

# Fire Safety in Care Homes

The Fire Safety Order 2005 places a legal duty on the dutyholder or responsible person to implement, manage, monitor and maintain fire safety arrangements at their premises. In care homes it is often the manager or the owner of the premises that is charged with this duty.

## Fire Risk Assessments

The introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 shifted the premise of fire safety in buildings from one of fire protection, to one of anticipatory fire prevention based on an assessment of the risks and the status of the existing fire safety arrangements. Statistically it can be argued that this approach has seen a reduction in the number of fire deaths in the UK but tragedies still occur, and there are lessons to be learnt from each of them, as was the case with the fire at Rosepark Care Home in 2004. The enquiry into this fire highlighted a number of significant learning points, central amongst them being the importance of a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment, and the reasonable precautions that such an assessment would have identified thereby saving many, if not all of the fourteen lives that were lost.

The very nature and purpose of care homes presents additional fire safety hazards which may not be obvious to the less competent assessor, and will probably require enhanced, robust fire safety arrangements in order to mitigate the resulting risks. Failure to produce a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment, and the appointment of someone who is not competent to undertake the assessment, constitute breaches of the Fire Safety Order 2005. Metro SRM is a BAFe SP205 third party accredited Fire Risk Assessment company. All of our Fire Risk Assessors are experienced, long standing, fire safety professionals, the majority also hold individual third party accreditation. Appointing a third party accredited Fire Risk Assessor, such as Metro SRM, is a clear indication that the responsible person exercised due diligence in making the appointment.

**Metro SRM can work with you to produce Emergency Plans and Emergency Information Packs specifically designed to fit your individual care home.**



## Remedial Works

The action plan within the Fire Risk Assessment report will identify and prioritise any significant issues in your fire safety arrangements which need to be addressed in order to eliminate or reduce so far as is reasonably practical, the risk to residents and staff from fire, and the risk of enforcement action or prosecution to the responsible person. Our consultants are conscious that the cost, both in terms of time and money, of the remedial actions that they recommend may present challenges to the responsible person. But equally, they are also aware of the potential costs of a fire. They therefore strive to achieve the right balance between costs and appropriate, and necessary, risk reduction.

## Fire Safety Training

The lack of suitable fire safety training was one of the contributory factors in the Rosepark fire. It is an essential requirement for all types of premises, but it is absolutely critical in premises where the occupants may need more time or require assistance in order to react to an emergency. Effective fire safety training plays an essential role in keeping your staff, occupants and business safe from fire. The frequency, suitability and effectiveness of your fire safety training is one area that may be identified as requiring review and improvement. Your staff must receive initial and refresher training commensurate with their responsibilities. In addition to a range of generic fire safety training courses, Metro SRM also offers bespoke training which can be designed to fit the needs of your individual care home and staff responsibilities.

## Emergency Plans & Emergency Information Packs

Emergency Plans provide instructions for staff and able residents, regarding what they must do in the event of a fire emergency. The plan sets out clear actions that staff and various identified post holders must follow in the event of a fire alarm or in the event that they discover a fire. Your Evacuation Plan forms the basis for your fire safety training, and together they form a considered, practiced and effective response to fire emergencies at your care home. Emergency Information Packs are intended to assist the Fire & Rescue Service upon their arrival at an incident. Clear Emergency Information Packs will enable the fire service to quickly evaluate the risks, both within the building and to their staff and get crews to work with the minimum of delay.

Metro SRM are able to work with you to produce Emergency Plans and Emergency Information Packs specifically designed to fit the circumstances of your individual care home. These can be tied in with your staff's fire safety training and the development of fire safety information which may be required by residents who are less dependent on staff intervention in the event of an emergency.

## Peace of Mind

Metro SRM believe in making compliance simple and cost effective. Our wide range of fire safety services can help you maintain compliance leaving you confident that your people and property are safe.

To find out more please call **020 7960 3939**.