

Fire, Moisture and Compliance

Fire performance, moisture control, and regulatory compliance are all critical parts of good specification. These are not optional extras and they should never be treated as boxes to tick once the main design decisions are already locked in. When they are considered properly from the start, they help create safer, more durable, and more reliable buildings.

Fire performance is about more than choosing a board labelled “fire rated.” In most cases, fire resistance depends on a tested system rather than a single material used in isolation. The full build-up matters, including the board type, thickness, fixings, supporting structure, joints, penetrations, and detailing. Service openings, poor sealing, or product substitutions can all weaken the performance of the overall system.

Moisture control is equally important. In floors, walls, and roofs, moisture can affect durability, bond strength, thermal performance, surface finishes, and the long-term condition of the structure. Damp proof membranes, vapour control layers, tanking systems, breathable layers, and correct sequencing all help manage moisture, but they must be used in the right place and for the right reason. A badly chosen moisture strategy can trap water just as effectively as it blocks it.

Compliance covers a broad range of issues, including Building Regulations, fire safety requirements, thermal targets, acoustic expectations, and suitability for intended use. That does not mean every project needs to become a regulatory marathon, but it does mean specifications should be grounded in proven systems, clear technical data, and a proper understanding of the application.

When assessing fire, moisture, and compliance issues, practical questions help.

Is the system part of a tested construction?

Is the substrate dry enough?

Is the product suitable for internal or external use?

Are there high-moisture conditions, service penetrations, or risk areas to deal with?

Do the materials work together as part of the same build-up?

The safest and most reliable specifications usually come from getting the basics right: using suitable products, following tested system logic, respecting the environment they are going into, and not cutting corners because the programme is under pressure.

Buildings tend to remember shortcuts long after the handover meeting

