



What is the RRO?

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force almost ten years ago in England and Wales; transferring the responsibility for Fire Safety from the fire authorities to whoever has day-to-day control of building premises. This person must take steps to reduce the risk from fire; consider how to contain a fire should one break out and then also ensure people can escape safely.

However, this major piece of legislation continues to be a hot topic and the Fire Services are prosecuting more businesses and individuals for serious or repeated breaches of the law.

Where does it apply?

The order applies to virtually all premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open space. For example, it applies to:

- Premises that provide care, including care homes and hospitals
- Community halls, places of worship and other community premises
- The shared areas of properties occupied by several households
- Pubs, clubs and restaurants
- Schools and sports centres
- Tents and marquees
- Hotels and hostels
- Factories and warehouses

It does not apply to people's private homes, including individual flats in a block or a house.

Who is responsible for meeting the Order?

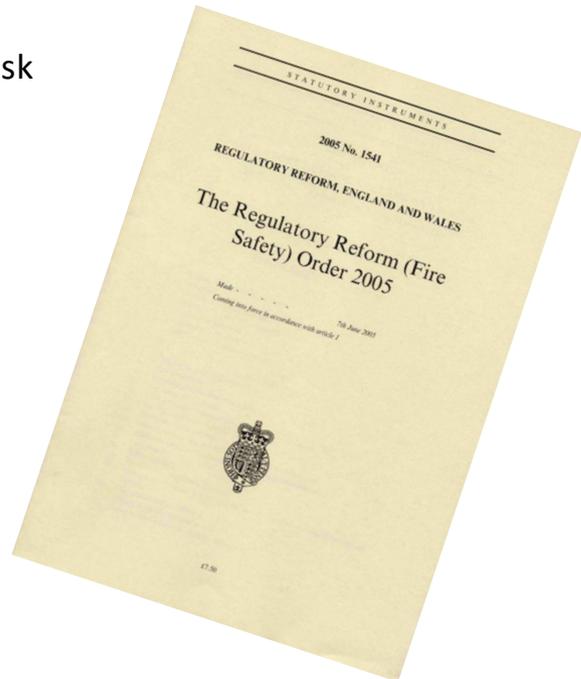
Under the Order, anyone who has control of premises or anyone who has a degree of control over certain areas or systems may be considered a 'responsible person'. For example, it could be:

- Employer with control of a workplace, failing that or in addition;
- Person with overall management of a building
- Owner of premises (i.e. empty buildings)
- Landlords (multi-occupied buildings).

What action must be taken?

A building manager must know the building well; know how it is to be used; assess, identify and where appropriate reduce fire risk; organise maintenance and above all, monitor and train the building users. A fire Risk Assessment must be undertaken including:

- Identification of those at particular risk
- Elimination / reduction of risk
- Dealing with remaining risk
- Addressing explosive or flammable substances
- Creating an emergency plan
- Record and review the fire Risk Assessment to ensure it is up to date



Ignoring your responsibilities could result in prosecution

The massive fines for New Look (£400,000), Shell International (£300,000) and Co-op (£250,000), and over ten prison sentences, speak for themselves. Substantial fines have been imposed on all sizes of businesses, from small firms and landlords, to international companies. And even the London headquarters of Communities and Local Government – the government department that steers fire safety policy in England and Wales – has been served with an enforcement notice under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Rest Assured

Although the new Fire Safety Order stops short of making third party certification mandatory, it clearly states that **'Third-party certification schemes for fire protection products and related services are an effective means of providing the fullest possible assurances, offering a level of quality, reliability and safety that non-certificated products may lack.'**



Why leave the RRO to chance?

Fire doors and all passive fire protection products play a unique role in the fire safety of a building and therefore in reducing risk to those in other compartments. Properly maintained doors form an essential element of the fire safety plan for every building. It is not to be ignored, every year 350 people are killed and 10,300 are injured in fires in the UK alone, many of the casualties being attributable to breathing in the toxic products of combustion from a remote fire. Fire and smoke also cause extensive damage to building fabric and contents. It has been estimated that the total value of fire related losses is some 8.7 billion per annum*.

* Source: Fire Loss Report 9/2019

If a fire occurs, and results in a casualty, the premise of the new law is that **you are guilty until you prove yourself innocent!** You will be asked to offer sufficient evidence that you have fulfilled your obligations effectively. Provided that you can do this, you will not be held accountable. If you can't then you can be prosecuted.

Further RRO Information

A series of guides is available to assist those preparing fire Risk Assessments.

The guides, available from

www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/

have been written for people with limited training and experience in undertaking a Risk Assessment. If you are unsure of how to complete it, you should contact a trained professional.

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