



News and views from Fire & Security Consultancy Limited



**Employers and organisations should not just rely on the building plan and layout design when preparing an evacuation plan. This important document needs to be tailored to the specific requirements of the workforce.**

The introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places the onus on employers or organisations to ensure that everyone, including those at additional risk, such as the disabled, vulnerable and the mobility impaired, can evacuate safely in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation.

A fire risk assessment needs to be conducted to identify any potential hazards. Once the issues have been identified, the next step will be to source the appropriate solution to accommodate the building its residents. The responsible person will need professional advice to establish what is required, this will involve a site survey and evaluating each floor in order to determine the most suitable equipment; the rationale for each floor being evaluated is to avoid the operators having to make repeat journeys reusing the same piece of equipment over an excessive distance and re-entering the building. Complex buildings such as heritage or ex domestic will need special consideration due to building restrictions that could impede safe and timely evacuation. When considering evacuation equipment, staffing levels and the operators ability to use correctly must be taken into account, for example the staffing level in a care home can vary during the day and night time - night time being when there is less staff, with this in mind, the evacuation procedure must be able to function at all times and cannot endanger the residents.

In order to comply with legislation, a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) or general emergency evacuation plan (GEEP) needs to be devised by the responsible person.

A PEEP is tailor-made to secure the safety of a specific person in the event of an emergency evacuation and must be drawn up with the individual so that the method of evacuation can be agreed. The PEEP will detail the escape routes, and identify the people who will assist in carrying out the evacuation and training.

The plan should be regularly tested during evacuation drills to ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures and are competent as well as capable of using any evacuation equipment. A copy of the relevant PEEP should be distributed to everyone involved and be filed accordingly.

In buildings used by the general public or places of work with a transient workforce, a GEEP is required. These are focused on visitors to a building who have a disability or mobility impairment and may not be able to evacuate a building unaided. They help the individual become familiar with the building layout, evacuation procedures and the equipment. The designated responsible person needs to ensure there are adequate procedures, staffing and equipment in place to facilitate everyone's prompt and safe egress.

When devising an emergency evacuation plan in a public access building, where mobility impaired or disabled people have access, a PEEP would not be sufficient. The responsible person would need to devise a GEEP this will cover the same points that are outlined in a PEEP, but needs to be as practical and robust in order to accommodate everybody; essentially ensuring you are prepared for any eventuality.

**Below is a checklist of all the areas that need to be covered when compiling a PEEP/GEEP**

**PEEP**

1. Identify all persons that may require assistance, which includes people who are temporarily impaired
2. Ensure all evacuation procedures are made visible with notices for those that may require assistance
3. Regular drills and a system to test methods should be implemented; the person to be evacuated must also be informed so they are aware of their involvement and when it will be required
4. All class 1 medical devices need to be maintained on a regular basis

5. Ensure the PEEP is developed with the person who will need assistance during an evacuation and those assisting
6. All PEEPs will need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still current and suitable (a person's situation may change or a building layout may alter)
7. The PEEP needs to be recorded and filed accordingly

**GEEP**

1. A GEEP needs to be in place for all visitors to a public building
  2. Ensure all evacuation procedures are made visible with notices for those that may require assistance
  3. Ensure everyone involved with assisting receives adequate training and is provided with the relevant information on the building lay out; it is also essential that these people have an understanding of equality and disability awareness.
  4. Regular drills and a system to test methods should be implemented
  5. All class 1 medical devices need to be maintained on a regular basis
- All GEEPs will need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still current and suitable (a person's situation may change or a building layout may alter)

**The Health & Safety At Work Act 1974 (also referred to as HSWA, the HSW Act, the 1974 Act or HASAWA) is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in the UK. To comply all members of staff who would be expected to use evacuation equipment i.e. an Evac+Chair must have documented training and certification to demonstrate competency in their ability to use the chair. Training methods such as e-learning or watching a DVD in the use of complex pieces of equipment may well be found to be inadequate due to the physical nature of the product which requires hands on experience and training. Failure to ensure adequate staff training could result in criminal and civil charges against the responsible person. Similar to First Aid training, it is recommended that evacuation training be updated, a minimum, every 3 years.**

**See more from Evac+Chair International**

# Lack of European Grade A space causes Grade C fire and lighting safety

Research from Hochiki Europe reveals over half (56 per cent) of European businesses are risking the safety of building occupants by failing to adjust security systems in accordance with change in use of space.

