



## **'In the aftermath of RRO....'**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO)<sup>1</sup> became law 1 Oct 2006.

The new fire law is fundamentally different from previous regulations, focussing on fire prevention. Nominated individuals must take responsibility for the safety of staff and buildings by conducting a risk assessment of both active and passive fire protective elements. Passive fire protection measures should be built into buildings to ensure safe escape routes and prevent fires spreading, and risk assessments under the RRFSO must specifically cover these. But still, few are prepared for the new responsibilities - or the potential impact.

According to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), a comprehensive self-assessment can be carried out in 5 steps as follows:

1. Identify Fire Hazards – Where can a fire start
2. Identify People at Risk – Who will be affected
3. Evaluate, Reduce Risk, Protect
4. Record, Plan, Train
5. Review and Revise

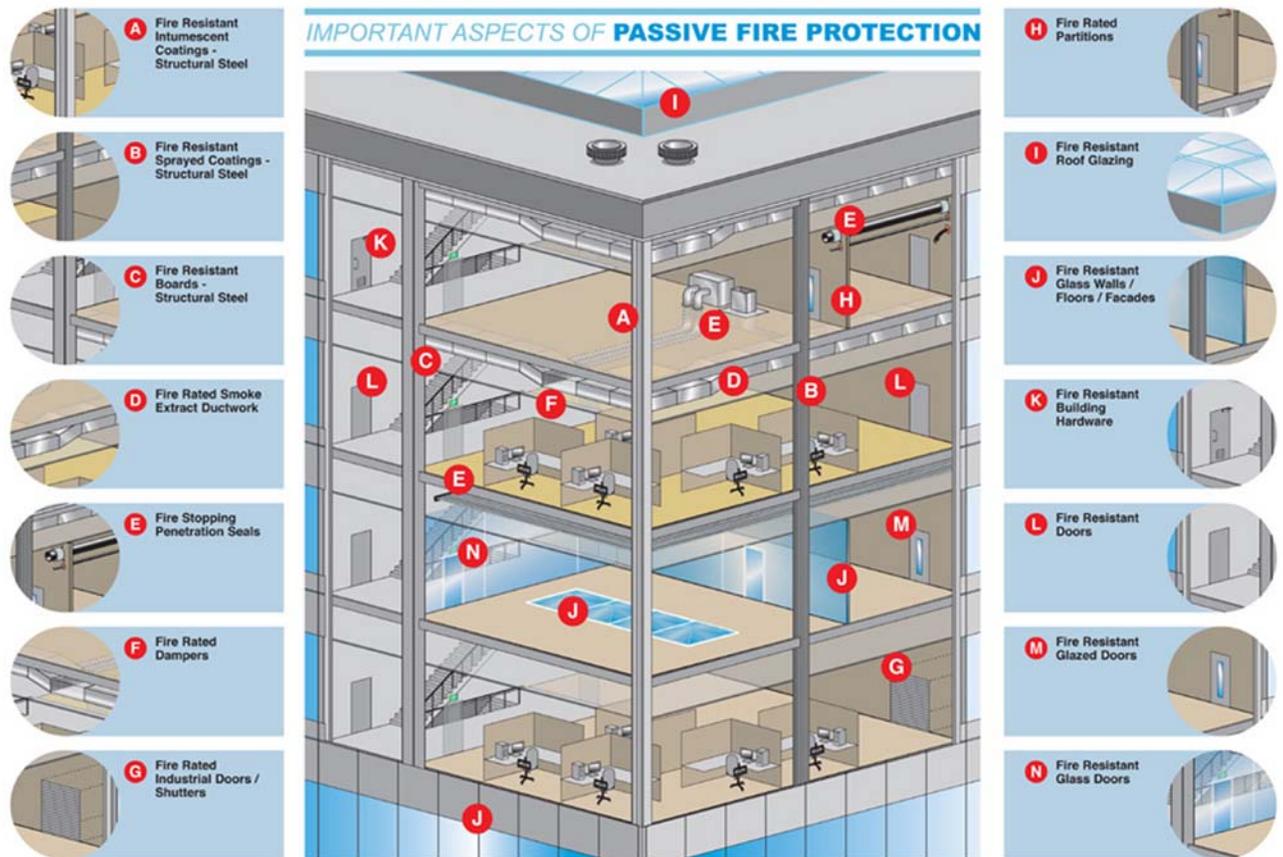
The nominated responsible person is accountable for this assessment and ultimately the safety of the building and those in it, but how do they know what they are looking for or indeed how to check it?

