

## **Fire Safety Law**

Law dating from 2005 requires **Fire Risk Assessments** to be carried out by people in control of

- Work places
- The common parts of buildings containing two or more residential properties. Common parts will include, for example, staircases, landings, corridors and any rooms which are shared by occupants of the buildings.

Since 2005, more detailed requirements have become law, most recently in the Building Safety Act which was passed in 2022, and became effective earlier this year.

Fire Risk Assessments must now be **recorded**.

Where there is a multi-occupancy building, all separate people in control of work place or residential common parts within it, need to inform each other of their contact details, and **share** any relevant **information** in an accessible form. All Fire Risk Assessments and procedures in the building must be consistent and complementary to ensure fire safety in the building as a whole.

In the case of **common parts of residential properties**, residents in the separate dwellings must be given adequate information about the fire risks, the fire safety measures in place, such as fire escapes, fire extinguishers and procedures generally. Notices must be displayed appropriately e.g. instructions to keep fire doors closed. Residents must also be notified of the people in charge of the Fire Risk Assessments and the fire safety measures.

Those responsible for fire safety in **small buildings** may need to tailor the risk assessment to the type of premises concerned as some will have a lower level of risk than others.

For example, maisonettes may need a simpler assessment covering only the structure of the building, unless there are issues of cladding or balconies or other additional risk. Also if there is no internal fire escape, there will of course be no responsibility for keeping it safe.

Common **fire hazards** that may need to feature in risk assessments relate to electrical equipment, smoking, easy access for unauthorised persons (and hence risk of arson), uncleared rubbish.

**Fire safety measures** will need to be set out including details of fire escapes and fire doors. Such installations will also need to be regularly maintained.

It will also be necessary to make sure that adequate **information** is given to residents and regularly updated.

**Those selling flats** will need to ensure that they provide their purchasers with a Fire Risk Assessment complying with recent law, as well as the usual information about rent, service charge, insurance and so on. Those in larger blocks of flats will often find that a commercial management company or managing agent will take care of these requirements. Those in smaller buildings where perhaps the residents themselves have their own management company and the residence are themselves the directors, will need to manage this themselves. The Government guidance mentioned below will assist those people or they can of course instruct professional fire safety organisations to assist.

**Further legislation** has been passed in **2023** and now all **businesses** will need to put the new arrangements in place, however many employees they have and whatever type of business they were. In other words, the previous exceptions to the rules no longer apply.

For further information, gov.uk has a number of guidance leaflets on various topics surrounding fire safety and the recent legislation. Please of course also feel free to speak to us at Alison Fielden & Co, The Gatehouse, Dollar Street, Cirencester, GL7 2AN. Phone Number: 01285 653 261.