

THE Burning Issue™

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Staff Training – what should the Responsible Person be providing?

Ensuring that employees in a building know what to do if they discover a fire or hear the fire alarm signal is a vital part in a company's emergency plan. Experience from numerous fire disasters shows clearly that, in the event of a multiple fatality fire in non-domestic premises, failures in procedures, as a result of poor preparedness of staff, often has more relevance than shortcomings in physical fire precautions.

Many companies consider that it is not practicable to provide training for all employees. This view has never been fully tested in court, but the fact that certain companies are able to train a large number of employees, adequately demonstrates the feasibility of providing proper training for all employees.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order* requires that employees must be given adequate fire instruction on induction and, as appropriate, periodically thereafter. The Order also requires that all employees are given information regarding fire procedures, the arrangements for fire-fighting, and the general fire precautions required to satisfy the Order.

Initial training should be given as part of any induction course for new employees. If this is not within a short time of joining the company, new employees should be given basic instruction concerning escape routes, fire procedures, fire alarm signals, etc on the day they begin work in the building. At the very least, they should initially be given a tour of all escape routes, including any alternative routes that do not form part of the normal access routes. If employees do not attend a formal induction course, they should be given instruction on fire matters as soon as

possible after joining the company. Instruction should be based on written material, which is given to the employee, but should also comprise verbal instruction. The only possible alternative might comprise computer-based learning packages, which can incorporate tests to evaluate learning outcomes. Standard fire instruction leaflets are not adequate; the instructions should be tailor-made for the building.

Instruction should be given to all persons who work in the building.

(Continued overleaf)

