

WINTER
2013

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Regular Testing
– It's Important!

How To Lift A
Ton

Where Do You
Stand?

Ask Professor
Gerbil Anything!

Welcome to our
Christmas
Newsletter!

We know, we know.
Right now the last
thing you want to
think about are the
'What ifs' at work.
But winter is one of
the most dangerous
times of the year. All
that ice...!

So read on for a
wonderful selection
of Yuletide Goodies
to make sure you're
safe for your ho-ho-
holidays!

**The Award-
Winning
Edition!!!***

**(We've won awards for our
services not our newsletter!)*



Fire Force For The Win!

We are the first and only fire safety company in the UK
who have toiled tirelessly to achieve four separate accreditations
for our work in fire safety.

A Huge Achievement!



Captain Sanjay released a personal statement when NSI announced the achievement and we've included some of it below:

'...This accolade truly upholds the hard work our team has put into our company and unmistakably demonstrates our expertise and continual commitment to give our clients the very best in terms of service and quality.'

We were lucky enough to have the **Rt. Hon. Mr William Hague** stop by to present us our awards and he commented that *'...you've clearly raised the standard for your industry.'*
(See Page 10 for our cheeky grins!)



Enter The Dragon...

Victory In Theo Paphitis' Twitter Competition!

The Fire Safety Company beat back the competition this September to become a winner of Theo Paphitis' #SBS competition!

For those who aren't familiar, the #SBS competition takes place on twitter every week.

It's a timed, hard fought effort to make sure you have the best and brightest of all tweets; because only the best will catch the attention of the Dragon himself.

We're ecstatic to have secured ourselves this honour and the Fire Force is getting ready to step it up a gear; but with a Dragon behind us what is going to get in our way?

Our warmest thanks to Theo Paphitis for giving us the opportunity to connect with so many fantastic companies!

Want to see our entry? Check out our Twitter Feed! Look for [@Sanjayfire](#)



Don't Forget Our Health & Safety Section!! Page 5!

Turn your attention to the centre piece of the next two pages!

What you're looking at is a free, easy-to-use checklist to help you out.

Now who said we never give you anything?

Want more information on any specific test? Get in touch and one of the Fire Force will be happy to help!



Why Regular Testing Is Good For Your Building...

When it comes to knowing what should be tested and when, we understand that it can be a bit of a rabbit warren. Every building will have different requirements and navigating your way through to emerge successful on the other side can be tricky.

But regular testing is one of **the best ways** to make sure that your fire safety is always up to scratch and functioning.

Fire Detection and Alarm Systems			
Frequency	Details of Test	Responsibility	Which Standard?
Weekly	Manual Call Point	User	BS 5839
	Control Panel Function Check		
	Remote Alarm Centre Transmission Check		
Monthly	Standby Power Generator Tested	Competent User	
	Standby batteries inspected		
Quarterly	Standby batteries and connections inspected	Competent Person	
Six-monthly*	To a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
Annually	To a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
*The recommended period between successive inspection and servicing visits should not exceed six months			
Portable Fire Extinguishers / Hose Reels / Fire Blankets			
Monthly	Extinguishers unobstructed, free from damage and charged	User	BS 5306 BS 671 BS EN 1369
	Hose reels free from obstructions, leaks and corrosion		
	Fire blankets in correct location and free from obstruction		
Annually	Extinguishers subject to basic service	Competent Person	
	Hose reels subject to inspection and maintenance		
	Fire blankets inspected		
Every 5 Years	Water, foam and powder extinguishers subject to extended service and recharge (if necessary)	Competent Person	
	Hose reels pressurised to maximum working pressure		
Every 10 Years	CO2 extinguishers subject to overhaul and recharge	Competent Person	

Focus on weekly testing. One building with 20 call points means setting the alarm off twenty times if you only do it once. That's a lot of disruption to staff inside. But one per week means people get into a routine of hearing the alarm **AND** the call points get tested regularly.

It also means faults with the system are more likely to be spotted.

Regular testing identifies problems as they arise.

You can replace faulty detectors as soon as they fail; this keeps your building in good nick and if there ever happens to be a 'surprise visit' you're completely up-to-scratch.



