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The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 1541

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is the biggest overhaul of fire safety legislation in over 30 years which will “simplify the law for thousands of businesses while placing a greater focus on prevention”. Originally it was due to come into force last month (April) but the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has announced it is deferring implementation to 1 October 2006 to give business and stakeholders more time to prepare.

The new law consolidates existing fire legislation. At present fire safety laws are scattered across more than 70 pieces of legislation. The reforms repeal the Fire Precautions Act 1971, the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (amended 1999) and amend or remove wherever possible the many other provisions dealing with fire safety contained in other legislation.

The Order also improves fire safety by placing the responsibility for it on the employer or 'responsible person' for that building or premises. Under the new legislation the 'responsible person' for each premises will be required to carry out an assessment of the risks of fire and take steps to reduce or remove the risk. Risk assessment will have to take into consideration the effect a fire may have on anyone in or around the premises. This will need to be kept under regular review.

In addition, businesses will no longer need a fire certificate - though fire and rescue authorities will still continue to inspect premises and ensure adequate fire precautions are in place.

The ODPM will be publishing a series of guides to assist those preparing fire risk assessments. More information is available at www.firesafetyguides.odpm.gov.uk



The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 1541 can be downloaded from www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051541.htm