

Timber Frame Construction

Timber Frame Construction is fast, sustainable and very carbon efficient. However during the construction phase they are much more vulnerable to fire. Unfortunately this has been demonstrated in several high profile incidents at sites under construction.

All of the evidence from these fires has demonstrated that the volume of timber in construction contributes to the fire hazards and the risk level presented to members of the public, construction workers and firefighters. It is evident that fires in timber frame buildings, particularly the larger projects under construction, pose different hazards in comparison to traditionally built premises.

Site Safe Online Notification

Over 85% of the UK timber frame manufacturers have signed up to the SiteSafe Scheme. The SiteSafe Online Notification system enables Fire and Rescue Services to receive electronic notifications about timber frame construction sites in their area.

The system is designed as part of the United Kingdom Timber Framed Association (UKTFA) SiteSafe '16 Steps' policy and procedure. The 16 steps guidance describe a series of simple precautions and safe working practices which, if adopted, will ensure that adequate detection and prevention measures are incorporated during the design and planning stages, and that work on site is undertaken to the highest standard of fire safety. The document includes a risk assessment model which helps to determine what fire safety measures are most appropriate for different sites, taking into account the size of the development, its location and other factors.

The system provides key details about the site; these will include information such as:

- Principle contractor for the site
- Address of the site
- Main site contact and telephone number
- Building including size and number of floors
- Details of any risks that the site is nearby
- Start and end date for the Project

Fire and Rescue Enforcement Role

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are the Enforcing Authority under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 whilst in the construction phase and the Fire and Rescue Service once the site is partially occupied.

Guidance documents in support of such functions can be found below:

- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg168.htm> "Fire Safety Construction" (HSG 2nd edition) ISBN: 9780717663453