

Summary of PAS 820:2012

Laboratory-identifiable forensic codes - Classification of performance when exposed to artificial weathering

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Laboratory-identifiable forensic codes and forensic marking products

A forensic code is a uniquely identifiable organic or inorganic code that can be verified by laboratory analysis. A product that incorporates a forensic code in a ready-to-use format is known as a forensic marking product.

Forensic marking products can be used to identify the Owner of an item, confirm the provenance of manufactured goods such as electronic components, or link a suspect to a stolen item or a scene of a crime, amongst many other applications.

Aim of BSI PAS 820:2012

The aim of this Publicly Available Specification (PAS) is to overcome the difficulties that Purchasers could encounter when assessing the length of time a forensic code will continue to be identifiable, and should help those making purchasing decisions to assess this aspect of a product.

The PAS provides a credible and repeatable test method to assess the functional life of a forensic code within a forensic marking product under accelerated weathering conditions simulating internal or external environments.

Longevity of forensic codes

The length of time over which it is possible to detect a forensic code that has been exposed to indoor or outdoor conditions (functional life) can vary from a few months to many years and so it is often not viable to undertake testing in real time. However, it is necessary to determine the likely effects of filtered or unfiltered ultraviolet (UV) light on the performance of the forensic codes. Artificial weathering tests use specific test procedures, allowing exposure to be conducted under controlled conditions, accelerating the natural degradation of materials.

Classification

This PAS describes a method for assessing the performance of the forensic code over time and through exposure to artificial weathering. The classifications are as follows:

Classification	Functional test life	Environment
Grade A – External	≥5 years	External
Grade A – Internal	≥5 years	Internal
Grade B – External	≥2 years	External
Grade B – Internal	≥2 years	Internal
Grade C – External	≥6 months	External
Grade C – Internal	≥6 months	Internal

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