With demand for Grade A office space outstripping supply in many major cities, organisations are investing in fit outs and refurbishments to accommodate evolving needs but neglecting to alter fire and lighting safety systems to support this.

## Top five fire system issues:

1. Inadequate log book records (60%)
2. Change of room use without correct system update (56%)
3. Detectors need cleaning (51%)
4. The original installer didn't install the best system for the environment (48%)
5. Detectors need replacing (34%)

Carried out by the leading designer and manufacturer of life safety systems, the study of installers also found that 55 per cent feel their customers are more concerned with initial expenditure than Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) which could compromise performance long-term.

Simon Massey, Section Leader Technical Support/Training at Hochiki Europe, explained: "While the construction industry works to meet a surge in demand for Grade A space in European cities such as London and Milan, businesses are understandably working with what they've got to accommodate their growth.

"However, fire and lighting safety solutions are installed with the current use of space in mind so to disregard this when altering layout or function is a potentially fatal oversight."

The study also highlighted maintenance spend as an area for concern. A fifth (22%) of installers surveyed think building

managers view maintenance as an unnecessary expense. While almost three quarters (74%) believe that they view maintenance as simply a 'tick-box' exercise.

## Top five emergency lighting issues:

1. Inadequate log book records (57%)
2. Batteries are not charged in emergency lighting units (57%)
3. Emergency exits blocked (44%)
4. Inadequate lighting lux levels (44%)
5. Inadequate emergency exit signage (43%)

When asked about the issues they most commonly encounter, installers said many were due to poor installation choices and poor maintenance practices. For example, when looking at fire systems, almost half (48%) of installers found businesses had the wrong system installed for the environment, while 51% found detectors that needed cleaning. For emergency lighting systems, the situation was similar, 57% found batteries in the units were not charged, while over two fifths (44%) had inadequate lux levels.

Massey commented on the findings: "With European GDP set to rise by 1.7 per cent this year alone, it's likely that many businesses will be forced to continue adapting with what they have but this shouldn't be to the detriment of overall safety.

"Raising awareness of this issue, as well as overall maintenance, is reaching a critical point and it's the responsibility of industry members to support businesses in regularly reviewing the status of their safety system to secure whatever form their building takes."

To combat the issues highlighted in the survey, Hochiki Europe has created a guide to simplify emergency lighting and fire safety installation and maintenance.

To download these guides, please visit [www.hochikieurope.com](http://www.hochikieurope.com)

## ASFP launches new website

The Association for Specialist Fire Protection (ASFP) has launched a new website which features a contemporary design and improved navigation, aimed at improving the visitor experience to ensure they find the passive fire protection advice and information they need.

The newly updated site uses clear labelling to ensure that the visitor can quickly access the information they are looking for, whether this is the ASFP's extensive range of free to download guidance documents and videos, access to events and training information, or news of ASFP and member activities.

The ASFP publications and video libraries offer in depth technical

information with regard to built-in passive fire protection.

Meanwhile, members can access a wealth of documents and meeting minutes through the extensive members' area.

The site's news section offers updates on all of the ASFP's activities, as well as access to the ASFP e-bulletin which provides news from the Association and its members, while available seminars and training courses are detailed in the events section.

Visitors looking for tailored passive fire protection advice or wishing to locate an appropriate product or specialist contractor for their project can use the site's member search facility to find the right product or contractor.

The new dynamic site can be viewed just as easily on mobile phones and tablets, allowing visitors to access information when on the move.

Marking the launch of the new site, ASFP CEO Wilf Butcher declared:

'Modern websites must offer a wide range of services to visitors, while at the same time ensuring they can find what they are looking for with ease, whether in the office or on the move.

'The ASFP's new website offers a fresh design and improved navigation tools to help you to locate quickly exactly what you need. It provides easy access to an extensive range of passive fire protection guidance and technical guidance for visitors and members alike and I urge you to explore it.' To access the site go to [www.asfp.org.uk](http://www.asfp.org.uk)



# Building guidance confounds fire sector experts

**The Fire Sector Federation (FSF) and Construction Industry Council (CIC) are calling for change to Building Regulations Guidance due to complex and inconsistent language, which has left even fire sector experts confused.**

So obscure is the language used in the current Building Regulations and its Guidance in Approved Document B, it has kept the experts from these two organisations confused for almost a decade.

