



News and views from Fire & Security Consultancy Limited

# GOVERNMENT BOOST TO FIRE SAFETY

**UK fire safety has received another boost in the wake of the government's recent decision to make smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms mandatory in privately-rented accommodation.**

Fire Minister Penny Mordaunt has announced a £3m government fund for rolling out life-saving alarms in the private rented sector. The government fund will support the installation of 445,000 smoke alarms and 40,000 CO alarms across 46 fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales.

A survey by Honeywell recently revealed that only 36% of private renters are protected by carbon monoxide alarms and just 38% have carbon-monoxide emitting domestic appliances regularly serviced.

Landlords must ensure that smoke and CO alarms are installed in privately rented properties – on each floor – from October 2015.

The alarms must also be tested at the start of each tenancy. Failure to comply will land them in the civil courts.

**The measures could prevent up to 26 deaths and 670 injuries annually, according to government figures.**

"Having backed the campaign for mandatory carbon monoxide alarms, we strongly welcome the news that all UK private renters will soon benefit from crucial early warning of this silent killer," says Tim Jack, business development leader for Carbon Monoxide Alarms, Honeywell Analytics EMEA.

Barry Sheerman, Member of Parliament for Huddersfield and co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group: "This legislation has been a long time coming and while I'm pleased this

will be put into effect, we can't stop at just rental accommodation.

"Carbon monoxide poisoning is a great danger and I look forward to the day that all UK residents are protected by having detectors installed in their homes.

"This substantial shift in the Government's stance on domestic carbon monoxide protection could pave the way for a wider requirement for life-saving, fully-accredited carbon monoxide alarms to be fitted as standard in other accommodation types such as new homes and social housing..

"Rather than wait, we would urge all landlords and homeowner that do not already have a Kitemark-certified carbon monoxide alarm in their properties to contact a Gas Safe Registered tradesperson and have one fitted."

"This is very good news," says Gas Safety Trust chairman Chris Bielby. "The Gas Safety Trust has been working with Liverpool John Moores University and Fire and Rescue Services on a carbon monoxide research project which will understand low level carbon monoxide exposure.

"We have been lobbying government and making the case for government intervention to increase the alarm population, so we are delighted that this has been announced. Well done to all those who have been involved in the campaign for this change."

**Contact Fire And Security Consultancy Ltd for more information on domestic smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.**



Photo: Kiriide Alarms

## New rules for construction H&S

The new Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM 2015) came into force on 6 April 2015.

Whatever your role in construction, CDM 2015 aims to improve health and safety in the industry by helping you to:

- sensibly plan the work so the risks involved are managed from start to finish
- have the right people for the right job at the right time
- cooperate and coordinate your work with others
- have the right information about the risks and how they are being managed
- communicate this information effectively to those who need to know
- consult and engage with workers about the risks and how they are being managed

More information is available from: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)



Photo: billjacabus1 (Flickr)

# Is your organisation facing up to the risks of E-cigarettes?



**With the increased popularity of the E cigarette there are many aspects to consider whether your organisation permits or prohibits their use.**

The smoking ban has now been in force since July 2007 and the E cigarette has been gaining popularity ever since. Many have concerns over the unregulated design and manufacture of the multitude of electronic nicotine delivery systems available. These concerns are both health and safety related.

Due to the unregulated nature 'safety issues' have been attributed to the start of over 100 fires caused by the E cigarette charging equipment, some organisations now prohibit the use of charging via USB computer ports.

The Health and Safety Signs Association have been working to develop standardised graphical symbol for the E cigarette. With the objective of creating a harmonious signing system which gives clear instruction of an organisations E cigarette policy.

## Some points to consider:

- Does the E cigarette fit with your corporate image?
- Does it look professional to have employees using these devices in the general work place, or do you have you designated a specific area for this activity?
- Are you comfortable with the fire risk attributed with the charging of these devices?
- What are the health risks?
- Whatever stance you decide to take the HSSA has standardised the following graphical symbol(s) to provide sign manufacturers and designers with a unified approach to electronic cigarette policy:



**Safe Condition:**  
Electronic cigarettes permitted.



**Prohibition:**  
Electronic cigarettes prohibited.



Jalite, the world leader in photoluminescent technology, has incorporated the HSSA standardised graphical symbol to produce these products.

These signs are designed to help you instruct and inform employees / visitors of your electronic cigarette policy. With the added benefit of Jalite AAA photoluminescent material these signs are visible in both normal and power-loss (blackout) situations, so you can rest assured the safety message is always clear with Jalite.

For more information contact Jalite at: [www.jalite.com](http://www.jalite.com)  
or The Health and Safety Signs Association at: [www.hssa.co.uk](http://www.hssa.co.uk)

## One in four European businesses are jeopardising employee safety because of poorly maintained fire systems, a study has found.

In a survey of European fire equipment installers conducted by Hochiki Europe it was also revealed that one third (33%) of customers do not have an up-to-date fire detection record on site in accordance with the law.

However, 86% of customers from across the continent said they appreciated flexible, open protocol systems, which make integration and upgrading of new components easier.

"It is crucial that businesses do not fall short when it comes to the assessment and maintenance of safety provision, which is designed to protect employees and prevent accidents that may

not be legislated for," says Mark Smith, UK sales manager at Hochiki Europe, which has manufactured life-safety solutions for nearly a century.

