

False Economy

By David Sugden, Chairman of the Passive Fire Protection Federation

The PFPF has been a strong advocate of Third Party Certification since the Federation came into being 20 years ago, indeed, as I said at Firex North last October my old firm took out the first Certifire Product Certificate back in 1987. I was therefore pleased to see the Risk Assessment Certification that Exova are now offering. The RA is central to fire safety in the Build Environment and we are seeing many prosecutions of firms who fail to provide "Suitable and Sufficient" risk assessments, something over 1500 actions have now been taken. The pressure has been on companies to get these in place and so many people have used assessors found on the internet and finished up with an inadequate assessment because it looked like a cheap solution. Last year a retailer in London was fined £400,000 with half as much again in costs for such a failure

I have also noted a prosecution in the last few weeks of a residential landlord in Ilfacombe who paid out £158,000 in fines and costs for failing to have proper fire doors in his 4 storey building causing 13 tenants to flee to the roof when fire broke out. The need to buy properly certified doors should be obvious and yet this landlord probably went to his DIY store to save money! Having read about the prosecution I am now wondering where that leaves his insurance.

Both these areas show the false economy that can result from a failure to do the job properly and I congratulate Exova who I know were pioneers of this type of scheme in PFP, we have come a long way since 1987 and many buildings are safer because of this work.

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