

DHF throws its support behind new fire safety regulations

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The introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022, and specifically Section 156, has brought in Phase 3 of the Home Office plan to improve fire safety in higher risk buildings.

Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) makes a number of amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) to improve fire safety in all buildings regulated by it. These improvements form Phase 3 of the Home Office's fire safety reform programme, building on Phase 1 (the Fire Safety Act 2021) and Phase 2 (the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022). The new fire safety legislation comes into effect on 1st October 2023.

In particular, Phase 3 further strengthens fire safety in all FSO regulated premises by improving cooperation and coordination between Responsible Persons (RPs), increasing requirements in relation to the recording and sharing of fire safety information, thereby creating a continual record throughout a building's lifespan, ensuring residents have access to comprehensive information about fire safety in their building and making it easier for enforcement authorities to act against non-compliance.

"Some requirements such as *ensuring a competent person is carrying out the risk assessment*, will not be implemented at this time. Although, according to the Gov.UK website, this will happen at a future date, it is key to begin preparations and to think about the competency of the person," explains DHF's General Manager & Secretary, Michael Skelding. "The updates can be viewed as a further move toward putting into practice the principles from the 'Golden Thread' proposed in the Dame Judith Hackitt report, and we welcome this.

It is hoped that by implementing the amendments at the beginning of October 2023, the following will be achieved. Firstly, an improved cooperation and collaboration between Responsible Persons (RPs) and building owners, greater simplicity in the enforcement of fire safety regulations by authorities, all-inclusive access to fire safety information so residents can feel safe, and finally, a more rigorous management of

fire safety information and record-keeping throughout a building's lifespan."

DHF has continually championed fire safety, including third-party certified complete doorsets, and has been especially vocal about this since the Grenfell fire disaster in June 2017. In particular, it has advocated that checks on fire doorsets must be carried out by competent persons.