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Chief Fire Officers
Association



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CFOA: The Chief Fire Officers Association

The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) was established in 1941 and has become the professional voice of the UK fire and rescue service (UK FRS). The membership and professional partnerships of the CFOA are wide and varied, encompassing senior management, subject experts and those involved in service delivery at fire and rescue services across the UK. It can count every fire and rescue service in the UK amongst its professional partners.

Members are supported to fulfil their leadership role in protecting local communities and making life safer through improved service delivery. The CFOA provides professional advice to inform government policy and is committed to developing strategic and technical guidance with services all over the UK.

In all of its activities, the Association works to achieve four aims which shape its direction. These are:

- To lead and influence the direction of the UK FRS on professional, managerial and leadership issues.
- To be the focal point for professional advice that drives and contributes to the development of policy impacting on the UK FRS.

- Effectively communicate views and priorities.
- Support members to achieve both individual and collective improvement.

As a registered charity, the association aims to reduce the loss of life, personal injury and damage to property and the environment by improving the quality of firefighting, rescue, fire protection and prevention in the UK.

This happens through the provision of advice, information, leadership, research, informed comment and other services to relevant bodies, and to the Association's own members.

Through the work of the Association, the promotion of efficiency of the UK FRS to the benefit of the public and all communities continues to increase.

The CFOA is supported by a small team in Tamworth who assist the directors, presidential team and membership. It became a limited company in 1998 and followed this a year later by becoming a charity.

There are ten Directors at the CFOA, including a three-person presidential team with four Strategic Directorates, each headed by a Director.

Each directorate encompasses a number

of standing committees or working groups, lead officers for particular references and a number of task and finish groups. Portfolios cover operations response, prevention, protection and road safety, people and organisational development, and corporate services and sector improvement.

Each member of the Association belongs to one of 11 regions, which follow the boundaries of the former regional development agencies.

These regions provide important opportunities for local working, while at local level, members of the Association have regional and independent representatives who sit on the Members Sounding Board (MSB), which acts as a sub-group of the main CFOA board.

All aspects of governance, business organisation and business process constantly adapt, as the Association meets challenges that continue to change.

As with many associations, the CFOA's work is wide and varied, from initiatives on furniture fire safety, to work with children and young people. The Association is currently involved in waste management and recycling fires, unwanted fire signals and flooding.

FIRE DO NOT CROSS

HEADLINES LIKE THESE...

...ARE BECOMING ALL TOO FAMILIAR
DON'T GAMBLE WITH YOUR FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT!

A London hotel has had to pay more than £260,000 in fines and costs in what is believed to be the first jury trial of a case under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The former owners of a Wolverhampton Hotel have been fined almost £44,000 following 11 breaches of fire safety

Insufficient provision of fire detectors and alarms at the premises

"We will continue to take robust action through the legal system against those landlords that do not take their responsibilities seriously"

A landlord has been jailed for four months and ordered to pay £10,000 costs after pleading guilty to three offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

**FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION IS NOW BEING SERIOUSLY ENFORCED
TO ENSURE THAT PROPERTY OWNERS MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS
TO PROTECT STAFF, CUSTOMERS AND PREMISES**

Adequate Fire Protection starts with a comprehensive and competent fire risk assessment. property owners can be sure that the provider that they use meets appropriate standards.

That's why BAFE has developed a new scheme for the certification of companies who provide fire risk assessment services.

BAFE scheme 'Life Safety Fire Risk Assessment' (SP205) ensures that UKAS accredited certification bodies can assess staff and procedures, so that

BAFE is the independent registration body for third party certified fire protection companies, which ensures quality for the fire protection industry and provides the vital reassurance that the services being bought or specified are effective and reliable.

Don't leave everything to chance.
Make sure that your suppliers are registered with BAFE at WWW.BAFE.ORG.UK

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HELPING YOU TO MEET YOUR FIRE PROTECTION OBLIGATIONS

It is a legal requirement that all premises have a full and competent Fire Risk Assessment and then implement the fire protection requirements. The 'responsible person' has the duty to ensure that they have carried out these obligations – but how can they be sure that they have used competent contractors?

