FIRE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN RETAIL PREMISES

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BRE, Garston, Watford WD25 9XX
Tel: 01923 664743
Email: secretary@bretrust.co.uk
www.bretrust.org.uk

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www.brebookshop.com
or
IHS BRE Press
Willoughby Road
Bracknell RG12 8FB
Tel: 01344 328038
Fax: 01344 328005
Email: brepress@ihs.com

For further help or guidance from BRE Global please contact:

Tel: +44 (0) 1923 664100
Fax: +44 (0) 1923 664910
Email: enquiries@breglobal.co.uk
Web: www.breglobal.com
www.redbooklive.com
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FOREWORD

It is vitally important that retailers do everything reasonably practicable to protect their colleagues, customers and premises from the many fire and security risks faced by their business on a daily basis. Actions taken to mitigate these risks need to be carefully considered since, for example, it is imperative that any security measures implemented do not adversely affect the capacity for those same people to be able to safely leave the premises if a fire does occur.

Starting with a background to the relevant legislation, this guide covers the basic principles of fire safety, how to carry out a fire risk assessment and the preparation of a fire emergency plan. Fire, however, is not the only threat to premises and people. Theft, terrorism and assault are also potential hazards which need to be addressed. A basic understanding of crime and how to prevent it are clearly explained.

No security or fire risk assessment should be carried out in isolation, and a responsible retailer should consider managing safety and security as 'Business as Usual'. This guide offers practical advice on how to balance both disciplines effectively. Most of the information is aimed at creating a culture of good practice for fire and security management within a business, and the guidance should act as an aide-memoire to assist those responsible for fire safety and security in ensuring they consider all the relevant issues.

Patrick Heaney BSc
Group Fire Safety Manager
J Sainsbury plc

ABOUT BRE AND BRE GLOBAL

The BRE Group is a world leading research, consultancy, training, testing and certification organisation raising sustainability and delivering innovation across the built environment and beyond. Its mission is to 'build a better world'.

BRE, part of the BRE Group, provides a complete range of consultancy, testing and commissioned research services covering all aspects of the built environment, and associated industries. It also makes significant contributions to the development of national and international standards for construction and fire safety. Additionally, it provides a complete events management service for BRE and other organisations, with onsite facilities suitable for a range of events, from small meetings through to a fully serviced 190 seat lecture theatre.

BRE Global is another major part of BRE Group. It incorporates LPCB (the Loss Prevention Certification Board) and BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method). LPCB is an independent third party approvals body offering certification of fire and security products and services. It also produces the *Red Book*, which lists those that are approved, and is used as a resource by specifiers. Similarly, *Green Book Live* brings together listings from BRE and a number of other organisations including: the Energy Saving Trust (for energy saving products), and One Planet Products (for products with 'Green' credentials). BREEAM provides a family of assessment methods and tools that are designed to help construction professionals understand and mitigate the environmental impacts of the developments they design and build. BRE Global organises training courses and events within the areas of fire, security and sustainability, and their world-renowned team of experts and scientists are also involved in providing research and advisory services within their field of knowledge.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the UK approximately 2.9 million people are employed in the retail trade which, with a turnover in 2009 of £285 billion, represents one of the UK's largest industries.

Provisional statistics* for the period April 2009 to March 2010 show that in the UK there were over 3000 fires in retail distribution premises, resulting in over 450 injuries and 7 deaths. The most common cause of fire in shops and retail premises is arson. Arson, the deliberate setting of fire, generally involves both breach of security and fire. Each year thousands of small businesses, including retail premises, are the subject of arson attacks. The Arson Prevention Bureau (www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk), in its guidance for small businesses, reported that in 2003 there were over 3100 arson attacks on shops, cafes and small businesses, and that up to 80% of businesses are seriously affected following a major fire, with many being forced to close.

As for security, figures from the British Retail Consortium for the year to April 2009 show that over a third of a million shoplifting offences were recorded and retail crime cost UK retailers over £1 billion.

Fire and breaches of security threaten the lives and well-being of your customers and staff, and your ability to continue in business. Customers expect retail premises to be welcoming, pleasant places to be in. They, and people who work in them, do not expect to be put in danger. Each person has placed his or her unspoken trust in those responsible for the premises. As the owner, manager or employee you have a duty of care to your staff and to all those who use your retail premises. If you have a fire, you could be personally liable for any injuries to employees, customers, tenants or contractors. You have a responsibility to minimise the risk of a fire occurring and to protect the lives of those on your premises.

There are many potential causes of fire and your premises should contain features and systems that, in the event of a fire, limit the spread of smoke (the primary cause of death) and flames, and critically protect the routes leading to the fire exits. Similarly, your premises may have several security weak points, but these can be strengthened, and intruders can be deterred by the presence of security features and systems.

* Provisional statistics provided by Communities and Local Government (September 2010)

FIRE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN RETAIL PREMISES

A practical guide to assessing the risk of fire and enhancing the security of retail premises. It identifies the important issues, and encourages an approach in which good fire safety and security practice become familiar and normal to employees.

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