

Landlords urged to act on new fire safety laws

Landlords in Devon and Somerset are being urged to act now to ensure they are ready for new safety laws aimed at saving dozens of lives a year.

The regulations make it compulsory for all landlords to fit smoke alarms in rented homes and are expected to come into effect from October 2015, subject to Parliamentary approval.

Under the new laws smoke alarms must be fitted on every floor of the property as well as carbon monoxide alarms in properties which burn solid fuels. Landlords must check the alarms are working at the start of every new tenancy with potential penalties of up to £5,000 if they don't comply.

To help landlords gear up for the new regulations the Government has provided Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service with a limited number of free smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to give out to relevant landlords.

"We are keen to work with local landlords to improve the safety of tenants across our area," said Robert Carlson and Alan Coxon.

"We would urge those landlords who need to take action to comply with the new regulations to contact us by telephoning 0800 0502 999"

The Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) has been campaigning for over two years for the legislation to be introduced and presented key evidence and research into the Government's national review of the issue.

"While deaths and injuries from fires have reduced considerably in recent years, the majority of victims continue to be those who are most vulnerable, often living in private rented accommodation," said Mark Cashin, Chair of CFOA's Home Safety Committee.

"We are delighted that the Government has worked with us to bring in these new laws which will improve the safety of families and stop dozens of people from losing their lives to fire each year. We also welcome their £3 million in funding which will ensure nearly 500,000 smoke and carbon monoxide alarms will be installed in the coming months."

While overall smoke alarm ownership in the country stands at around 90%, those living in private rented homes are far less likely to have a working smoke alarm. Statistically people are four times more likely to die in a fire in the home if there is no working smoke alarm and over the next 10 years it is estimated that the new laws will result in 231 fewer deaths and 5,860 less injuries.

Ends