There have been a number of fire incidents in care homes and many other business and public establishments which means that the pressure on owners to maintain competent fire protection is ever greater. The Fire and Rescue Services are often asked for advice about where organisations can go to get competent providers.

Under legislation across the UK, it is a requirement to have an adequate and competent fire risk assessment and to ensure that fire protection meets these requirements.

BAFE has developed a scheme for companies who carry out Fire Risk Assessments (SP205) which is a vital part of meeting the 'responsible person' obligations under fire legislation. Providers are rapidly recognising the value of this scheme and gaining certification. After a number of fatal fires, such as the one at Rosepark Care home in Scotland, there is now specific and, in Northern Ireland, mandatory requirements for fire protection in care homes across the UK. The Fire Risk Assessment is where fire protection starts, so companies need to ensure that it is provided by a competent company with skilled assessors.

There has been multiple prosecutions all available to view on the CFOA (Chief Fire Officers Association) website. A large amount of these include the breaching of Article 9 (1) of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:

'The responsible person must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions he needs to take to comply

with the requirements and prohibitions imposed on him by or under this Order.'

BAFE is the independent, third party certification, registration body for the fire protection industry - founded over 30 years ago with a wide range of industry bodies represented on our Council. We develop schemes for UKAS accredited certification bodies to assess and approve companies to recognised standards. Each company has to undergo a full assessment based on the requirements of each scheme, including their technical and quality procedures and are then reassessed annually. There are now over 1000 BAFE registered companies with more than 1200 registrations across the UK. Our aim is to support property owners and specifiers to ensure that they get quality fire protection for their premises, staff and service users.

If you are specifying the supply and maintenance of portable extinguishers, look for companies accredited to BAFE Schemes SP101/ST104. Companies are certificated to ISO9001 and all technicians are assessed by BAFE with over 1250 assessed and fully up to date with their training requirements. For design, installing or maintaining fire alarm systems Companies should hold BAFE modular SP203-1 scheme approval. There are over 800 companies registered to the SP203 scheme, all receiving annual third party certification audits. Our modular Emergency Lighting scheme, SP203-4, sets out the standards and staff competence criteria to be met. There are a range of other schemes for different fire protection requirements.

To be sure you are getting your fire protection from companies who are properly assessed. Search FREE for providers in your area on our website

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CFOA urges private landlords to take heed of changing legislation

New government legislation, intended to safeguard the lives of an approximate 200 private tenants per year, has been welcomed by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA).

It is now compulsory for private landlords to fit working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in any residential properties that they lease. Any landlord failing to do so could face a fine of up to £5,000.

The new regulations, which were approved by the House of Commons and House of Lords in September 2015, came into effect on 1 October 2015.

This vital and potentially lifesaving legislation has been introduced following a major high profile campaign from the CFOA to ensure the safety of tenants in their own homes.

The amendment was one of many suggested improvements detailed as part of a CFOA report entitled 'The Fire and Rescue Service: Making our Nation Safer' released in early 2015.

The new law requires private landlords to fit a working smoke alarm on each storey of their property, in addition to a carbon monoxide detector in every room with a solid fuel burning appliance. All alarms must be tested and working at the start of each tenancy, and houses of multiple occupation are required by law to have hard-wired smoke alarms.

Of the new legislation CFOA President Paul Hancock said: "This marks a change in improving the safety of some of our most vulnerable residents.

"We know most landlords will support this move and already operate safely, but for the irresponsible few the legislation will help to protect tenants. It also sends a clear message to those not taking the safety of their tenants seriously: You could face legal action."

Mark Cashin, Cheshire's Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Chair of CFOA's Home Safety Committee, also

commented: "I am delighted that the government recognised the strength of the case we put forward and the major improvements in public safety this simple step will bring about."

"While death and injuries from fires have reduced considerably in recent years, the majority of victims continue to be those who are most vulnerable, often living in private rented accommodation. "This change will improve the safety of families and stop dozens of people from losing their lives to fire each year. The cost to landlords is small, with a ten year sealed alarm costing around £15."

IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE

Response to the new legislation has proven lukewarm however. A recent survey conducted by SpareRoom.com – one of the UK's largest flat and house share websites – has revealed that 15% of tenants are still without working smoke alarms.

