



FETA NEWS

FETA Fire Extinguishing Trades Association

FIRE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES - JUST HOW AWARE IS UK BUSINESS?



Although Risk Assessment has been a fundamental requirement of fire safety legislation for a number of years, the level of awareness in many UK businesses is poor.

FETA is currently finalising a questionnaire which seeks to identify the levels of awareness in companies in the UK of their responsibilities under fire safety regulations.

For many years the fire protection industry has expressed concerns that many UK businesses have little or no knowledge of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations and the responsibilities they place on building owners and occupiers. Despite the strengthening of the regulations in 2000 so that the UK legislation fell in line with the European Union, awareness remains sketchy in many quarters. The confused situation

is certainly not helped by more than 100 different pieces of legislation facing businesses trying to comply with their fire safety responsibilities.

The new Fire Safety Order, to be introduced next year, provides a real opportunity to address the fragmentation which exists by drawing together the different pieces of legislation pertaining to fire safety into a cohesive whole. However, the creation of the Fire Safety Order is only half the story - communicating it to the marketplace is vital if the failings of the current situation are not to be repeated.

FETA welcomed the news that the Government has ear-marked

£2million to promote the new Fire Safety Order through a publicity group on which Suzanne Donovan represents the Fire Industry Confederation (FIC).

The thinking behind the development of the FETA questionnaire is to provide invaluable quantitative and qualitative data on levels of risk assessment awareness in UK companies in advance of the implementation of the Order.

This will provide not only an indication of the level of communication required but will also help to identify the areas where the communication efforts need to be particularly focused.

SIGNING OF 3-WAY PROTOCOL

The invaluable role played by fire extinguishers in reducing commercial losses has been recognised by the public sector and the fire service with the signing of a joint protocol by FETA, CACFOA (Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association) and LGA (Local Government Association).

John Worboys, Chairman of FETA, Jeff Ord, President of CACFOA and Jane Hobday, Chair LGA Fire signed the 'Protocol for Portable Fire Extinguishers' at the FIRE2003 conference in Glasgow.

The timing of the protocol is particularly significant given the changing role of the Fire and Rescue Services following the publication of the Government

White Paper, in addition to the significant changes in fire safety legislation due with the fire safety reforms to be implemented.

The Fire and Rescue Service is moving from its traditional role of intervention to a much more prevention based approach and has recognised that fire extinguishers are an integral part of any attempt to reduce deaths, injuries and the £6.6 billion annual cost attributed to fire in the UK.

The protocol encompasses a number of different types of premises in which local authorities have an involvement, from offices and shops to educational establishments and healthcare facilities.

Commenting on the protocol, John Worboys, FETA Chairman said - "So many of the premises in which fire safety products are protecting the public every day are under local authority control. From our recent pan-European Survey into the use of fire extinguishers we have shown how important it is that extinguishers continue to be a central feature in integrated risk management plans and we are delighted to be part of this protocol which shows how we can work with the fire service and the public sector to further advance fire safety in the UK."

Copies of the protocol are available from the FETA secretariat.

John Worboys, FETA Chairman, signs the Joint Protocol watched by Jane Hobday, Chair LGA Fire and Jeff Ord, President of CACFOA



NEW CHAIRMAN OF MARKETING



Gwyn Ewens, new Chairman of the FETA Marketing Group, takes a break at the Annual Conference

Gwyn Ewens has been appointed the new Chairman of the FETA Marketing Strategy Sectoral Committee. 31 year old Gwyn, a Product Manager with Chubb Fire Ltd, has been an active member of the group since returning to the portables industry 2 years ago and succeeds David Bonnett who is relinquishing the Chairmanship due to his commitments with the Fire Industry Confederation (FIC), the umbrella organisation under which FETA and a number of other fire related trade associations operate.

Commenting on his appointment, Gwyn said - "I am absolutely thrilled to be elected

as the Chairman of the FETA Marketing Committee. It is no understatement to say that the work that FETA does for its members and the fire extinguisher industry in general is immense. By heading up the marketing committee, I very much look forward to ensuring all parts of the fire industry, commerce and Parliament get to hear about, appreciate and most importantly benefit from all that FETA has to offer."

The marketing group is one of three sectoral committees, the others being Manufacturer's & Technical and Finance all working on behalf of FETA members and reporting into the FETA Council.

BRAVERY AWARD FOR M6 HERO

At the dinner following the annual conference on November 25, the FETA Award for Bravery was presented to Richard Carter, a Chubb service engineer, for his prompt intervention in a motor traffic incident on the M6.

Richard was driving north on one of the country's busiest stretches of motorway when he spotted a Renault on fire on the southbound carriageway. Richard turned around at the next exit and arrived on the scene in a matter of minutes.

The flames had spread - with the potential for an explosion or a multiple accident - but Richard quickly doused the flames from the car and from the tarmac to which it had spread using an extinguisher he had in his van.

To recognise Richard's initiative and his bravery in preventing an escalation into a serious incident, FETA Chairman John

Worboys presented the commemorative FETA Sword, plus an engraved tankard.

In accepting the sword Richard commented - "I am very proud to receive this award. I extinguished the fire but the training that I had received from my employers was also an important factor."