The PFPF advise identifying all Fire Separating Elements (FSE) which will be walls and ceilings that divide the building into manageable areas of risk (see advice on

---

<sup>1</sup> S.I. 2005 No. 1541.

[www.pfpf.org.uk](http://www.pfpf.org.uk)). FSE are in place to keep fire and smoke compartmentalised to limit fire and smoke damage and allow active measures such as sprinklers time to control the fire. To demonstrate where and what FSEs and passive fire measures are and therefore how to successfully assess them, the PFPF have published the following schematic, in addition to a practical guide to assessment, available on their website.



When assessing the need for passive fire protection measures in buildings it is essential to refer to the CDM file which is a requirement of the **Construction Design and Management regulations 1994** (CDM) which records all the safety processes for that building from design to occupancy stage. If your building is not covered by CDM (more than 12 years old) it is advisable to speak to your local Fire Authority who will be able to give advice tailored to your specific premises. Any changes will have to meet the regulations. In new build however, the basic requirements are set out in **Approved Document B** (ADB) as set out by the DCLG and should form the basis of passive fire

protection in any new buildings unless a fire engineering study was part of the original design.

**So, now what for the 'responsible person'?**

The 'aftermath' of RRO is concerned with Passive Fire Protection measures that have been improved to a suitable standard that the responsible person is satisfied with. But how can the average employee deem what is suitable and safe with so little available support? Without considerable training they would not understand or be able to recognise the need, for example, for detailed door gaps and closers, fire rated penetration seals, fire rated ductwork or properly fitted fire rated glazing. Indeed, even measuring the risk of major parts of a building such as incomplete fire separating elements or damage to structural steel protection, can only be done by a trained professional. Yet, if problems are recognised, the responsible person has the added task of employing accredited installers who have to prove their knowledge and ability through third party schemes.

Even if the responsible person decides to outsource the risk assessment to a suitably qualified third party or installation contractor it does not absolve them from their liability in any small way, in the event of a claim that results from fire.

This highlights the extent and gravity of the responsibility allocated to the nominated person. Indeed, if the Risk Assessment is not carried out or the procedures for doing so are not in place, then the building insurance may well be invalidated and the responsible person may be fined or prosecuted.

The aftermath of RRO really centres on the responsibility of the nominated person in carrying out a complete Risk Assessment. However, that person needs to be trained and fully educated in active and passive fire protection; therefore the PFPF and Local Fire Authorities must continue to ensure that training and support is both available and widely publicised.

**END**

**Picture Caption:** Guidance on Best Practice in PFP for all areas of the building are available as free PDF downloads on [www.pfpf.org.uk](http://www.pfpf.org.uk)

**Issued on behalf of:**

David Sugden, **Passive Fire Protection Federation**, Association House, 99 West Street, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7EN Tel: 01274 861338 Email: [pfpf@associationhouse.org.uk](mailto:pfpf@associationhouse.org.uk)

**Press enquiries to:**

Abby Crook, Michael Rigby Associates, 15 Market Street, Wotton-under-Edge, GL12 7AE

Tel: 01453 521621

Email: [abby@521621.com](mailto:abby@521621.com)

**Editors notes:** The Passive Fire Protection Federation (PFPF - [www.pfpf.org](http://www.pfpf.org)) is dedicated to growing awareness and giving advice on fire protection, and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO). Our members include the Chief Fire Officers Association, the Department of Communities and Local Government (previously the ODPM), the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Building Research Establishment. Our website carries advice on what to check and best practice in all passive fire protection measures

**Release date:** 26 October