...And Why Is That Good For You?

Well the first and possibly greatest benefit of all working fire prevention methods is the obvious; they save lives. This is one that seems to be overlooked a *lot* in the news. People risk the lives of others through substandard equipment far more often than you'd like to believe (check out page 8 for a few we've rounded up for this newsletter).

But there is one benefit that affects the responsible person directly: the clue being the responsible.



Fixed Suppression Systems			
Frequency	Details of Test	Responsibility	Which Standard?
Weekly	Pressure gauges, stop valves, water/other suppressant levels, pumps checked and alarms sounded	User	BS EN 12845 BS EN 12259 BS EN 12416 BS EN 12094 BS 5306
Monthly	Standby batteries inspected	Competent User	
3 Monthly	To a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
6 Monthly	To a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
Annually	To a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
Emergency Lighting			
Daily	Visual inspection of power supply to emergency lighting	User	BS 5266 BS EN 50172
Monthly	To a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
Annually	To a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
Other Equipment			
Weekly	Fire-fighting lift switches tested	User	BS EN 81 BS 5588 BS EN 12101 BS 5306
Monthly	Visual inspection of fire mains, dry and wet risers, inlets etc.	User	
3 Monthly	Inspection of smoke and heat control systems to a schedule as detailed in the appropriate Standard and manufacturer's recommendations	Competent Person	
6 Monthly	Thorough examination of fire-fighting and evacuation lifts (or to a Written Scheme of Examination)	Competent Person	
Annually	Annual testing of fire hydrants, dry and wet risers	Competent Person	

*Professor Gerbil hard at work
Battery Calculations are
enough to confuse anyone!*



The law does govern the testing of all those devices listed in the checklist and the title of Responsible Person is not given lightly. When your building is up to scratch you're fulfilling your obligations.

If your building isn't up to scratch, if anything happens, **you are responsible**.

There is also the huge, immense feeling of relief you'll feel when you realise you've not only met your obligations, but have ensured that a building full of people are now that much safer because of your actions. That's got to be good for your karma –





Fire Assembly Points: Where Do You Stand?

Fire Assembly Points; every building needs one, but where do you position them?

Well there is some guidance in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). A safe location for the fire assembly point is identified as 'a safe point beyond the premises'.

The 'beyond the premises' is the key. Locating the assembly point in a courtyard for example wouldn't be considered suitable as there is no exit from that area if another risk did present itself. By ensuring that your assembly point is off the premises completely ensures safety from fire.

But then come a whole host of other problems. Are you going to be in the way of the Fire Service? Are any people going to get hit by a car as they travel across a busy road to the assembly point?

With those issues in mind, we've included some helpful bullet points below about things that need to be considered when you're selecting your Fire Assembly Point.

The signs should be really easy to spot



- ✓ Where Do Your Final Exits Lead? Do they lead to a safe location or will you need to move it further?
- ✓ How many people is the assembly point going to need to accommodate? Can everyone gather there safely?
- ✓ Are there any people with mobility issues? Are they going to struggle if it is too far away? Will they have access issues? (e.g. steps)
- ✓ Are you going to be crossing roads? Is there a safe place to do this?
- ✓ Is the route suitably illuminated?
- ✓ Will your assembly point require shelter for any vulnerable evacuees?

- ✓ Are there any outlets from the building which may expel smoke/heat or even debris into the safe area?
- ✓ How much traffic (vehicle & pedestrian) is likely to be encountered? Will this cause a problem for a safe exit?



A Helping Hand:

Above all make sure the location is well sign-posted. A fire assembly point is no good if no-one has a clue where it is!



The Health & Safety Section

Manual Handling

Or: How To Lift Tonnes of Presents Without Hurting Yourself

Ah Christmas. That delightful time of year when everyone begins lifting heavy packages *alone* to keep up the mystery of 'what's in the box...'

We thought this would be the perfect time to share common injuries connected to carrying large, heavy objects incorrectly AND how best not to get them!



