

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT II

There has been a high incident of fires in commercial premises over the last twelve months or so.

Grenfell Tower, understandably, is the one that perhaps springs to mind. However more recently we have seen the Cameron House Hotel fire resulting in fatalities, there have also been other hotel fires, railway station fires, tower block fires and quite a high number of farm fires.

Legislation

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is the legislation that covers all commercial buildings in England and Wales. Scotland is covered by The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Both these areas of legislation put an obligation on every building that is used for commercial purposes to have a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) in place.

Aim

The aim of the legislation is simply to preserve humans from death and injury from fires by preventing fires or the incidents of fires and in the event of fires allowing for rapid and safe egress from the premises.

Commercial Premises

The legislation covers all buildings that are utilised for a commercial purpose or are used by members of the public. This covers a huge variety of building types including;

- Hotels, Bunk Houses, B&B's, Houses of Multiple Occupancy
- Offices, Shops
- Factories, warehouses
- Cafes, Pubs, Restaurants, Village Halls
- Farm Buildings, Animal Housing
- Fishing Huts, Caravan Sites, Churches

This list is not complete by any means and should not be treated as such. The legislation covers any property that is used for a business, is utilised by employees or is utilised by members of the public.

Who is Responsible

Under the legislation the person that is responsible for the employees or public is the Responsible Person (RP) (or Duty Holder (DH) in Scotland). That person can be either the manager, owner or a person appointed to a position that involves Fire Risk Management. For example, the general manager of a hotel is unlikely to be the fire warden but they can appoint a fire warden who is then the RP. The RP needs to have an understanding of what is required but it is common that the Risk Assessment is carried out by a third party with the assistance of the RP.

What to look for

A Fire Risk Assessment will firstly consider the potential causes of fire, what materials are likely to aid in the spread of a fire. The FRA will then consider the ways to mitigate a fire in the first instance and how to control one after it has started. In addition, an FRA will consider if all occupants have a safe and speedy way of exiting the building to a safe place in the event of a fire.

Next Steps ...

If you are the owner, manager, managing agent, or Responsible Person, check to make sure there is a documented FRA. If there is not then we would strongly recommend one is put in place. If there is make sure all items referenced in it have been addressed. Revisit it to make sure it takes into account new building work, new employees, new working practices etc. Make sure all fire

suppressant systems adequate and functioning. Make sure that all fire escape routes are clearly marked and unobstructed. And finally make sure everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire.

If you have any concerns or queries about what is required please feel free to contact me for a no obligation chat.