The revelations come from a study by the Fire Sector Federation which found:

- 92% of FSF members indicate a need to make changes to Building Regulations and Approved Document B
- More than half of the Construction Industry Council find the Guidance in Approved Document B difficult to use
- 100% agreed the need to address inconsistencies in building definitions

The study was led by the FSF's Built Environment Issues and Affairs Workstream which surveyed Federation and CIC membership – which ranges from chartered associations to trade unions, building architects, engineers and building control officers to the UK's fire and rescue services – on issues pertaining to clarity of wording, user-friendliness, adaptation to construction trends and the incorporation of factors other than life safety, on which the Building Regulations and its Guidance in Approved Document B's scope is based.

The findings reveal both the FSF and CIC believe issues with definitions, clarity of wording, adaptation to construction trends and its scope in the Guidance in Approved Document B should be addressed. The FSF is of a collective opinion a significant attitude change to fire safety is needed whereby proper assessment of construction products and methods, the consideration of credible research and mandatory accreditation must be urgently pursued.

Celestine Cheong, Chair of the Built Environment Issues and Affairs Workstream, said: "The Federation is founded on acceptance that fire safety in the UK is far wider than the Fire and Rescue Service alone because emergency firefighting is a measure implemented when safety features and protection has failed, and we need to remove this eventuality as much as possible.

"We understand the pressures on Government and we would like to help resolve issues pertaining to fire. Having identified areas in this study such as the research underpinning the Guidance being out of date, complex wording and the Guidance's limited applied scope, we wish to work with Government to develop further opinion on an agreed frequency of updates, idea generation with relevant stakeholders for improved clarity of text, and to develop opportunities to minimise risks and impacts from fire to property, the wider built and other environments."

Graham Watts OBE, Chief Executive of the Construction Industry Council, said: "As best practice and new technology evolves, it

is essential that Building Regulations and Guidance Documents are aligned with these new developments, that they are clear in their meaning and easy to use. This necessitates a regular need for review to ensure relevance. A review of Approved Document B is long overdue. I welcome the findings of this study in drawing attention to problems that are challenging FSF and CIC members and may be compromising fire safety in our built environment."

Mark Shepherd, Manager, General Insurance, Association of British Insurers (ABI), said: "The Guidance in Approved Document B should promote a risk-based approach to fire safety and recognise the inter-relationship between fire safety, arson and security in buildings, and the impact of fire on communities. It is time that fire safety design guidance considers all pertinent risk factors including social, economic and environmental factors such as proximity to, and use of neighbouring buildings, local rates of fire and arson, and levels of deprivation."

Paul Overall, Chief Executive of the Local Authority Building Control, said: "The Approved Documents provide essential guidance as to how to comply with the Building Regulations in England and Wales. As such, it is vitally important that the advice in them is clear and unambiguous, and that they reflect changes in construction practice. It is some time since Approved Document B was updated, and I welcome this survey of CIC members which shows how necessary a review now is."

Key observations from the Federation's surveys on Building Regulations and Approved Document B:

- Over 92% of FSF members indicate a need to make changes to the Building Regulations and Approved Document B.
- 100% of FSF members agreed the need to address the inconsistencies in building definitions.
- Over 88% of FSF members agree the Approved Document B is not adapted to suit the trends used in today's construction methods, design and usage, in comparison to 42.3% of CIC who do agree it is flexible – the majority (69%) of FSF members agree the research underpinning the Guidance in Approved Document B is out of date.
- Both FSF and CIC members indicated the need for greater understanding, clarity and ease of use where the text in the Building Regulations and Guidance in Approved Document B is concerned.
- The FSF survey gave rise to a need to further understand specifics involving clarity of text – for example, how to identify and formulate definitions.

- 82% of FSF members indicated the scope of Approved Document B should be considered beyond "life safety" whereas 54% of CIC members said "life safety" is sufficient.

- 90% of FSF members said third party accreditation should be mandatory instead of voluntary.

- 43% of CIC members and 75% of FSF members think the Fire and Rescue Service should have the final decision over B5 compliance (access and facilities for Fire and Rescue Services).

- The Building Regulations and Approved Document B does not reflect modern building design and usage.

Research in 2005 from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) showed that by including requirements for fire safety management in Approved Document B, a net saving to society of up to £1 billion over 25 years through reduced incidence and severity of fires, could be realised.

The last available and recognised figure for the economic cost of fire was in 2008 when fire cost the UK £8.3 billion per year. Latest figures reveal the British economy lost £1 billion in GDP and 5,000 jobs during the years 2010-2014 to preventable commercial warehouse fires alone. The cost of fire to the UK is steeply rising despite fewer fire deaths recorded annually.

