

ROSEPARK PROSECUTION: Latest Developments

Prosecutions under fire safety legislation are not common. The most notable in recent years concerns the prosecution of the owners of Rosepark Care Home in Lanarkshire, where a fire in 2004 resulted in the deaths of 14 elderly people. Subsequently, the Procurator Fiscal charged the owners of the home with various offences under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations .

In February 2007, the High Court dismissed the charges against the owners, because the judge ruled that prosecution should not be brought against individual partners of the firm, but should be brought against the firm as a separate entity.

Following an unsuccessful appeal by the Crown Office in June, charges have now been brought against the firm. ■

(Continued from Page 1)

This includes permanent shift workers (e.g. night shift security staff), part-time staff, cleaners, etc. Special training is necessary for those with particular duties, such as fire wardens. After initial training on joining the organization, employees should receive refresher training once or twice a year.

Some organizations consider fire training to be impracticable, as they believe employees need to be sent off on an external course. Such courses may be one method for training those with special duties, but are not normally necessary for all building occupants. After the initial induction training, which may be part of an induction course or merely a briefing from someone with adequate knowledge, short sessions can be held periodically by the company fire officer, safety officer or other suitably knowledgeable person. Various external organizations, including consultants and some fire and rescue services, can also provide such training on the premises.

Periodic refresher training should not be time consuming. In some companies, it may involve no more than a 30 minute session. These training sessions should not merely reiterate the standard fire instructions for the building. The objective should be to raise the awareness of employees by attracting their attention and providing material that is of interest. Refresher training also offers an opportunity to discuss any fire problems that have arisen in the company, or causes of false alarms that have occurred. Interest can also be generated by imparting guidance on domestic fire safety matters for the employees' own benefit. ■

*And equivalent legislation in Scotland and Ireland

Trading Tip!

Staff training doesn't only mean fire training. Evacuation training is just as important and fire wardens are always keen to do their job properly - just mention megaphones and waistcoats and see what happens!