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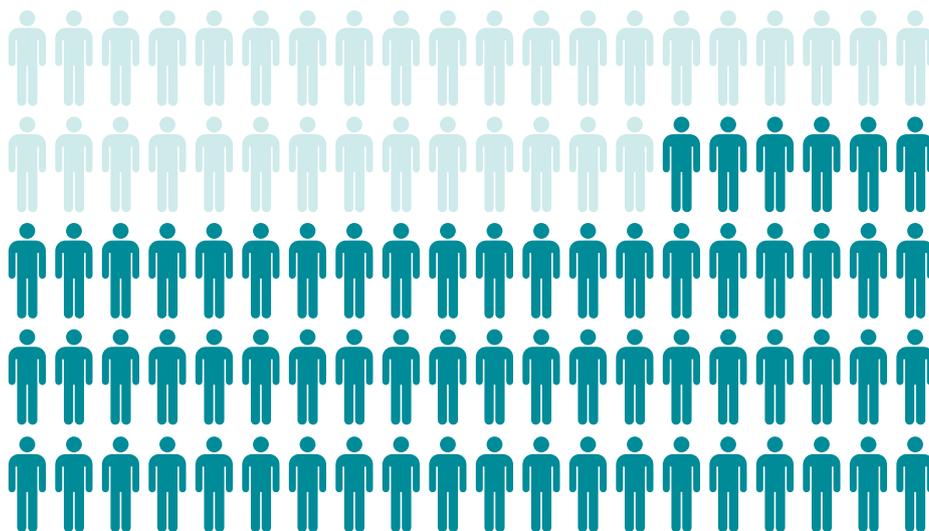
Navigating the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005- Is the RRFSO really that difficult to comprehend or is ignorance bliss?

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Overview

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 was a game-changing piece of legislation in the fire prevention world. After making fire-risk assessments the responsibility of building owners or managers, the legislation caused considerable apprehension among end users.

We discuss whether ten years on, the responsible person is taking the time to fully understand the legislation, or whether they are still blissfully unaware of the order and therefore their responsibilities.



The total number of **NON-FATAL** fire casualties was **34% fewer** in 2013-14 than in 2003-04

*Government fire statistics have been used on this page. Please follow the link at the end of this white paper for a link to the Government fire statistics reports.

Background

For those new to the industry, the RRFSO was introduced to simplify, rationalise and consolidate the law on fire safety in buildings. Previously, there were nearly 100 regional and national acts and statutory instruments regarding fire safety provision, some of which were inconsistent or out-of-date.

When it became law on 1 October 2006, the RRFSO 2005 represented a major step change in protecting occupants within buildings. The requirement for a dedicated 'responsible person' or team that ensures that premises are risk assessed and that any installed life safety equipment is fully maintained and fit for purpose, has been one of the most important pieces of legislation in recent times.



The provisional total number of fire **FATALITIES** in England in 2013-14 was 275, this is 179 (39%) fewer than ten years ago (2003-04)

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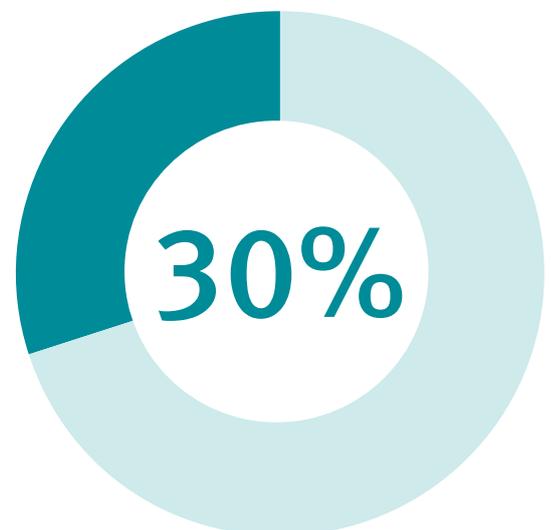
Understanding

Being the responsible person doesn't necessarily require specialist knowledge, however it does require a certain level of understanding about the causes of fire, how to prevent it and what to do in the event of an emergency.

