

The Building Regulations & c. (Amendment No.3) and Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Regulations 2013

Residential Automatic Fire Suppression Systems

From the 1 January 2016 all new homes, and homes created by a 'Material Change of Use' in Wales will be required by the Welsh Building Regulations to be fitted with an automatic fire suppression system.

In 2013 a report was undertaken into the amount of deaths/injuries caused by fires in the previous 10 years. On average over this period, 17 deaths and over 500 injuries resulted from fires in residential properties in Wales and it is hoped these numbers will be significantly reduced by the introduction of the new measures.

The requirement is specific to new homes, although the requirement has been in place for Care Homes and other residences that are used for sleeping accommodation since April 2014.

The costs of an installation can vary, due to the type of installation/water pressures etc, but for a typical 3 bedroomed house it could be approximately £1400, increasing to £2500 if a pump is needed. Further issues and costs could arise if works have to be carried out in the conversion of properties and to installations fitted retrospectively.

The requirement has created work opportunities - Neath Port Talbot College are currently operating upgrading courses for plumbers as well as re-skilling courses for individuals in the installation of the systems.

The Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Carl Sargeant, announced a Welsh Government funded programme for the design and installation of fire sprinklers in social housing. The scheme has been operating for nearly a year looking at the;

- Design & installation
- Costs & cost savings
- Water supply issues
- Application of statutory guidance
- Experience of all key stakeholders

An interim report is due to be published this Autumn with the final report expected in Spring 2016.

The Bridgend County Borough Council Building Control Section hosted a seminar on 5 November 2015 with the speakers from the Technical Manager of the Welsh Government and RSP Sprinklers Wales to advise of the impending changes to Building Regulations relating to sprinkler systems in houses and flats from 1 January 2016.

Background to the legislation

June 2007 – Ann Jones AM won an assembly ballot to be the first individual AM to introduce a Legislative Competence Order [LCO]

February 2011 – Domestic Fire Safety [Wales] Measure 2011, introduced by Ann Jones AM, is passed by the National Assembly

April 2011 – Measure receives the Royal Assent

January 2012 – Building Regulations devolved to Welsh Ministers

May 2012 – Welsh Government made a commitment to introduce regulations in 2013.

October 2013 - Changes to the Building Regulations were made and published.

Recommendation:

That the report of the Corporate Director Communities be noted.

MARK SHEPHARD
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background Papers

None