"We've partnered with skilled installers to determine where businesses can be better supported and developed a simple online tool which directs them to solutions that promote efficiency and optimum safety in accordance with the very latest regulations."

Businesses can assess the performance and compliance of their existing fire safety equipment through Hochiki Europe's online tool, which also provides guidance on boosting performance.

For the online tool go to: [www.hochikieurope.com](http://www.hochikieurope.com)

# Financial incentive to fit fire sprinklers

**The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) is calling upon the Government to provide an incentive for businesses to install fire sprinklers, by introducing a reduction in stamp duty in new or renovated commercial properties that are fitted with sprinklers.**

The move has been proposed as part of the Local Government Association (LGA) and CFOA's document: 'The Fire and Rescue Service: Making our nation safer', which lays out a number of challenges to a new Government and includes detailed policy proposals to be implemented within the first 100 days of the new parliament, along with their financial benefits.

With fire and rescue services across the country taking part in Fire Sprinkler Week (16-22 March) the benefits that fitting automatic fire sprinkler systems can provide to businesses and educational establishments, in helping to achieve business continuity, will be highlighted. The benefits to business, education, and the economy from initiatives to encourage the fitting of



sprinklers are manifold, not only in protecting valuable commercial and community assets, but in reducing the impact a fire can have on the wider supply chain. Many businesses do not recover after a major fire, and this can affect not only the company itself, but its employees, customers and suppliers.

The cost of business fires is around £1.29 billion a year, so even a small reduction of 1.5 percent of the £2.9 billion annual stamp duty collected from commercial premises would more than meet the cost of installing sprinklers in the 8,000 businesses that caught fire in 2012/13.1

The CFOA and LGA proposals estimate that a reduction in Stamp Duty would save the public purse £32 million, with a potential benefit to the UK economy of between £59 and £211 million. A copy of the document with cost breakdowns and outcomes of the proposals can be found on the CFOA or LGA websites.

In addition to the LGA, CFOA is working with the British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA), the Business Sprinkler Alliance (BSA), the National Fire Sprinkler Network (NFSN), and the Fire Protection Association (FPA) to promote sprinkler benefits.

## Fires have a devastating effect on businesses. Research commissioned by the Business Sprinkler Alliance has shown that there are, on average, 621 fires in warehouses each year.

These fires have economic, social and environmental costs for the country as well as UK businesses.

Published guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) recommends that warehouses in England and Wales should be provided with a fire sprinkler system or equivalent fire prevention mechanism if they are larger than 20,000m<sup>2</sup>.

By comparison, in the majority of EU countries fire sprinklers must be installed in commercial and industrial properties with an average floor space one tenth of that size – for example 1,800m<sup>2</sup> in Austria, 5,000m<sup>2</sup> in Belgium, 2,000m<sup>2</sup>-5,000m<sup>2</sup> (dependent upon fire load) in Denmark, 3,000m<sup>2</sup> in France, 2,000m<sup>2</sup> in Spain, 1,800m<sup>2</sup> in Germany, 1,000m<sup>2</sup> in the Netherlands and 800m<sup>2</sup> in Norway.

The reality is that across Europe and in competitor economies current regulation and guidance levels mean that these markets are far better prepared and able to recover from fires that threaten their businesses and their economies. In short, businesses in these countries are regulated in a way that encourages physical resilience.

UK businesses must abandon the commonly-held belief that fires will not happen in their premises, while the government needs to reconsider the current UK warehouse size regulations for fire sprinkler installation.

### Compelling case

Recent research by BRE Global and the Centre for Economics and Business Research found that over the lifetime of a warehouse larger than 2,000m<sup>2</sup> – around half a football pitch in size – the whole life costs were on average 3.7 times lower in warehouses with fire sprinklers installed.

If all warehouses above 2,000m<sup>2</sup> were fitted with fire sprinklers the

annual saving to businesses in England could be up to £210m – providing a compelling case for the installation of fire sprinklers in warehouses.

Such action would also enhance productivity by £190m and save up to five thousand jobs needlessly lost each year because of fires in warehouses.

Yet still only 67% of warehouses large than 10,000m<sup>2</sup> and 20% of warehouse between 2,000 and 10,000m<sup>2</sup> in England and Wales are protected from fire with sprinklers.

This situation is a consequence of a number of factors – notably a lack of understanding of the benefits of sprinklers among those that design and build commercial buildings and those that occupy them.

This is compounded by a complex design and build process involving numerous parties. This can often result in alternative fire protection solutions which protect lives in the event of a fire, but do not effectively protect the property and its contents.

These facts lead us to conclude that regulatory change would benefit both businesses and the national finances.

The fire safety provisions of the building regulations are due to be reviewed this year.

We therefore hope that the Government and its advisers will review this new research alongside the broader considerations when taking its decision.

Ultimately though, UK Plc needs to promote a better understanding of the importance of fire resilience in business. Better understanding of this critical component of commercial success will create a cultural change and in the future we hope people do not ask why they should install sprinklers, but instead embrace it as a new and beneficial norm.

More information is available from the Business Sprinkler Alliance at [www.business-sprinkler-alliance.org](http://www.business-sprinkler-alliance.org)