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### **Updated fire regulations get six out of 10 from the Passive Fire Protection Federation**

On 6 April 2007 the changes to Approved Document B (AD B) which regulates fire safety in buildings come into force. Issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) the document is an important set of guidelines that has, over the years significantly progressed fire safety in England and Wales. But is it starting to show its age? Founded on technical work carried out in the 1960s, the urban environment has changed dramatically since AD B's inception. While welcoming the updated regulations the Passive Fire Protection Federation (PFPF) give the new regulations just six out of 10.

The PFPF commends the efforts to make the guidance more accessible by splitting it into two volumes - one relating to dwelling houses the other to all other buildings. The inclusion of Third Party Certification schemes (TPC's) is also worthy of praise. It is a vital first step in ensuring the highest standards in the manufacturing and installation of fire safety products are met. To this end the document recommends the use of Third Party Certification schemes. However, the new AD B does not establish objective criteria for determining what makes a good or bad certification scheme, and leaves open the question of who validates the 'experts' whose job it is to judge these schemes.

Perhaps the most serious flaw is the lack of specific guidance on the design of tall and multi-functional buildings. This has to be seen as a significant omission. These structures have become such a distinct and integral part of our modern landscape that the need to consider their inherent and particular fire safety requirements is now long

overdue. It is no longer satisfactory for the regulations to stop at buildings over 30m high.

The PFPF hope this milestone revision will see the DCLG authorise a fundamental technical review to address the issues of modern construction, design and practice.

**END**

325 words

**Image attached:** no

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**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 among others. Our website carries advice on what to check and best practice in all passive fire protection measures