The Building Regulations and its Guidance in Approved Document B have not undergone an in-depth review since 2006. The most frequently reviewed Guidance documents are Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part Q (security), which are reviewed every two years.

Following a series of high profile social housing fires in recent years, and responding to the destruction of homes in Canterbury, Kent, in July this year, Canterbury and Whitstable MP, Julian Brazier, said: "My concern is that, at a time when building regulations are more prescriptive than ever on issues like energy saving, the basic requirement to make the building resilient to fire appears to have been lost sight of."

The coroner involved with the Lakeland House fire in 2013 had also made recommendations for a review of the Guidance in Approved Document B under Rule 43 of the Coroners' Rules. This is where evidence had given rise to a concern that circumstances creating a risk of other deaths will occur, or will continue to exist, in the future.

# Christmas Retail Fire Safety Advice

Christmas is one of the busiest times of year for the retail industry and in order to ensure maximum sales some retailers will fill every available space with merchandise.

This can mean that escape routes and fire exits that normally are empty become a fire hazard area full of extra Christmas stock.

We remind shop owners that fire risk assessments are a legal requirement for all businesses (even one-person operations) and must be completed for every shop location. This aids fire prevention by identifying and taking remedial action against any significant findings, the risk of fire is reduced and therefore reduces the risk to your staff, visitors and business assets.

## When was your last shop fire risk assessment carried out?

Stockroom safety, fire precautions, escape routes, slip and trip hazards, ladder and kick stools, waste storage are among the items that need to come under your scrutiny.

If you employ five or more people you must record the significant findings of the assessment. It is not difficult and you do not need to buy external advice to help you with it. You know your business better than anyone else.

Once a fire risk assessment has been conducted, it is necessary to review it on a regular basis – ideally annually. If a shop has had a recent refit, this may have impacted on your fire safety measurements.

## Poor storage practices

Many fires occur from poor storage practice, particularly when close to sources of heat.

- Do not store combustible materials close to gas or electric heaters or boilers, light fittings or other heat generating equipment.
- Avoid using portable heaters with naked flames or hot radiant surfaces, fan heaters and fluid-filled radiators.

## BS 9991:2015 Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings. Code of practice

A fully revised version of BS 9991 for fire safety for residential buildings is now available. BS 9991:2015 features a major technical revision and presents a general update to take into account new and revised standards published since its last publication, in 2011.

It provides guidance on how buildings can be used, designed and managed to achieve reasonable standards of fire safety for people in and around them.

### BS 9991:2015 is essential for:

- Architects
- Fire safety engineers
- Fire and rescue services
- Fire risk assessors
- Building control officers
- Certification and installation scheme inspectors
- Owners and managers of specialized housing and buildings containing flats or maisonettes.

# ...and finally

The team here at Fire and Security Consultancy Limited would like to wish you a very merry Christmas and a prosperous, healthy and safe 2016. As is our tradition we leave you with the best (?!!) of the Christmas cracker jokes for this year....enjoy, or endure!

## What do vampires sing on New Year's Eve?

Auld Fang Syne

## Why did Santa's helper see the doctor?

Because he had a low "elf" esteem!

## What happened to the man who stole an Advent Calendar?

He got 25 days!

## What kind of motorbike does Santa ride?

A Holly Davidson!

## What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?

A Christmas Quacker!

## What is the best Christmas present in the world?

A broken drum, you just can't beat it!

## How did Scrooge win the football game?

The ghost of Christmas passed!

## Who delivers presents to baby sharks at Christmas?

Santa Jaws

## Who is Santa's favorite singer?

Elf-is Presley!

## What do Santa's little helpers learn at school?

The elf-abet!

## What did Santa say to the smoker?

Please don't smoke, it's bad for my elf!

## What do reindeer hang on their Christmas trees?

Horn-aments!

## Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?

They always drop their needles!

## Did Rudolph go to school?

No. He was Elf-taught!

## Why did the turkey join the band?

Because it had the drumsticks!

## What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite!

## What do snowmen wear on their heads?

Ice caps!

## How do snowmen get around?

They ride an icicle!

## What song do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?

Freeze a jolly good fellow!

## How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas?

One that's deep pan, crisp and even!

## Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?

A mince spy!

## What do you call a cat in the desert?

Sandy Claws!

## What does Santa do with fat elves?

He sends them to an Elf Farm!

