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PFPF challenges Eurotunnel fire strategy on BBC TV Politics Show

The Passive Fire Protection Federation (PFPF) challenged Eurotunnel's fire protection and repair strategy on BBC1's Politics Show on Sunday 8th Feb. David Sugden, Chairman of the PFPF was interviewed on the TV show and comments: "The Channel Tunnel has suffered three fires since it opened in 1994. The latest repairs bill from September's fire is estimated to be £53 million - but this doesn't include disruption to trade and industry."

David continues: "In each incident the fire started in one of the vehicles transported on an open shuttle. So if the train continues moving when a fire occurs (original policy) the flames are fanned and spread. If a train stops (current policy), the heat is concentrated at a single point of the tunnel which damages its structure. At the moment fire suppression systems (eg sprinklers) can't be used effectively on an open vehicle or in the tunnel itself."

"A combination of built-in (eg enclosing the wagons) and active (suppression systems) fire protection methods could help avoid a disastrous collapse of the tunnel, narrowly avoided now on two occasions. This is the effective and least disruptive option (and probably the cheapest too), but Eurotunnel has dismissed it out-of-hand. There are likely to be more fires in the tunnel. How much will it cost the country - already hit by a recession - next time?"

The TV show aired at midday on 8th February and the debate on the Tunnel repairs was shown at 12.36 in the South East region.

For advice and guidance on built-in, or 'passive' fire protection visit www.pfpf.org.

END

280 words

Image attached: David Sugden, Chairman of the Passive Fire Protection Federation

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Editors' notes: The Passive Fire Protection Federation (PFPP - www.pfpf.org) is dedicated to growing awareness and giving advice on fire protection, and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO). The Federation brings together the collective expertise of the passive fire protection industry and provides a central forum so that the Industry speaks with one voice to articulate the benefits and value of passive fire protection in the achievement of fire safe building design and construction.

Passive fire protection is the primary measure integrated within the constructional fabric of a building to provide inherent fire safety and protection by responding against flame, heat and smoke to maintain the fundamental requirements of building compartmentation, structural stability, fire separation and safe means of escape.

Passive fire protection measures achieve their intended purpose by raising the fire resistance of the structure, protecting the structure against the effects of fire, reducing fire spread through secondary ignition, limiting the movement of flame and smoke, and minimising the danger of fire-induced collapse or structural distortion.

Passive fire protection design, incorporating passive fire protection materials, systems and assemblies, serves by fire containment to protect life, safeguard the building structure, protect assets, maintain building serviceability after fire, minimise rebuild costs, and facilitate quick business recovery and continuity.

Our website www.pfpf.org carries advice on what to check and best practice in all passive fire protection measures.

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