Of the more than 1,000 tenants surveyed since 1 October 2015, one in seven (15%) said that they don't have a smoke alarm at all. A further 16% stated that, while they do have alarms they are unsure if they are in working order. Worryingly, 7% of tenants surveyed admitted to removing the battery of their smoke alarms for various reasons, rendering it useless and placing themselves and their housemates at risk.

A separate poll of landlords, also carried out by SpareRoom.com, found that almost half (49%) were unaware of the change in regulations. Consequently, the CFOA is working with the government to better publicise the amendment and update landlords on their new responsibilities. Tenants are also encouraged to inform their landlords of their obligation to fit working smoke alarms.

The attitudes of private landlords and letting agents towards the safety of their tenants has long been called into question. In June 2015 UK charity Electrical Safety First commission a

study which found that private landlords and letting agents were largely ignoring safety concerns reported to them, such as exposed wiring, repeatedly tripping fuse boxes, overheating appliances, and damp or flooding around electrics. Failure to resolve these issues could result in electrical fires, electric shock or even electrocution. Electrical Safety First is now calling for mandatory electrical safety checks every five years in privately rented accommodation, and a visual inspection when the tenancy changes hands.

Addressing the lacklustre reception to the new legislation Mark Cashin added: "These are worrying findings and we would hope that as the new legislation beds in more landlords and tenants will make sure that their homes are safe. Ignorance is no excuse, landlords should be aware of their responsibilities, and good landlords will have already ensured their properties had smoke alarms before this law came into force.

"Our statistics show that rented properties, flat shares and Houses of Multiple Occupation are some of the most at risk properties from fire and CO poisoning. Tenants who don't have working smoke alarms or CO alarms should contact their landlord and insist that they be fitted. It's the law."

According to the government's 'English House Survey 2013/2014', privately rented accommodation is most at risk of fire, yet least likely to have working a smoke alarm. Flats are at greater risk of fire, as are homes with five or more occupants. The CFOA recommends that landlords fit ten year non-replaceable smoke alarms, which are unable to have their batteries removed. For the concerned, the CFOA also advises residents to contact their local council or fire service for advice and support.

Please visit the CFOA website to find your local fire service. The FireKills website is also available for advice on how to make your home safer from fire.



Concerns raised over faulty appliance fires

The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) has expressed concern over the high number of home appliance fires highlighted in a recent report from consumer organisation Which?

Conducted between 2011 and March 2014, the Which? investigation found that almost 12,000 house fires were caused by faulty home appliances. In addition to some 1,723 faulty washing machine fires, 1,456 faulty tumble dryer fires also occurred during the period. Together they form just over a quarter of the 12,000 fires total. Tellingly, the Which? report also indicates that fires were more prevalent in products from certain manufacturers.

Once a safety issue has been discovered – particularly where there is risk of electrical shock or fire – manufacturers are required by law to issue a safety notice, but tracing the ownership of an appliance can be

problematic if it has not been registered by the person purchasing it. UK trade organisation, the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA) has therefore set up a website where owners can register details of appliances purchased from different manufacturers to ensure that they are notified if an issue arises.

However, research conducted by Electrical Safety First has found that more than four million household appliances are still in UK homes despite a product recall being issued. Crucially, the public often underestimate the potential danger associated with the fault, not realising that it may be safety related.

Andy Reynolds, Electrical Safety Lead at the CFOA said: “The shocking numbers identified by Which? demonstrate how essential it is that people are aware of the fire risks

associated with faulty appliances. We are working with partners to highlight the issue of unsafe electrical appliances, and to promote safety and information campaigns.

“Key to protecting your home and family is making sure you’re kept up to date with any potential safety issues and product recalls. We would urge members of the public to use Electrical Safety First’s product checker, to make sure their appliances have not been subject to a recall, and to register their appliance with the AMDEA website, or direct with the manufacturer.

“We recommend that appliances are never left on overnight, or when you leave the house, unless they are specifically designed to remain on, such as fridges and freezers. And, of course, make sure that you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home, to warn you if a fire does break out.”



