

Proposed Safety Film Regulations in Western Germany

Back in the year 1939 Germany prepared a police regulation prescribing the exclusive use of safety film in theaters. This regulation was not put into effect due to the outbreak of the war. Since then nearly all the large manufacturers of raw film stock in the world have discontinued nitrate base and are manufacturing only safety base for 35mm film. On account of this, Western Germany is preparing a law which will prescribe the exclusive use of safety base and

which will eventually form the basis of material simplifications in the planning and construction of motion-picture theaters.

The law will take effect in three stages. Shortly after its publication, which is expected during the latter part of 1954, film laboratories will be permitted to process only safety stock. About three to six months after that, the safety stock will have to show identification marks in such a way and of such kind that proper identification is possible even by the layman. Thereafter several years may elapse before the final stage is reached toward which the law is aiming — that copies on safety stock only may be shown in theaters.

An essential element of the new regulations is the determination of what is considered an adequate identification mark in the sense of the law, which of course will also embody a proper definition of the term "safety base."

The definition closely follows that given in the well-known German Standard DIN 15551. For practical considerations the fixing of a definite nitrogen content is omitted as well as the prescription that the emulsion coating must be removed for the determination of ignition temperature and burning time. The reason for this is that in the case of many recent kinds of film, e.g. color films, the removal of the coating is almost impossible.

All film shall show the mark of the manufacturer along the edge of the film. In addition it will become a legal requirement that a special mark must be placed between the perforations at least every 250 mm. This is similar to the identification mark as adopted by the Eastman Kodak Co. In "Hazard in the Handling and Storage of Nitrate and Safety Motion-Picture Film," the statement is made: "Eastman 35mm black-and-white Safety Motion-Picture Positive Film now carries a lengthwise frame line mark after every fourth perforation located exactly between the perforations instead of at the extreme edge of the film. This is the only area on the film which is ordinarily not exposed in printing."

It is to be expected that, after the issue of the law, laboratories will be asked by the authorities to ensure that exposure of this area will be made impossible in printing practice. As identification marks are proposed: the letter S in regular repetition, "SS," "Nonflamm," or "Safety," the single letters of which would appear on consecutive areas between the perforations. Any other identification mark that might be adopted by some manufacturers to appear in the same areas of the film will probably require a special permit from the legal authorities.

Special consideration has been given to the question of coloring the base by a fluorescent substance or by another color. The use of a fluorescent substance is not favored by some manufacturers. Also the German authorities do not like it since it requires the use of special lamps. A faintly bluish coloring seems to be preferable as it will not interfere with the color of the print in projection and may be easily recognized by daylight or artificial light. It is intended that the use of such a bluish coloration as well as of fluorescent substances will be recommended to manufacturers but will not be made compulsory.

The new law is based on the assumption that DIN 15551 will shortly be issued in a new version which has already been prepared by the Fachnormenausschuss Kinotechnik FAKI and is available in draft form from Benth-Vertrieb, Berlin W 15, Uhlandstrasse 175.

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