Four Most Common Types of Injury:

- ➔ Sprains / Strains
- ➔ Contusions
- ➔ Fractures
- ➔ Lacerations

Areas of the Body Most Likely to Be Injured:

- ➔ The muscles and ligaments of the back
- ➔ Arms, fingers and thumbs
- ➔ The hands
- ➔ The legs

Our Best Tips!

Watch Your Back

The best and easiest way to avoid this most common of injuries is to use appropriate machinery to do the lifting/moving for you. Of course, this isn't going to help in an environment where there is no equipment so below are three simple ways to save your back (in the event you can't get someone to help you).

Avoid Weird Body Angles

If the item isn't in proper reach, don't grab it. Make sure there is suitable space to move yourself or rotate the item without bending or twisting

Perfect Your Moves

Pulling is more efficient than pushing when you're using body weight and either of these work best at waist height

Forward or backward pushing/pulling is stronger than left/right and will put less strain on you.

Rest Up

Don't overdo it! If you're going to be working for a while make sure you use appropriate rest periods.

A Brief Overview of...

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 & What Is Required

- a. Avoid Manual Handling whenever possible
- b. Carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments whenever Option A cannot be fulfilled
- c. Reduce the risk of injury as much as possible
- d. Provide details of weight characteristics of loads
- e. Review Risk Assessments if they become invalid or where significant change has altered the work



Common Myths of Health & Safety	Hard Hats for Trapeze Artists
	Although it was widely reported that under EU legislation trapeze artists would be required to use hard hats to ensure compliance with Health & Safety regulations, this has since been identified as being a myth. The HSE have commented that <i>'[hard hats] have no place on a trapeze'</i> .
	No Christmas Decorations In The Office!
	Although this one gets recycled every year all across the UK, there has never been any move from the HSE to ban Christmas decorations. In fact the HSE have commented that their Christmas decorations go up without fuss every year! As long as suitable ladders are used for the work there seems to be no problem with a few festive items in the office.
	Incoming! Mortar Boards!
	Believe it or not, people began talking about how the HSE had banned the throwing of mortar boards on graduation day. This one is false because the risk of injury is minimal. The HSE are fairly certain this one started so as to limit the damage done to the mortar boards—more damage is done to them when they're thrown than anyone the might hit!

Princess Phillipa says 'Think Ahead & Control the Risks of your Workplace!'

Basic Ways to Control Health & Safety at Work

Good House-Keeping
This is the most important one as it will ensure all risks are guarded against to the extent of your control.

Maintain Floor Conditions
If part of the floor is damaged, or the corner of a carpet starts curling up, *repair it.*

Adequate Space
If there is enough room to do a job, there should be enough room for the equipment to be used safely.

Be Danger Aware
Make sure all sources of potential risk are identified with the correct labels (i.e. are your taps marked to identify if they're safe to drink?)



We know it's a bit old fashioned but there's a very good motto from the Scout Movement:

'Be Prepared'

When it comes to preventing risks in the workplace, this still holds true.

Have policies in place for storage, make sure that cleaners use the correct signs when they have cleaning equipment out; it all helps to lessen accidents in the workplace.

And most of all be observant; try to spot hazards as they're developing and not when it's too late!

Human behaviour is a major factor.

If there are rules in place you need to follow them because no-one makes them up for fun.

If you're instructed to wear anti-slip shoes and suffer an accident because you *don't* then an injury may not be the only nasty surprise as your employer may choose to discipline you.



Terminate The Risks: How To Use Machines To Avoid Injury In The Future



Employer's Responsibilities

- Identification of all manual handling operations in job activities.
- As far as possible; avoid hazardous manual handling.
- Create and update (when necessary) risk assessments where a hazardous manual handling operation cannot be avoided – this should be a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in line with current standards.
- Reduce risks wherever possible to the lowest level.
- Provide information on the load which is required to be moved.
- Provide training to improve the operation where necessary.



The two best ways to control a risk of injury is to complete the manual handling operation via one of the two ways below:

Automation:

Where moving or positioning loads is carried out automatically by a machine as part of a larger process.

Mechanisation:

Get a machine to do it! Rather than sweat over it, have a mechanical piece of equipment pick up the slack!

EXAMPLES OF SUCH MACHINES...



