

EQUITONE: The perfect choice to ensure cladding fire safety in high-rise buildings



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*As the government steps in to speed up cladding replacement on private tower blocks, Martin Smithurst, technical manager at EQUITONE, explains the importance of private owners making responsible choices in choosing materials with the required fire performance classifications.*

Since 2017 the government has identified 176 private high-rise residential buildings that are fitted with unsafe cladding. There are now plans in place to speed up the removal and replacement of the cladding, with the government investing around £200 million to ensure the work takes place as quickly as possible.

Whilst the initiative is fully government-funded, the onus is still on private building owners to ensure that appropriate safety measures are in place so people can feel safe in their homes. As the application process for building owners to access the funds opened on 12 September (and closes on the 12 November), the focus has now turned to what materials should be used for the recladding.

At EQUITONE we have been evolving and innovating in collaboration with architects to design and manufacture fibre cement facade materials for more than six decades. With building material combustibility a key focal point during the specification stage, we have a long-standing commitment to ensuring all of our materials comprehensively meet the fire performance classification A2-s1,d0 to EN 13501-1:2018.

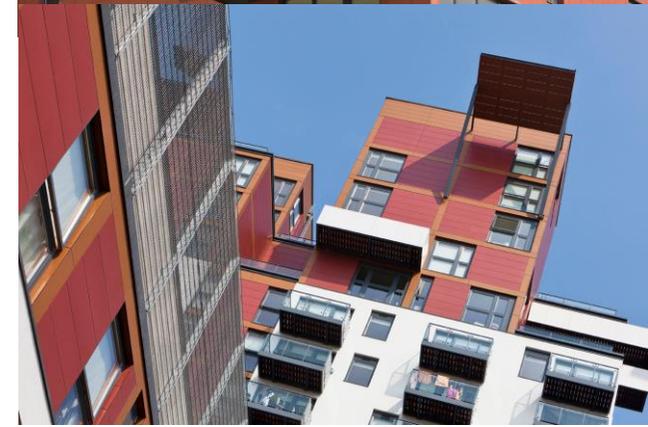
The Euroclass standard of fire safety is the recognised standard of fire safety across Europe. It was introduced by the European Union in 2000 to remove trade barriers between individual member states and to ensure consistent quality levels. It classifies the reaction to fire, as well as evaluates multiple aspects such as ignitability, flame spread, heat release, smoke production and propensity for producing flaming droplets/particles.

  
Fibre cement facade materials

> For more information on EQUITONE facade materials, visit [www.equitone.com/en-gb](http://www.equitone.com/en-gb).

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As stated in the government's Approved Document B – materials that are A2 and above, which includes all EQUITONE materials, can be safely used for high-rise buildings over 18 metres in England. The 's' and 'd' parts of the classification refer to the total smoke, and the number of flaming droplets and particles emitted during the first 10 minutes of exposure to fire respectively, with s1 meaning little to no smoke and d0 meaning no droplets.

In order to ensure the best fire safety precautions across the 176 tower blocks, building owners must make the responsible choice to meet the demands of current fire performance requirements.

EQUITONE's A2-s1,d0 fire performance classification means our materials are classed as of limited combustibility in England, emit little or no smoke and produce no flaming droplets or particles within the first 10 minutes of fire exposure. This means our materials do not contribute to the formation or spread of a fire.

When choosing facade materials that need to meet the demands of the current fire performance requirements, our dedicated technical and specification team can offer expert support to architects, designers and contractors from the initial design concept through to build completion and beyond.

In conclusion, the best way to ensure fire safety – particularly in high-rise and high-risk buildings – is to solely use A2-s1,d0 materials or above, such as EQUITONE.

  
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