

REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) came into force in October 2006 and replaced numerous pieces of fire safety legislation. Businesses previously relied upon fire certificates from the local fire authority: any existing fire certificates now do not have any legal status and it is the responsibility of the 'responsible person' to manage any fire risk in your premises.

To whom does this apply?

The 'responsible person' is anyone who has control over the premises: this could be the employer, the occupier or owner of businesses or premises, such as offices, shops, care homes, hospitals, community halls, pubs, clubs, restaurants, hotels, schools, factories, etc. The RRO does not include people's private homes or flats.

How do I go about complying?

If you are the 'responsible person' you must carry out a fire risk assessment to ensure that everyone on the premises can escape safely in the case of a fire, paying particular attention to those who have a disability, who may need assistance.

What is a fire risk assessment?

A fire risk assessment is an evaluation of the property taking into account the use of the building. This can be carried out by the 'responsible person'; however, the 'responsible person' may not feel that they are competent to undertake the assessment and will seek to appoint a person who is competent and in certain instances has specialist knowledge. This does not remove any responsibility from the 'responsible person'.

Who is a competent person?

This is a person who has had sufficient training and knowledge to assess and comment upon the standard of the building and its operation against the articles within the RRO.

How often should I carry out a risk assessment?

The document should be reviewed regularly and kept up to date, as the risks can alter. If the property is extended or altered, an assessment has to be made of the area affected.

What happens if I do not comply?

The risk is yours: the fire authority can still enter your property and request to see your assessment. If you do not have one in place or you have chosen to ignore or not update the document, then the penalties can be significant. The fire authority can issue a notice preventing the whole or part of the premises from being used. This can result in a £5,000 fine for each area found to be neglected, enforced through the magistrates' court, or in the worst case scenario, a two year prison sentence. Can you afford not to comply?

Who to contact?

If you would like any further information or require a no obligation quotation for a fire risk assessment, please contact us via building@pinders.co.uk