Fork Lift Trucks
Hoists (inc. small hand-powered hydraulic versions)
Sack Trolleys
Gantry Cranes
Roller conveyors
Pallet Trucks

Employee's Responsibilities – Everyone Has Their Part!

- § Make use of equipment and follow instructions provided for them to promote safety during manual handling operations*
- § A general responsibility to take care of themselves and others when in a work environment

Princess Phillipa Says:

One quick reminder! Whenever a manual handling operation is conducted using any of the above methods, ***new risks are introduced.***

The only people who should use equipment to move any kind of load are those who are trained!

*Regulation 5 of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992



And If Machines Aren't an Option - Just Remember T.I.L.E.

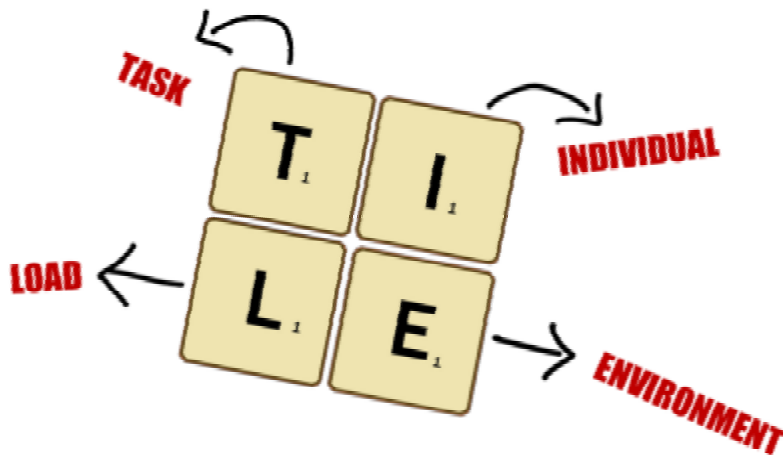
Four Areas That Form The Basis of A Manual Handling Risk Assessment

Individual

The age, build and fitness of all employees should be considered when they are being selected for certain tasks

Medical Conditions – These should be reported to the employer if there is a greater risk of injury.

Certain manual handling operations require specific training. Only those with it should be employed to do so.



Environment

Space Constraints – Is there enough space to enable good posture during the operation?

Uneven/Unstable Floor Surfaces – Will you have a sure grip with your feet?

Change in Floor Levels – Are there any steps/gradients which must be taken into account?

Temperature – Is this going to fluctuate? Is there likely to be increased humidity?

Poor Ventilation can lead to increased fatigue – will this be an issue?

Is the **lighting** sufficient to ensure safe operations?

Task

Will employees be required to **hold/handle** the item away from the body?

Will employees have to perform **awkward body movements** to complete the operation?

Will there be excessive **lifting/lowering**?

Will there be excessive **reaching across distance**?

Will there be excessive **pushing/pulling**?

Will they be in a **seated/standing position**? (This will alter the stress on the body)

Is the work rate imposed by a **process**? (e.g. an automated conveyor delivery system)

Is there a risk of a **sudden movement** of the load? (E.g. live animals/liquids)

Load

Weight – Must be considered in conjunction with all other factors

Bulk or Shape – Bulky/Unwieldy difficult to hold items stand more chance of being dropped

Stability – Items partly filled with liquid may be prone to sudden weight shifts

Physical Properties – Is the item hot/cold? Is it slippery? Is there anything about it that will require additional precautions?



In The News:

Sex Club Stripped of Cash

A fetish club in Devon was forced to pay out £1300 after it was discovered they had not complied with a Prohibition notice restricting the use of the premises. Officers from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service arrived on site, accompanied by police officers, to find that club owner John Malcolm Vaughan Morgan had ignored their previous notice.

The matter was taken to Plymouth Magistrates' Court where Morgan pleaded guilty to a breach of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Morgan was fined £300 and ordered to pay £1000 in costs following his appearance in court.

Factory Burnt To A Crisp

A Real Crisps factory in South Wales was the site of an arson attack which caused 50% of the building to collapse.

Sixty five firefighters from twenty stations were needed to bring the blaze under control and to safely evacuate the twenty members of staff in the premises.

