Information on the security features of certified safes

Statement of VdS on the resistance grades of safes against burglar attacks

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Thermal attack on a safe at VdS laboratories

The opinion that safes comply with certain requirements for preventing burglar attacks is generally based on certificates and approvals. These approvals confirm in a binding manner that safes shall have the resistance grade against burglar attacks as defined in the certificate/document.

Verification tests on safes

Eurosafe and two certification bodies (members in the European Fire and Security Group – EFSG) have performed verification tests on safes which were formerly certified by an Eastern European body in line with EN 1143-1.

These new tests revealed that the certified resistance grades are not acceptable and therefore challenge the value of the approvals issued.

Example 1: A safe had been certified in line with EN 1143-1 and assigned burglar resistance grade V. The new test was able to establish grade II only.

Example 2: A safe had been certified and assigned burglar resistance grade III. The new test ascertained only grade I resistance in this case.

No technical documentation was available for these verification tests. Hence, it was not possible to conduct a worst-case-test as required

by the standard. According to the standard, the relevant technical drawings shall be available to the laboratory to determine individual weak points of the test specimen.

If more information on the safe design had been available for the test, the results probably would even have been significantly worse, and the burglar resistance grades determined by the verification tests (grade II and I) would probably not be tenable.

In order to prevent such discrepancies, EFSG highlights that reliable certification shall be based on solid quality assurance measures. The European standard EN 1143-1 describes such measures as follows:

Testing should be carried out according to the current state of knowledge. To ensure maximum consistency of test results, testing houses should have an EN ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation and should participate in audits, cooperative tests and experience sharing events and other relevant training

The members of EFSG pay tribute to these requirements formulated in EN 1143-1. The regulations of EFSG prescribe, among other things, mutual audits of testing processes and so-called round-robin-tests which ensure an exchange of information on techniques as well as criminal know-how.

This is the only way to meet the requirements of the European standard for state-of-the-art processes and a consistent evaluation of test results including tests conducted by different experts.

Furthermore, EFSG members perform product and quality assessments in the course of manufacturing. This way, high and flawless quality can be assured throughout the entire manufacturing process.

As a result of these comprehensive quality measures, all EFSG members and stakeholders are able to rely on reproducible testing and certification results. The consistency of these results makes it possible to react to risks in the market by installing safes with adequate resistance grades.

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