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New 'joined up' fire regulations now in force

Approved Documents to Building Regulations set the scene for the construction industry and its product suppliers and revisions are always eagerly awaited. The new version of Approved Document B (AD B), issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) at the end of last year, was no exception.

AD B came into force this April, and The Passive Fire Protection Federation (PFPF) applauds the efforts to make the guidance more accessible by splitting it into two volumes - one for dwelling houses, the other for all other buildings. The strengthened position of Third Party Accreditation is also a welcome change.

Where fire safety is concerned AD B follows the Regulatory Reform Order, Fire Safety (RRO) that came into force last October. The RRO requires all businesses in the UK to nominate one person with specific responsibility for all aspects of fire safety. This individual must conduct a thorough risk assessment of the business' premises - including an appraisal of passive fire protection measures. Together, the two documents give architects, specifiers, builders, owners and occupiers a whole new platform to work from when designing, constructing and occupying a building. AD B requires a developer to pass on information regarding the fire safety strategy, and products used, to the owner/occupier. This links nicely with the RRO and is a good example of 'joined up government'.

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Editors notes: The Passive Fire Protection Federation (PFPF - www.pfpf.org) is dedicated to growing awareness and giving advice on fire protection, and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO). Our members include the Chief Fire Officers Association, the Department of Communities and Local Government (previously the ODPM), the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Building Research Establishment among others. Our website carries advice on what to check and best practice in all passive fire protection measures