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**‘Consensus’ reached
over new partnership to
reduce winter pressures**



Firefighters are joining forces with the NHS in a new partnership designed to tackle health and social problems and reduce winter pressures.

Five organisations have signed a new 'Consensus' – NHS England, Public Health England, the Fire and Rescue Service, Age UK and the Local Government Association – pledging to work together to make changes throughout their respective workforces.

The Consensus sets out how these organisations can work collaboratively to encourage local action, prevent or minimise service demand and improve the quality of life for people with long-term health conditions.

Firefighters across the country will now aim to undertake 'Safe and Well' checks when visiting the public. Some 670,000 home safety checks are already carried out each year. These house calls will now be extended into a 'Safe and Well' visit to help in particular the vulnerable and those with complex needs.

In addition to reducing the risks of fire, the 'Safe and Well' checks are intended to reduce health and safety risks such as fall hazards, and feelings of loneliness and isolation. It is hoped that this will result in a drop in A&E visits, broken hips and depression this winter.

The 'Consensus' was launched on national Older People's Day at a World Health Organisation conference. Simon Stevens, NHS England CEO, commented: "Fire service home visits already prevent fires, and now will help prevent falls, accidents and trips to casualty. It's great to see two of the most trusted public services getting creative about jointly supporting vulnerable people to stay healthy and independent."

Firefighters will now be able to quickly install a handrail for instance, to identify and correct likely hazards or signpost people to local groups for help, support or company.

Research indicates that a high percentage of people will allow

firefighters into their homes due in part to the public's high level of trust. This makes it much easier for firefighters to give simple advice which could potentially save or change a life.

While some regions have already employed this joined up thinking, the Consensus has pledged to roll-out the initiative nationwide.

In Manchester for example, firefighters work with Community Response Intervention Teams who provide a rapid response to avoid people going into hospital and to facilitate early discharge.

Paul Hancock, President of the Chief Fire Officers Association, said: "By working in partnership with health professionals we can help to protect some of our most vulnerable residents, while improving people's quality of life. The Safe and Well checks will help to identify issues at an early stage, which could reduce the likelihood of older people being admitted to hospital by focusing on prevention measures. Firefighters carrying out these checks already have a high level of trust from the people they are visiting and will be able to give help and advice on a wide range of issues, while helping to keep our older residents safer."

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England, said: "Saving peoples' lives is the most important thing for firefighters. They have already had astonishing success in reducing deaths from fires and can now bring this experience to bear more widely. They are perfectly placed to spot the dangers facing the most vulnerable when making their hundreds of thousands of visits each year to homes across the country.

"This agreement will help ensure older people, and those with complex needs, get the care and support they need to live healthier, more independent lives."

'A Practical Guide to Healthy Ageing' has also been re-launched by NHS England in partnership with Age UK. The guide is currently being distributed through Age UK shops, FRS home

safety visits, GP practices, pharmacies, housing associations and many more.

Pam Creaven, Services Director at Age UK, said: "We're delighted to be part of the Consensus and believe that Local Age UKs and local fire services working together can really make a difference, helping older people stay healthy and independent in their own home.

"It is terrific for Age UK to be joining NHS England in launching this new practical guide for people living with frailty. It is clear that having access to the right information and advice at the right time and knowing where to go for support can really enhance older people's lives."

Dr Martin McShane, NHS England's Director for Long Term Conditions, said: "This is translating the Five Year Forward View into reality. There are 670,000 home visits a year by the Fire Service for people with the sort of risk factors we recognize in healthcare.

"The fire service has reduced domestic fires by 35% with pro-active interventions. Working together will help us to provide a good deal for the taxpayer and an even better deal for people at risk."

Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Chair of the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee, said: "Over the last decade fire and rescue services have halved instances of fire, both through their responses to emergencies and their extensive programme of prevention work. They are now looking to be just as effective in improving the public's health by providing critical interventions, promoting health messages and referring to appropriate services.

"Over half of all fire related deaths and injuries in the home happen to people over 60, and we know that impairment and disability increase the risk of harm from fires and other hazards too. This work means that not only can we prevent fires and other emergencies, but action can be taken to help people who may not even realise that they need extra help."



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