Richard Carter, winner of the 2003 FETA bravery award with girlfriend Louise Lavelle

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

The lifeblood of any trade association is its members and FETA is no exception. A membership drive is currently underway to help build on FETA's already enviable reputation as a real force at all levels of the fire protection arena, whether it be training schemes to enhance skill levels in the industry or acting as a cohesive voice for member companies in liaising with Government.



Martin Reed, MD of FDSA Fire Protection

FETA represents the interests of all of its members, whatever their size. Martin Reed is Managing Director of FDSA Fire Protection, a relatively small independent company servicing the London area from its Harrow offices. Martin sets out what he sees as the benefits of FETA membership and how a pro-active approach can reap real rewards.

"Some three years after our company's incorporation in 1991 our business was assessed by FETA at our premises as being a bona-fide fire equipment servicing company. The process was short and painless. The outcome - approval as a Full Member of FETA.

"Since that time we have expanded slowly to also encompass other areas of fire protection, including alarm and detection and passive fire protection. However, our corner stone has always been the humble fire extinguisher and this remains an important link in the other services we provide today. We are still very much a 'small business' and need ongoing support in running our business, whether it is financial, our suppliers, or our loyal customers. The support we receive from FETA is not undervalued either.

"Looking back some ten years it seemed at the time a natural progression for us to be allied with an Association, which has much history, credence and respect in the fire protection industry. "However, it was only more recently, having opted to become more pro-active (for my sins) by sitting on both the Servicing and Marketing Committees, that I have had a much fuller appreciation of the level of communication FETA has with Government and other important policy making bodies. This I believe does ensure representation of the best interests of its members and provides vital information on prospective legislation and many other matters.

"As a small business we are only too aware of the time and cost pressures that similar sized companies face. We have been working towards ISO 9001 and hope to be announcing our registration very shortly. Yes this takes time and commitment and any FETA members not currently approved to the standard will be required to take this route with the plans to make the BAFE Registered Technicians Scheme mandatory. But when you consider that one of the main benefits of the FETA logo is to demonstrate that you are a company committed to quality - a real differentiator in a competitive marketplace to a company who is not a member - further enhancing the strength of the logo can only be a good thing for FETA and its members.

"Becoming more closely involved has also dispelled the rumour of FETA only being supported by the larger, well established FP companies and plc's. I have been very encouraged by the optimism and drive among the representatives of such companies to actively support those of us with slightly less history or weight in the industry.

"This really is very positive and should encourage us all to get on board FETA. It makes sound commercial sense too - as we can testify."

For further details on membership of FETA please complete the Faxback form.

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

FETA Council extends a warm welcome to the following companies:

ASCO Extinguishers Co. Ltd., Glasgow - Large contract maintenance company

Euro Fire Protection and Maintenance Service, South Croydon - Small family business offering service and maintenance of portables

Saffire Products Ltd., Nottingham - Manufacturers of fire extinguishers and accessories

Peterlee Fire Company Ltd., Peterlee, County Durham - Supply and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers

FETA, Neville House, 55 Eden St., Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 1BW.

Tel: 020 8549 8839 Fax: 020 8547 1564 e-mail: feta@abft.org.uk Website: www.feta.org.uk

FETA CHAIRMAN SPILLS THE BEANS

The 2003 FETA conference took place on 25 November at the Windmill Village Hotel in Coventry and provided members and guests with a fascinating insight into one of the success stories in portable fire fighting.

FETA Chairman, John Worboys, led a session in which he revealed some of the secrets behind the growth of his business, Fire Protection Services, from its formation to a £24million and 400 employee company. John was joined by his former colleagues, Peter Chilton, Executive Director responsible for Human Resources at FPS and David Brough, the company's Financial Director, both now operating on a consultancy basis.

Under the title 'Spilling the Beans', John, Peter and David covered a wide range of topics, from the importance of a company's employees through to how to prepare a business for sale. They drew on their own considerable experience to give the delegates a real insight into some of the components necessary for a successful business, including the drive and enthusiasm for which John has become renowned throughout the UK fire industry.

Also on the agenda the 'nuts and bolts' of FETA members' businesses were discussed, namely the Regulatory Reform Order, ISO 9000, Risk Assessment, amendments to British Standards and 3rd Party Certification. This section of the conference began with a presentation from FETA Marketing Committee Chairman



FETA Chairman John Worboys provides some words of wisdom during his session entitled 'Spilling the Beans'

Gwyn Ewens who addressed the subject of the Fire Safety Order, drawing out some of the more salient points and the likely impact the reforms will have on companies operating within the fire protection arena. Gwyn later returned to outline the 'Top Ten' things you need to know about changes to the BS 5306 standard. 'Integrated Risk Management' (IRM) was discussed by West Midlands Fire Service, IRM Project Manager David Cotton, followed by David Brown who covered CO₂ discharge tests and updated members on the BAFE Registered Technicians Scheme which is planned to become mandatory for all FETA members to operate next year. This will require members to become ISO 9000 registered and David was therefore followed by Mark Woods of Status Management Services who gave practical advice on how to achieve ISO registration, drawing on his experience in working with fire protection companies.

With almost 120 delegates, it proved to be one of FETA's most successful annual conferences, with many staying on for a dinner in the evening which featured the presentation of the FETA Bravery Award, (See opposite - top left.)

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