

*Our focus in this issue is on fire which is starting to represent an increasing part of our certification activity. A key theme of the two main fire articles is 'responsibility'.*

Geoff Rendall's article, *Fire Alarm Systems and the Law*, reviews the role of the 'responsible person' under the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into force in 2006. The role of the responsible person is still unclear for many individuals, so we have highlighted here again what falls under the remit of the 'responsible person'. Not least amongst this is the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) this is the means by which organisations must identify, mitigate or remove fire safety risk in the workplace. The design, installation and commissioning of fire alarms systems forms part of this consideration and Geoff's comments raise some issues that systems designers might want to consider with respect to their role or contribution to the FRA.

Terry Martiny, Marketing Manager at BAFF, reinforces Geoff's comments in his article. He again draws attention to the role of the 'responsible person' and emphasises the benefits of using a third party certificated provider as a means of helping employers or the responsible person, in demonstrating that they have taken all reasonable steps to fulfil their responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order.

Further information, advice and guidance on fire safety issues can be obtained from the Insurers' Fire Research Strategy Scheme (InFiReS) website. InFiReS have recently made their extensive database of guidance documents freely available. InFiReS is administered by the Fire Prevention Association (FPA) and full details of how to access the data is given on page 8.

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The most visible parts of the SSAIB team are our inspectors. Inspection visits, and the infrastructure which supports them, comprise our main activity. Whilst the majority of inspections are surveillance visits, we also carry out a significant number of assessment inspections for applicant firms. Although security systems remain our core activity, demand for registration of monitoring centres, manned guarding companies and, as referenced above, companies installing fire alarm systems is steadily increasing. Also, as an approved assessment body for the SIA Approved Contractors Scheme (ACS), our activities in this sector are also increasing at a steady rate.

Lynn Watts-Plumpkin joined SSAIB as a full-time member of staff about six months ago. Her role is Scheme Manager, which encompasses some inspection activities and inspection supervision. As the newest member of staff we have provided a brief profile on Lynn, outlining her main roles and responsibilities. One of her main tasks is to overview our involvement in the SIA ACS and the Private Security Authority (PSA) scheme in the Republic of Ireland, but more of this later.

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) does not include individuals employed by security systems companies in their licensing schemes. The company scheme, the Approved Contractors Scheme, which is voluntary, also does not yet apply to security system companies. However, it is not clear if the SIA plans to extend its scope to include security system, but they must be tempted!! We will keep you informed of any changes on this front.

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For those of you in Scotland, you may be aware that the remit of the SIA has already been extended 'over the border', with the effect that from the 1st of November it became illegal to work in any position, that falls within the remit of the SIA licensing scheme, without an appropriate licence.

Turning now to our core activities, standards continue to be an issue for many of you. As you are aware, I continue to be involved in the development of European Standards for intruder alarm systems. You will be pleased, but perhaps surprised, to hear that contrary to popular opinion, progress is being made. Also, via the BSI, and in association with other industry bodies, we are trying to minimize the disruption and costs associated with the introduction of the new standards. David Profit's article provides a full rundown on the current state of play. I will simply add a comment that we continue to aim to minimise the disruption in the introduction of these standards, but also accept that some disruption is inevitable.

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Our colleagues in Ireland are, of course, also affected by the introduction of European standards. To provide security related services in Ireland, i.e. security systems, manned guarding or monitoring, it is necessary for a company to obtain a licence from the Private Industry Authority (PSA). In addition, individuals employed by such companies must also hold a licence, having first satisfied PSA's requirements with respect to matters of probity and competence. Certification by a recognised Certification Body is acceptable to the PSA as evidence of compliance with the technical aspects of the company licensing scheme. As an EU country the PSA scheme calls up the relevant European Standards, e.g. IS EN 50131-1 and where appropriate, (i.e. guarding and monitoring centres), Irish standards.

Again, Dave Profit addresses this in his standards update.

During 2007 various members of the SSAIB team have attended PSA Certification Body (CB) forums, events intended to provide guidance to CBs and aimed, among other things, at ensuring that consistency is achieved between the various Bodies. The PSA schemes are still quite new and issues continue to arise which require clarification from the PSA. Recognition of SSAIB certification by the PSA has resulted in increased levels of activity in the Republic of Ireland, for our security system, manned guarding and alarms receiving centres schemes.

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Many of you make the annual pilgrimage to IFSEC and hopefully visit or pass by the SSAIB exhibition stand. The exhibition provides us with an opportunity to showcase our schemes, but it is also a useful venue and opportunity to discuss SSAIB's activities with a wide range of organisations, including insurance companies and brokers, local authorities, the police and, of course, many registered firms. Many of you attended IFSEC last year and I am sure you will agree that our stand was our best to date. We have maintained a similar style for this year, albeit in a new location – Hall 18, stand no. 15189. IFSEC is again upon us (12/15th May 08) and I look forward to meeting some of you there.

Finally, we are just about getting settled in our new offices and are delighted that Lord Stephens, previously the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police has agreed to perform the formal opening ceremony late in May. We have the facilities now to hold more substantial gatherings and we hope to see more of you through our doors in the coming year.



*Geoff Tate, Chief Executive for SSAIB*