The Sirhowy Valley Foods factory, which is run by the Tayto Group, employed 115 people, not all of whom can be relocated to other factories; despite the company's best efforts.

Colin William Goulding of Abertillery, the man charged with destroying the building, stood before magistrates only days after the arson attack.

There has been a call from local Plaid Cymru Councillor, Keith Lloyd, for the company to restart operations in the local area.

He stated that 'Everything must be done to protect the livelihoods of employees and save jobs'.

Goulding, an employee at the factory, was remanded in custody.

If you've enjoyed our news section, sign up for our e-newsletter for current news relating to fire safety. We'll send our latest updates right to your inbox.

Call the Fire Force to join! It's quick, easy and painless; not to mention a great way to keep up-to-date with your favourite fire safety superheroes!

01748 811 992



The Fire Safety Company was victim to a crime of a different sort than the ones we usually share here. Whilst in London on one of their whirlwind tours of the UK, our engineers returned to their van to find that everything not nailed down had been removed.

It was a nasty shock for everyone and severely hampered our ability to complete work for a number of days.

Although none of the tools have so far been recovered we are happy to share that we are once again 100% capable of completing any and all jobs required.

Although this was a painful lesson to learn as much of our equipment is very specialised (often having only limited suppliers in the UK) we've made improvements. The Fire Force won't get caught out like that again!



Ask Professor Gerbil Anything!

Professor Gerbil the Wonder Cat has taken time out these past few months to try and answer a couple of the **most pressing questions** we've have during that time.

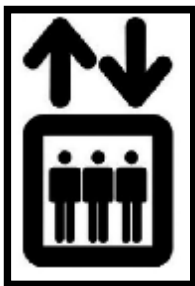
We thought everyone might **find the answers useful** so see below for something that might be relevant to your business!



Is It OK To Use Lifts During An Evacuation?

Although it can be tempting, as a general rule of thumb we're going to have to go no with this one. Most lifts are not suitable for evacuation and can get stuck, leaving occupants **vulnerable to smoke and heat**. There are exceptions, where lifts are clearly marked as being suitable for evacuation but this is generally in buildings which will require large-scale evacuations.

Just to be safe, avoid lifts at costs during an evacuation. Stick to the stairs!



We Haven't Had An Inspection From The Fire Brigade Recently. Do We Need One?

Fire Brigades, as the principle enforcers of the FSO are understandably busy when it comes to Fire Risk Assessments. So their main focus will always be 'high risk sites' - buildings in poor repair or that aren't being managed properly. These are seen to be a **greater risk to the community** so are given precedence.

As long as your fire risk assessment is up-to-date and you've followed the recommendations though, when they do get to your building, you should be ready!



We've Created Our PEEPs. How Do We Test Them?

For starters, a PEEP is a 'Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan'.

And discussing the strengths and weaknesses of your PEEPs will only get you so far. The best way to test any kind of evacuation procedure is to practise; during a fire is not the time to find that **critical flaw**.

So why not try a 'live practise'?

Have someone use the PEEP as required during an evacuation and see how staff handle it. That should show you any issues you have and give you a chance to improve if you need it!



We weren't kidding about the cheeky grins!



Final Thoughts of The Fire Force

Well that's the end of another newsletter! We know, we're sad too.

But wow how much was crammed into this one! We weren't worried it was too much; we knew you'd be able to 'handle' it!

On a serious note though, there are far greater risks of fire and accidents during the Christmas season.

We'd like to draw your attention quickly to the danger of overloading plug sockets and extension cables both at work and at home.

This can be a short leap to a fire and with so many additional flammable items in the area it can spread that much quicker.

With the seasonal warnings over, we'd like to thank you for working with us for the past year, we've thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and look forward to continuing with you next year.

Thanks for reading; look out for our next newsletter in the spring which will once again be sharing as much health, fire and safety information as we can possibly cram into it!

"Merry Christmas from The Fire Safety Company!"



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YOUR 10 STEP PLAN OF ACTION

You've read the newsletter, what action do you need to take?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



Remember:

If you need help
with anything, the
Fire Force is only
one phone call
away!

