

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 and Fire Testing of Melcourt Products

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 Act, has firmly placed the onus on landscape architects and project designers to foresee, design out or reduce, potential hazards 'on site'.

With this in mind and to assist landscape architects, we have had five of our mulches, (Melcourt Graded Bark Flakes™, Bark Nuggets®, Ornamental Bark Mulch™, Spruce Ornamental™ and Amenity Bark Mulch™), independently fire tested in accordance with the requirements of British Standard 4790:1987.

In all cases, the Melcourt products tested were classified as having a "low radius of the effects of ignition".

To our knowledge only Melcourt mulches have been fire tested in accordance with British Standard 4790:1987. (see below).

Potential fire hazards on landscape schemes could be increased by approving the wrong type and specification of mulch, particularly those containing a high wood, dust and fine content.

Typical potential fire hazard examples include landscaped and mulched car park areas, areas adjacent to vehicle fuel filling stations, areas adjacent to pedestrian walkways, footpaths and road verges.

By nominating any of the five Melcourt mulches above, landscape architects and designers can practically demonstrate that they are reducing 'on site' hazards.

If you decide to specify one of the above Melcourt products, but then add 'or similar approved', please be fully aware that any other product from another manufacturer is highly unlikely to have been fire tested, in accordance with British Standard 4790:1987.

If you are told by a supplier that the product has been tested, ensure that you obtain genuine, current test certificates before approving the product for use.

British Standard 4790:1987 "Determination of the effects of a small source of ignition on textile floor coverings, Hot Metal Nut method"

Melcourt Ornamental Bark Mulch, Bark Nuggets®, Graded Bark Flakes, Spruce Ornamental and Amenity Bark Mulch have been fire tested using the above British Standard method.

The table below sets out the results of the tests:-

Product Name	Duration of flaming (seconds)	Greatest rate of char		Classification	The classification of the radius of effects of ignition are:	
		Face (mm)	Back (mm)		Low	up to 35 mm
Melcourt Ornamental Bark Mulch™	30	15	0	Low	Low	up to 35 mm
Melcourt Bark Nuggets®	31	20	0	Low	Medium	40 – 75 mm
Melcourt Graded Bark Flakes™	31	15	0	Low	High	80 plus mm
Melcourt Spruce Ornamental™	59	30	0	Low		
Melcourt Amenity Bark Mulch™	42	20	0	Low		

All tests were carried out by WIRA Testing Centre, Leeds, West Yorkshire. Each product was tested three times. The 'worse' case test results are listed above. The results are specific only to the Melcourt products tested.

Why did we have these mulches fire tested?

So that we could have an independent opinion, in accordance with a British Standard test method, to identify the likely fire risks when these particular products are used on site.

This is particularly significant when the products are to be used on an area of potential fire risk, such as car parks, vehicle fuel filling stations etc.

What is the benefit of British Standard 4790:1987 Fire testing to the Landscape Architect

In the absence of any British Standards for mulches, soil ameliorants and composts, this is one of the few independent tests that can be carried out to compare the potential fire performance.

You can advise your client or their insurance company, that the product used have known, quantifiable fire characteristics.