



Hempel intumescent saves bar after three hour blaze

People often think that a fire is something that will never happen to them, but reality shows that it can. Our intumescent coatings not only ensure a durable, good looking finish, but assure you that if the worst should happen, your assets are afforded greater protection.

Raiz cocktail bar is a trendy nightspot in the centre of Ponta Delgada, the bustling capital of the Azores. A busy venue, popular with locals and tourists alike, Raiz bar is a modern, industrial design, featuring exposed steel beams and glass walls with steel staircases connecting two floors. It was important to the owner, Gabriel, that as a main feature of the building design, the steelwork was not only protected against corrosion and fire, but also looked good, to enhance the ambience of the bar.

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One night, soon after closing, a fire took hold. The fire raged through Raiz bar destroying many fixtures and fittings and causing a substantial amount of damage. Initially it was thought the cause was from an electrical short-circuit, but having been ruled out it is now being investigated as a deliberate, criminal act. The fire burned for three hours before being brought under control and finally extinguished by the fire crews. Being outside of opening hours, the building was empty and fortunately no-one was hurt.

As the damage was assessed, it became apparent that the steel structure remained intact. Hempel's intumescent coatings not only protected the steel against the heat and flames, but allowed additional time for the Fire Department to bring the fire under control. With the Raiz Bar, Gabriel has been advised that once the steel has been abrasively blasted, it will be 'as new' and ready to take a new coating system that includes Hempel's intumescent coatings to assure protection against cellulosic fire.

"Without the protection of the intumescent coating the Fire Department believe that the glass structure would have collapsed. Thanks to this added protection the structure is in place and we can rebuild as good as new," says Gabriel.

How do passive fire protection coatings work?

Structural steel generally starts to lose its strength at around 400°C; by 600°C, its integrity will have been reduced by more than half; by 700°C, its strength is a fifth of what it once was. Applied to structural steel in thin coats, passive fire protection coatings expand to form an insulating char in the event of fire exposure. This protects the steel beneath from the effects of thermal increase and enables it to retain its load-bearing capacity for longer, giving extra time for evacuation and emergency response.

At a glance	
Customer	Raiz Bar, Ponta Delgada
Specification	For the structure - R60 - 500°C For the staircase - R30 - 500°C
Environment	C3
Products used	Hempacore One FD

