FIREFIGHTERS

21 August 2020

Media Release

European firefighter PPE standard updated

The European standard EN 469, which ensures protective clothing worn by firefighters is of good quality, fit for purpose and adequately protective, has been revised and published this month.

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) published *EN469: 2020 Protective clothing for firefighters - Performance requirements for protective clothing for firefighting* in mid-August. EN 469 covers general clothing design, labelling, minimum performance requirements, and the tests that should be carried out to determine these performance levels.

In response, Bristol Uniforms, a leading designer and manufacturer of protective clothing for emergency services across the globe, is putting together a handy guide for its distributors and customers, summarising the changes that have been made. These include minor changes to performance requirements. For example, there is now a requirement to undertake tests, such as seam and fabric tear strength tests, after five wash-and-dry cycles instead of before, to check clothing performance is maintained.

Other tests have also been added, for example to check that sewing thread can withstand heats of 260°C without melting, and to ensure that when clothing comes into contact with a surface of 250°C that it takes longer than 10 seconds for the temperature inside to rise by 10°C.

In addition, some testing processes, such as the resistance to liquid chemical penetration test, have been simplified and some more subjective tests for things like surface wetting have been removed.



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The new standard also specifies extra design features, for example lockable zips to prevent accidental opening and exposure to contaminants, and wider pocket flaps to keep contaminants and burning debris out. It also now puts a limit on the depth of anti-wicking material added to the sleeves and hems of garments.

BSI/CEN standards expert Dave Matthews has been involved in the development of this standard. He said: "EN 469 has been updated to reflect the changing role of firefighters, and to improve the accuracy and consistency of testing. The revision has taken a lengthy period, due to the interest in this standard. It will continue to ensure that all conforming PPE is fit for purpose and protects firefighters from the hazards of the job."

Richard Ballheimer, Compliance Manager at Bristol Uniforms, is Secretary to the standards committee that updated EN 469, and provides specialist advice and guidance on firefighter PPE. He said: "EN 469: 2020 replaces EN 469: 2005 and like all manufacturers, Bristol Uniforms will now start the process of certifying its structural firefighter clothing to this new standard. Customers can rest assured that when they buy PPE certified to this new standard, it's been thoroughly tested and is fit for purpose."

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Editor's notes:

- Bristol Uniforms Ltd is a leading designer and manufacturer of protective clothing for emergency services in the UK and across the globe.
- Founded in 1801 as a clothing manufacturer in Bristol, the company has been a pioneer in the development of specialist firefighter PPE for more than 60 years.
- Today, Bristol Uniforms employs over 170 people. Its garments are sold in more than 110 countries throughout the world, via a network of around 70 experienced distributors.