When it comes to carrying out a risk assessment, a responsible person or member of the premises management team can complete a suitable training course. Alternatively, there are a number of professionals who can do this on your behalf. If you use external resources to conduct a risk assessment that you will be responsible for, you should satisfy yourself that they are suitably competent and qualified to conduct it.



of fire-related DEATHS in Britain were caused by the victim being overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes.

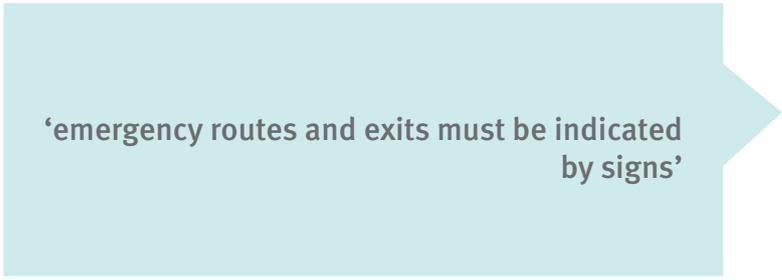


were caused by burns alone.

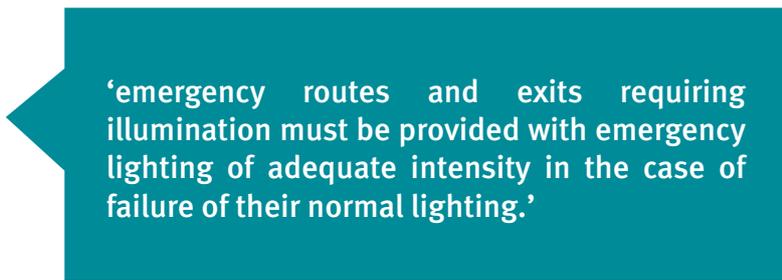
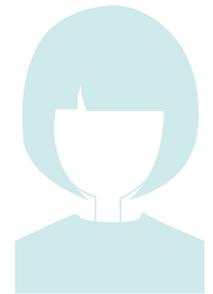
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Illumination

Few people realise that if they are responsible for Fire Safety, they also have a responsibility for Emergency Lighting. Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, article 14 details the Responsible Person's duty to ensure exit routes are illuminated and clearly indicated by signs.



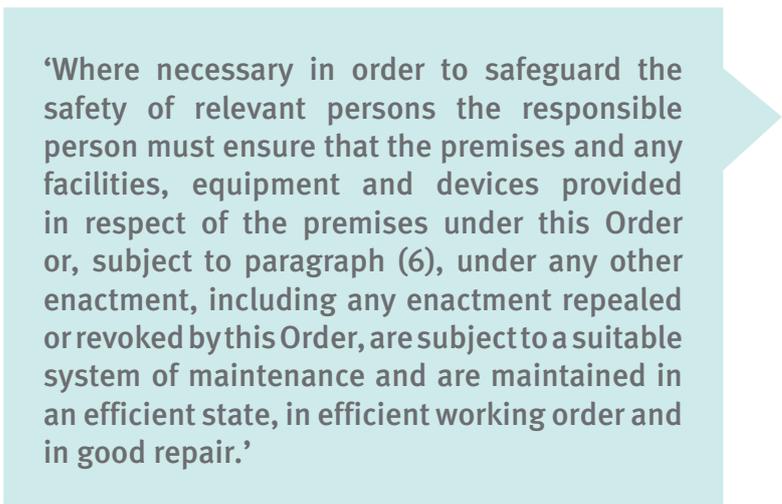
'emergency routes and exits must be indicated by signs'



'emergency routes and exits requiring illumination must be provided with emergency lighting of adequate intensity in the case of failure of their normal lighting.'



