

SUDDEN STOP FOR INERGEN IN OSLO

In Oslo there is a great deal of disagreement between the City of Oslo Agency for Planning and Building Services and a fire consultant on whether or not the Inergen fire extinguishing gas is suitable for use in an apartment complex. The battle's core is a loft development at Grønland [a district of Oslo], where it was projected with a gas extinguishing system. The Planning and Building Agency was skeptical of whether this solution would be a good idea in this townhouse from 1890, and whether the documentation for this type of facility was sufficient for use in this type of objects. The municipality therefore hired Norconsult [major Norwegian consultancy - <https://www.norconsult.com/>] to review both the design and documentation.

Norconsult concluded the same as Oslo municipality: This type of system is not suitable for apartment complexes because there are too many parameters that you will not be in control of and that will be of great importance for the system to work as intended. In addition, Norconsult is skeptical about how to ensure that air and gas concentrations are correct at all times, both in terms of health aspects and in terms of extinguishing effect.

The fire consultant disagrees and believes that the documentation for this type of system is more than good and that the health aspects are well taken care of - and well documented. For over a year they have now discussed back and forth. The fire consultant was informed in November that their inputs will not be taken into account. The Agency for Planning and Building Services has also deprived the fire consultant of the responsibility in the project. The fire consultant will appeal the case to both the County Governor and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation.

Gas extinguishing systems based on Inergen have been installed in many different objects in recent years. These historic museum buildings, asylum reception centres and care homes for people with mental disorders. The City of Oslo Agency for Planning and Building Services is not alone in being skeptical about the installation of such systems in buildings where people live. The Association of Consulting Engineers Norway (RIF) [<http://www.rif.no/english/>] is also not positive, and they say they want better documentation for that such systems are well suited in homes where people live.

The European standard for these types of installations is initially intended for technical rooms and warehouses. That is, objects where people are not supposed to stay on a permanent basis. It does not include use in apartment complexes. The standard also contains strict guidelines for how quickly people staying in buildings where the extinguishing gas system is installed must evacuate when the system is released. And this both the Agency for Planning and Building Services and many fire consultants, that B&S has talked to, says it is not possible to comply with in practice, if for example, you are asleep when the extinguishing system releases.

The supplier of such systems – which is among others Fire Eater - and the fire consultant says that these are not relevant arguments because Inergen is another and much better gas than the types of extinguishing gases for which the standard is developed. In addition, installations in apartment complexes will be supplemented with Inergen Safeair®, which ensures that the oxygen content will never come below critical levels for humans. Another counter argument is that standards shall be

performance based. And that apartment complexes are not mentioned specifically is because the use of this kind of installations should not be restricted unnecessarily.

Demonstrations that the undersigned have participated in regarding Inergen systems have shown that the gas has a very good holding time. Measurement of pulse on persons who have stayed in the room during the demonstrations has also shown completely normal values. It could be that the history will give suppliers like Fire Eater right. However, as currently so many people express uncertainty and skepticism about whether such installations can be installed in an apartment complex, it is most reasonable to ask the supplier to start working on getting "the papers in order" for just this type of use.

We have seen the same with the water mist systems. These systems were also surrounded by skepticism and criticism for many years. Slowly but surely they have come in from the cold, and an own standard is now just around the corner. No one asks questions about whether water mist is a good idea or not.

And if the decision in Oslo will be standing, the supplier of extinguishing gas will have no choice either. At least it is not a good idea to continue installing Inergen systems in apartment complexes in Oslo at the moment. They will not get a final certificate of completion.