



FIRE REGULATIONS

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 brought new fire safety laws into force on 1st October 2006 and revoked former fire safety laws.

The new law applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales and includes charities and voluntary run organisations.

Northern Ireland and Scotland are to bring in their own laws.

The definition of premises includes any vessel and vehicle.

The main effect of the change is a move towards greater emphasis on fire prevention. Fire Certificates have been abolished and have ceased to have any legal status.

The laws require fire precautions to be put into place 'where necessary' and to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances of the case.

Responsibility for complying with the new laws will rest with the 'Responsible Person'. In the workplace this is the employer and any other person who may have control of any part of the premises eg. the occupier or owner. In all other premises the person or people in control of the premises will be responsible. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises, they must take reasonable steps to work together.

If you are the Responsible Person you must carry out a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment which must focus on the safety in case of fire of all 'relevant persons'. It should pay particular attention to those at special risk, eg. disabled people and children, and must include consideration of any dangerous substance likely to be on the premises eg. petrol, diesel.

The risk assessment must be reviewed by the Responsible Person regularly in order to be kept up to date. Regularly does not necessarily just mean annually, it may mean daily, weekly, monthly, depending upon the size and nature of the club and the possible hazards.

If you employ 5 or more people or your premises are licensed (under the Licensing Act 2003) or an alternations notice is in force, you must record the significant findings of the risk assessment.

The Responsible Persons must appoint one or more Competent Persons, depending on the size and use of the premises, to carry out any of the preventative and protective measures required by the Order (The Responsible Person may also act as the Competent Person). A Competent Person is someone with enough training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to be able to implement these measures appropriately.

Your club's existing fire safety arrangements may, as long as they have been kept up to date and met an equivalent standard of safety to the new law, be acceptable.

CONTACTS:

The Department for Communities has issued a series of guidelines which you can download or order by telephone as a priced publication. The first is 'A short guide to making your premises safe from fire'.

Guide 6 - Small and Medium Places of Assembly is a guide is for all employers, managers, occupiers, and owners of small (accommodating up to 60 people) and medium (accommodating up to 300 people) places of assembly including clubs. The link below will take you to the relevant area of the Depart for Communities website.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162110>

Guide 6 aims to provide recommendations and guidance for use when assessing the adequacy of fire precautions in clubs.

The Government has launched a one-stop shop to allow organisations and individuals to carry out their own fire safety assessment, namely the Fire Safety Gateway website, www.fire.gov.uk

For more information kindly contact the RYA Legal Department on 0845 3450373 or legal@rya.org.uk

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