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The opening of Berlin's new €2.5bn (£2bn) airport has been delayed by nine months following a dispute over fire safety regulations.

Berlin airport opening delayed after failing fire regulations

24 May 2012 | By [Declan Lynch](#)

The opening of Berlin Brandenburg Airport has had to be put back after Germany's Building Standards Authority refused to allow a "partially automated" fire protection and control system to be used in the 280,000m² main terminal building.

Airport operator Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg (FBB) was due to open the airport on 3 June, but this has been pushed back to 17 March 2013 to allow time for a fully automated fire protection system to be installed.



FBB has responded to the delay by sacking project manager Planungsgemeinschaft Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg International (PF BBI) and terminating the contract of its own managing director for operations and construction Manfred Kortgen.

PF BBI had proposed a "manmachine interface" which would involve hundreds of temporary workers who would sound alarms in the event of a fire.

But the German Building Standards Authority said this operation "will not be successful" and refused to allow the airport to operate until a fully automatic system was in operation.

Commissioning of the automated system will now take until December with the airport opening the following March.

Independent fire expert Fathi Tarada said the officials' decision seemed "somewhat harsh, but understandable".

"Germany suffered major fire in 1996 at Düsseldorf Airport which killed 17 people and injured 62," said Tarada. "German officials are keen that such incidents are never to be repeated."

Construction began on the airport in 2006. It will replace the German capital's existing Tegel and Schoenefeld airports.