Article 17 continues on to explain the maintenance responsibilities of the responsible person.



'Where necessary in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons the responsible person must ensure that the premises and any facilities, equipment and devices provided in respect of the premises under this Order or, subject to paragraph (6), under any other enactment, including any enactment repealed or revoked by this Order, are subject to a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.'

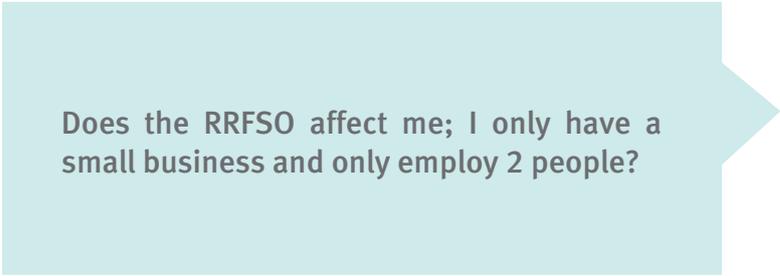


*Quotations found on this page have been taken from the RRFSO 2005. These are small clippings taken from the full legislation and are therefore not explained in their entirety. Please follow the link at the end of this white paper to view the full legislation.

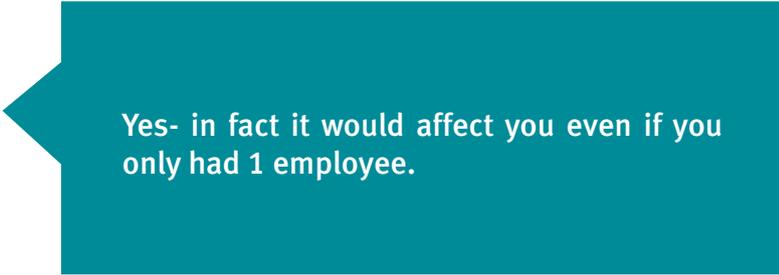
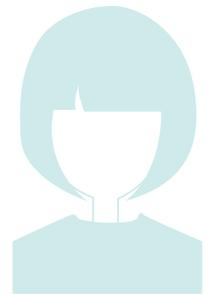
Awareness

While in theory there should be the same rigorous and thorough approach to assessing risk and the potential for danger within any building, this is simply wishful thinking.

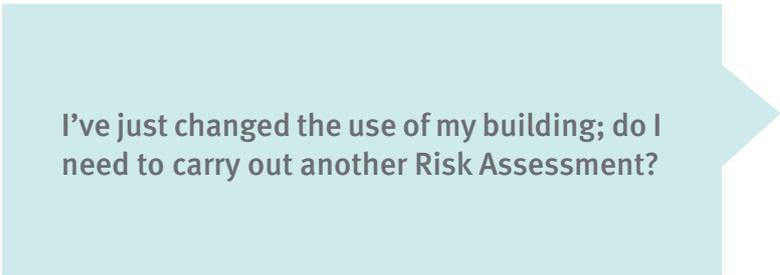
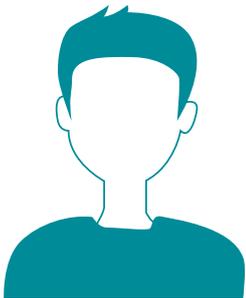
Although some individuals wilfully neglect their responsibilities, others are simply unaware of the extent of their duties. While the former are far more overt in their flouting of the law, the fact is that ignorance is just as much of a problem.



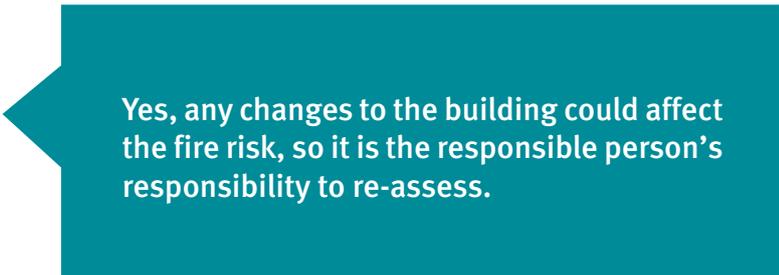
Does the RRFSO affect me; I only have a small business and only employ 2 people?



