



An Inspector Calls!

Dealing With the Local Fire and Rescue Service



What Fire and Rescue Services Do

- ❑ Fire Authorities are the main agency for enforcing the Fire Safety Order and will:-
 - ❑ Target resources and inspections at premises that present the highest risk.
 - ❑ Continue to look into complaints regarding fire safety.
 - ❑ Investigate fires in poorly managed premises and may carry out targeted inspections.



What and Who is a Fire Inspector?

- **England and Wales – Appointed Inspector**
- **Scotland – Enforcement Officer**
- **Northern Ireland – Authorised Officer**



Powers of a Fire Inspector

An inspector may do anything necessary for the purpose of carrying out his / her duties and in particular, so far as may be necessary for that purpose, shall have power to **do at any reasonable time** the following:

- to enter any premises which he/she has reason to believe it is necessary for him to enter for the purpose mentioned above and to inspect the whole or part of the premises and anything in them, where such entry and inspection may be effected without the use of force;
- to make such inquiry as may be necessary for any of the following purposes—



Powers of a Fire Inspector

- Check compliance
- Identify the responsible person(s)
- Demand relevant information / records required by the FSO
- Inspect and take copies of records
- Require any responsible person to help
- Take samples
- Dismantle or test any equipment or material which may cause danger



Why Me?

Part of the F&RS planned inspection regime:

Planned inspections – frequency depends but they may come round, either annually, every three years or if you are very good, every five years.

Also, you may have had a complaint made against you by:

- Member of the public
- Member of a family
- Disgruntled member of staff
- Another enforcing authority e.g. CQC, Environmental Health, HSE etc
- Operational fire crews after a fire or other call



Role of the Fire Inspector



Where necessary, premises will be visited and a FIRE SAFETY AUDIT will be carried out by a Fire Inspector

Inspectors will utilise knowledge of legislation & codes of practice, fire engineering principles and professional judgement, when auditing premises to validate 'reasonableness in the circumstances.'



What can they do under the law?

- State that the you comply (some F&RS use the term 'broadly compliant')
- Issue a minor deficiencies notice or similar (this is not a legislative action -this is an 'informal' notice)
- Issue and Enforcement Notice in which you have at least 28 days to comply or any other time the F&RS state.
- Issue and Alterations Notice
- Issue a Prohibition Notice



What can you do under the law?

- Carry out the work that is required by the F&RS in any notice issued
- Appeal to the Court within 21 days of the issue of any formal notice
- Ask for a determination by the Secretary of State



What should you do?



- Be there on the day!
- Provide a quiet office or place to view all documentation.
- Have that documentation spread out on the desk or table.
- Be prepared for any questions they may ask in relation to fire safety.
- IMPORTANT** - Get their details, name contact etc. or a business card off them.



What should you do?



- Accompany them around the building on their audit – *do not delegate this to anyone else!*
- Ask questions of them as they will ask questions of you.
- Be **ASSERTIVE** without being aggressive, remember you are the expert in the field of what you do, they are not!
- Take notes as you walk around, make notes of their comments and ask them to clarify if you are not sure. *If they cannot clarify, note it! (In legal terms these are what they call contemporaneous notes).*



What should you do?

- Once the walkabout is complete, return to your office and check your notes with them so that you 'agree' on everything that they have 'picked up'.
- Ask them if there is anything else they wish to comment on before they leave.
- Ask them to fill in the Audit/Inspection page of your FRA and sign it. If they refuse then note that on the page with name of Inspector, date and time whilst they are there.
- Sign and date your notes, and attach the notes to the Fire Risk Assessment.



What should you do?



- If possible, carry out any actions or remedial work that has been mentioned or 'spotted' and mark these actions in your notes.
- Start actions and note what you have done for any 'larger' remedial work.
- Revisit your Fire Risk Assessment and decide if it needs updating or a new one carried out.
- Phone Bob!**



What should you do?

- If you receive an enforcement notice then act on it immediately.
- Any other letter – they use phrases like: ‘deemed to satisfy’, ‘minor breaches’, ‘broadly compliant’ etc. Keep on file preferably with a copy in the Fire Risk Assessment and complete any actions that you are asked to do.





Questions?

