

Nearly Half of All Fire Safety Inspections Unsatisfactory – Latest Statistics Show

2 months ago



The latest figures from GOV.UK show that fire safety concerns are at an all-time high, with the number of unsatisfactory audits and formal notices served soaring. Of the 51,026 fire safety audits carried out in 2024/25, 42% (21,312) were found to be unsatisfactory, with almost 3,000 premises served formal notices.

Unsatisfactory fire safety audits have increased steadily over the last 8 years from 17,320 in 2016/17 to 21,312 in 2024/25, a rise of 23%. Additionally, formal notices served to premises owners have also risen from 2,044 in 2016/17 to 2,990 in 2024/25, an alarming 46% increase in the last 8 years. The statistics from GOV.UK also raise concerns about the lack of fire safety audits carried out on a yearly basis, with just 2% of all premises that require regular audits having them carried out in each of the last 6 years. There are over 2.5 million known premises that require fire safety audits in the UK, and premises should ideally be audited by a competent person carried out every 3 years.

Analysis of the statistics from the UK's leading smoke ventilation manufacturer, [Sertus](#), suggest that while there has been an alarming number of unsatisfactory audits and formal notices served, the industry has been forced to take building fire safety more seriously since the Grenfell disaster. Richard White, Commercial Director at Sertus, believes that there has been a change in how audits are being approached, with those in charge benefiting from the new legislation and processes put in place in recent years.

He said: "While the statistics may be alarming on the face of it, I'd argue that the increase is likely happening because of the implementation of the Building Safety Regulator and new legislation. There is a proper process in place now, and there wasn't before. More people are beginning to understand what good looks like when it comes to fire safety and are picking up the pieces from sloppy auditing in the past."

There's positivity that the industry is now placing additional emphasis on protecting the life of citizens, which is a direct reflection of the changes driven by Dame Judith Hackitt with the backing of HSE and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Building Safety Act 2022 was brought in off the back of the Grenfell tragedy to implement stricter regulatory frameworks for the design, construction and management of higher risk buildings. Alongside this, Fire Safety Act 2021 was also introduced and clarifies that the Responsible Person for a building must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the structure, external walls and common parts.

The two pieces of legislation have driven increasing scrutiny from auditors, as they are now more likely to capture any areas of non-compliance due to the liability and risk if a fire was to break out. The Building Safety Act in particular places particular emphasis on early-stage design, ensuring compliant application of fire safety equipment, such as smoke ventilation, is in place.

Richard White went on to add: "The spotlight has been firmly placed on high-risk buildings due to the failings that led to the Grenfell tragedy. The failings stem from a de-regulated building culture that stems back many years, meaning that we have been through decades of design and build which has largely happened without 3rd party inspection.

"There's been a change in recent years to more rigorous focus on the design stage, before building commences, so we'd expect future projects to adhere to fire safety standards far better than those constructed in years gone by."

Audits are now far more extensive following the inception of the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Act:

- The acts expanded what fire risk audits must cover, including external walls, doors and structures
- They required full and permanent documentation of risk assessments
- Increased requirements for information sharing and coordination
- Strengthened enforcement powers and penalties