

## Managing Fire Safety in Hotels and Guesthouses



### Are you Compliant with the Fire Safety Order?

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 brought in sweeping changes to fire safety in non-domestic premises. It imposed on owners and managers of buildings the responsibility ensure that the people and premises in their care have effective and appropriate fire safety management procedures in place, including an up to date fire risk assessment and any measures required within it implemented.

Hotels, inns and guesthouses are of particular interest to the Fire and Rescue Service because they are considered “high risk” due to the presence of occupants overnight, asleep. And it is the high risk premises where they are most likely to target their auditing campaigns. Even if you do not have sleeping guests, you must still have effective fire safety measures in place. If you get a false alarm, or have an incident, your fire risk assessment and premises will probably get audited anyway. Mostly, if they are not satisfied, they will give advice, or make recommendations which they will expect you to comply with; but if they find matters that are of enough concern they may give you very short notice to improve, or even prohibit you from using some or even all of your premises immediately. Failure to comply with these will result in prosecutions; and at around £5000 pre breach of the Fire Safety Order, this could prove devastating to your business.

### What do you need to do immediately?

Check that you have an up-to-date fire risk assessment. It must be, to use the legal term “suitable and sufficient”. If you have five or more employees it must be written down. If it is not written down you will still need to show you have a very good handle on fire safety. Your fire risk assessment must reflect and inform the fire safety arrangements you have in the building and you need to check that this is adequate. This will include an effective fire alarm system, adequate fire fighting equipment and suitable emergency lighting and signage, with evidence of regular routine tests and inspections.

Your fire alarm should be tested every week from a different call point, and this should be recorded in your fire log book,. The entire fire alarm should be tested fully every year and 50% of the system at the intervening 6 months interval by a competent technician. These are the inspection reports that you will keep in your fire logbook, as evidence of your attention to this important matter. The emergency lights should be flip-tested each month, and once for three hours duration every year. These tests too should be recorded in your fire log book. Portable fire fighting equipment requires servicing every year by a trained technician.

You need to ensure your premises is adequately compartmented by physical fire barriers, such as fire doors correctly located and safe escape routes that are fire resistant. If you employ staff you must train them in fire safety awareness.

### How does a busy hotel owner ensure that these tasks do not get overlooked or forgotten?

You need to have a good working relationship with a competent fire alarm company. In order to ensure they are competent you will be looking for the BAFE accreditation. This means that all their fire alarm operations are carried out to the controlling British Standard (BS 5839). As important as this, is it also vital that your fire alarms service provider is readily available to attend immediately to faults. If your fire alarm is giving problems, you will not want to wait several days for a technician to turn up.

### How we can Help

We will keep your details and inspection routines on our database and contact you when each service is due, to arrange a suitable appointment to come and carry out the work. We try, where possible to combine the extinguisher servicing with one or the other of the biannual fire alarms services as this will save you money. You do not have to remember. And if

you have an emergency day or night, you will get hold of someone who will send a technician with whatever urgency you require.

## What Services Do We Provide?

Our services include the following

- Fire Alarm System design
- Fire Alarm Installation and Maintenance
- Emergency Lighting Systems
- Fire Extinguisher Sales and Servicing
- Signage
- Hire of Fire Protection Equipment for Event Management
- Door access systems
- Door holder-closers
- Fire Awareness Training
- Fire Warden Training
- Responsible Person Training
- Gas simulated Live Fire training
- Passive Fire Protection
- Fire Risk Assessments
- 24hr Call Out Service 365 days cover



Fal Fire Protection was established in 1984 as a small family business. We are located in Penryn, and operate throughout the county. The staff has now grown to nine in number and we now have six vans on the road. We have invested heavily in training and accreditation.. We serve a wide variety of customers including Penwith and Devon and Cornwall Housing Associations, Coastline Housing and Falmouth Oil, as well as hundreds of small businesses spread across the county, many of them

hotels and guesthouses. We are an entirely independent company owned and run locally. Our company celebrated twenty five years in the fire protection industry in 2011. During this time, the industry has quite rightly, become increasingly regulated and we have been obliged to demonstrate our competence to the third party organisations. We are members of the Fire Protection Association, which is a trade association. We are accredited by BAFE to BAFE SP203 Part 1 Modular Scheme and we also are NICEIC accredited. In addition, we are audited members of SafeContractor and CHAS, which is the government-backed Health and Safety contractors scheme. We are approved installers for Aico smoke alarms and trained by Hilti to install their Passive Fire Protection products.

## What do the accreditations mean?

The BAFE SP203 Part 1 modular scheme is your assurance that we work to the requirements of the British Standard 5839, that governs the installation and maintenance of fire alarm systems. It is becoming the norm now for large procurement bodies, such as local councils, to make SP203 Modular Scheme a requirement to qualify to work for them and we are a pre-accredited business on the Cornwall Council list. There are four modules, Design, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance. Organisations can opt to be accredited in any or all of these. We are accredited in all of them. NICEIC accreditation means that annually we are inspected including a random site inspection, to ensure that our electrical work meets the standards of the applicable wiring regulations.



## How can we help you as a business to comply with the law?

Large or small, it is your legal obligation to have proper and adequate fire safety provisions in place. This requires time, research, knowledge and understanding. For many people the solution is to contract the tasks out to a third party. The hard part of this decision is how do you choose? How do you know that you are using a service provider who is competent, reliable and will provide you with advice that is measured, sufficient and not excessive or unnecessarily costly?

The BAFE accreditation and NICEIC approval tells you that we work to the BS. Of course it, doesn't tell you that we are reliable, conscientious, honest and available when you most need us. Only our reputation will tell you that. Our ethos is to provide only the highest quality service.



A fire is probably the most devastating event that could happen to your business. If you have forgotten to keep everything up to standard and something happens, it is something that will haunt your life for ever.

If you are interested in knowing more, call us for a chat.