

LATEST FIRE STATISTICS FOR UK

Useful data on fires is published regularly by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The latest full year for which statistics are available is 2004. In that year, fire and rescue services in the UK attended around 900,000 fires and false alarms, of which 442,700 were fires.

In 2004, there were 508 fire deaths, less than half the figure recorded in 1979, the lowest for 45 years. The number of non fatal fire casualties was 14,600, the

lowest for 11 years. In dwellings, there were 375 deaths, the lowest figure since records for domestic fire fatalities began in 1960. There can be little doubt that the humble domestic smoke alarm has made a major contribution in this respect. Statistically, if a fire is first detected by a smoke alarm, the likelihood of a fatality is reduced by a factor of 2.5 - 3

(continued from page 1)

This is a particular contrast between the now repealed Fire Precautions Act and the new Fire Safety Order. The measures required by the former are those described in (b)-(e) above, while fire procedures and instruction of staff were normally required by certificates issued under the Fire Precautions Act. These measures did not, however, actually prevent the occurrence of fire, but merely contributed to the safety of people if fire did occur.

The measures for ensuring that means of escape can be used safely are principally emergency escape lighting and signs, although these are only required to be provided where necessary. Measures in relation to fighting fires are generally portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets. Only rarely will there be a need for automatic fire suppression systems.

The wording in respect of means for detecting fires does not imply that all premises need automatic fire detection; this will be necessary in premises where people sleep, but may also be necessary in other buildings where fire could develop for some time unobserved, or where necessary to operate other fire protection measures, such as door release devices. It should be noted that general fire precautions do not include special measures to address the hazards of work processes, or those associated with use or storage of dangerous substances. These are generally a matter for health and safety legislation.

In Scotland, the term general fire precautions is not used in the equivalent legislation. Instead, the term 'fire safety measures' is used ■

Trading Tip!

Your customer's Risk Assessment will inevitably point up action needed to be taken under "general fire precautions". Don't miss the opportunity - fill any gaps that have been created!