



A WINTER SAFETY MESSAGE

With winter chills starting to set in, so too, is the dangers of fire in the workplace. Now is the time for managers/owners to identify and assess all potential fire hazards in the business and understand the risks associated with lack of maintenance and improper use. We see it each year where the cold winter months in particular present a greater risk for workplace fires with overworking of heating systems and malfunctions in electrical equipment presenting the most likely dangers.

An electrical flare-up in the switch board or a frayed computer cord placed next to a heater can start a small fire that can quickly erupt, and cause an uncontrollable and devastating situation. Indeed the first safeguard to detecting small fires should be a well maintained and wired smoke detector with battery back-up. This is actually an unpaid 24/7 sentinal ie. an early warning system against fire.

Keeping up to date with fire safety regulations and legislation is also a vital ingredient to ensuring a building and its occupants are protected against fire.

We urge commercial property owners to be vigilant this winter and make an effort to check that all fire hazards in the workplace are maintained in proper working order. If you need to discuss your responsibilities or require no obligation assistance, give us a call. We can help.

David Hassett MD



WILL YOUR BUSINESS SURVIVE?

In a busy working environment where dealing with staff and chasing the dollar become the priority it is not unusual for property managers to underestimate the financial impact a fire could have on the business they are so involved with. While the first concern with fire safety is always for the protection of people, managers should not keep a “head in the sand” attitude about protecting their livelihood.

Imagine, if a fire was to strike your business, it could have devastating consequences with the damage sometimes being irreparable and the aftermath taking far longer to recover from than the fire itself. Lengthy downtime through destruction of data and damage to plant, stock and equipment can quickly lead to loss of customers and income leaving the business in disarray. These risks are real and even with a general insurance cover you may find you are often not adequately covered.

The AESI message for property owners and tenants alike is not to be complacent when it comes to fire safety in commercial properties. Well maintained fire protection equipment and compliance with the necessary essential safety measures could mean the difference between a minor fire and a devastating blaze that could threaten the very survival of the business.



CASE STUDY: *NO WAY OUT!*

A recent ESM audit undertaken by one of our inspectors revealed a critical rear exit door within a large restaurant was fully blocked within by 2 sizeable free standing freezers heavily laden with frozen foodstuffs. Blocked pathway, blocked egress, and a potential fire trap existed for the tenancy. This example is not uncommon and constitutes a serious offence under the building regulations. On completion of the AESI safety audit it is likely that an infringement notice will be issued to the

occupier and/or the property owner which can carry severe penalties.

The greatest concern for building owners is that if exit safety and other essential safety measures are not properly maintained, then the risk of failure when they are most needed (i.e. in an emergency) increases significantly.

