



R B F & R S

news release

14/01/2008

No: 05/F&R

GUEST HOUSES UNDER FIRE SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

Fire Safety Inspection Officers from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service will be checking fire safety measures in guest houses across Berkshire.

Pete Boardman, Fire Safety Manager at RBFRS, said: "New legislation places the responsibility for ensuring fire safety, in all premises that are not single private dwellings, firmly on a named responsible person. It also requires the fire and rescue service to enforce the law.

"People who are asleep in unfamiliar buildings are more vulnerable and we have therefore prioritised inspections of hotels, guest houses and similar premises.

"Our inspection officers visit premises to help the responsible person to make their premises as safe as practicable. These inspectors follow the standards laid out in the [<http://www.firesafe.org.uk/html/intro/concord.htm>] on inspection good practice.

"However, they are also trained in evidence gathering as failure to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 can be a criminal act. In extreme cases and when in the public interest, we are required to consider prosecution."

Further advice is available from the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service at www.rbfrs.co.uk or by telephoning 0118 9452888.

ENDS.

Notes for editors:

- **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 became law in England on 1/10/06 and replaced many old fire safety laws, including the Fire Precautions Act that required larger hotels and guest houses to hold a fire certificate.**

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- The new legislation is less prescriptive and requires responsible persons, such as hoteliers, to assess and remove the risk from fire to persons using their premises.
- Fire and Rescue Services are required to enforce the Order.
- Guidance on how responsible persons can assess and remove fire risk is available in a suite of online documents
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firesafetyrisk4>.