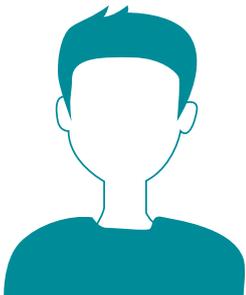
Yes- in fact it would affect you even if you only had 1 employee.



I've just changed the use of my building; do I need to carry out another Risk Assessment?



Yes, any changes to the building could affect the fire risk, so it is the responsible person's responsibility to re-assess.



Case Study

Rosepark Care Home.

Tragic events took place at Rosepark Care Home in South Lanarkshire, when a fire broke out in a cupboard, spread through the building and led directly to the deaths of 14 elderly residents.

Attempts to prosecute the owners for alleged fire safety breaches failed, due to a loophole in the law that meant that as they had dissolved their partnership they could no longer be prosecuted.

However, in November 2012, Lord Wallace introduced a bill to close the loophole and ensure that dissolving a partnership will no longer protect the responsible person from prosecution in such cases.



The risk of dying in a fire is

over twice as high

for elderly people (65 and over) as the average for all ages

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Enforcement

In order to reduce the lack of awareness, the RRFSO has introduced an element of fear.

Fire Safety Enforcement Officers from local Fire and Rescue Services now have the right to enter any work place at any reasonable hour, without giving notice to inspect a premises. If a breach is found, then the severity of the action will be decided by the officer. Sometimes informal advice may be given or an Enforcement Notice may be issued, but a severe breach could lead to prosecution.

Take, for instance, the Nottinghamshire businessman who was found guilty of a failure to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

His crimes included failure to comply with an enforcement order, failure to ensure an effective means of escape from the premises, failure to ensure that exit routes were clear at all times, failure to provide adequate emergency lighting in emergency routes and exits, and failure to ensure that the non-automatic fire-fighting equipment provided was easily accessible, simple to use and indicated by signs.

He was sentenced to 26 weeks imprisonment suspended for two years, ordered to do 180 hours unpaid work and had to pay £4,000 in costs.

Dont pay the price, know your stuff!

›1. Ensure you have as many relevant Documents as possible to help you understand fire safety. Click on the logo for more information.



You may also find some useful information about Emergency Lighting on the ICEL website.



Useful Fire Safety information can be found on the Fire Safe Website.



Hochiki have a number of free fire safety guides and documents that can be downloaded from the website and our brochure app. Download now by clicking the relevant icon.



Hochiki Europe are also an approved supplier of CPD seminars.



GOV.UK

Government Fire Statistics have been used in this document.

›2. Choose A Reputable Installation Company.

If you require a new system, or would like someone to review your existing system, make sure you are using a professional and reputable company. A good installation company will be able to talk you through all of your different options and advise you which system is the most appropriate for your building.

Hochiki is a world leading manufacturer of high quality life safety systems and expect all of our installers to have the same standards of excellence as we do. Therefore by selecting one of our Systems Partners to work with, you are safe in the knowledge that they are highly professional, extensively trained, hold the highest industry accreditations and can provide the newest technology on the market.

›3. Ensure you have an ongoing maintenance plan in place.

This is just as important as choosing the system to begin with. Fire alarm systems will need regular testing to ensure that the system remains fully operational. Not only that, but if there have been any changes to legislation, your maintenance company will be able to advise you if any changes need to be made in order to remain compliant. If you have chosen to work with a Hochiki Systems Partner, these are all services that they are able to provide.

Click on the logo below to learn more about the Hochiki Systems Partners network.

