

Press Release

16th June 2017

“Fire Safety”

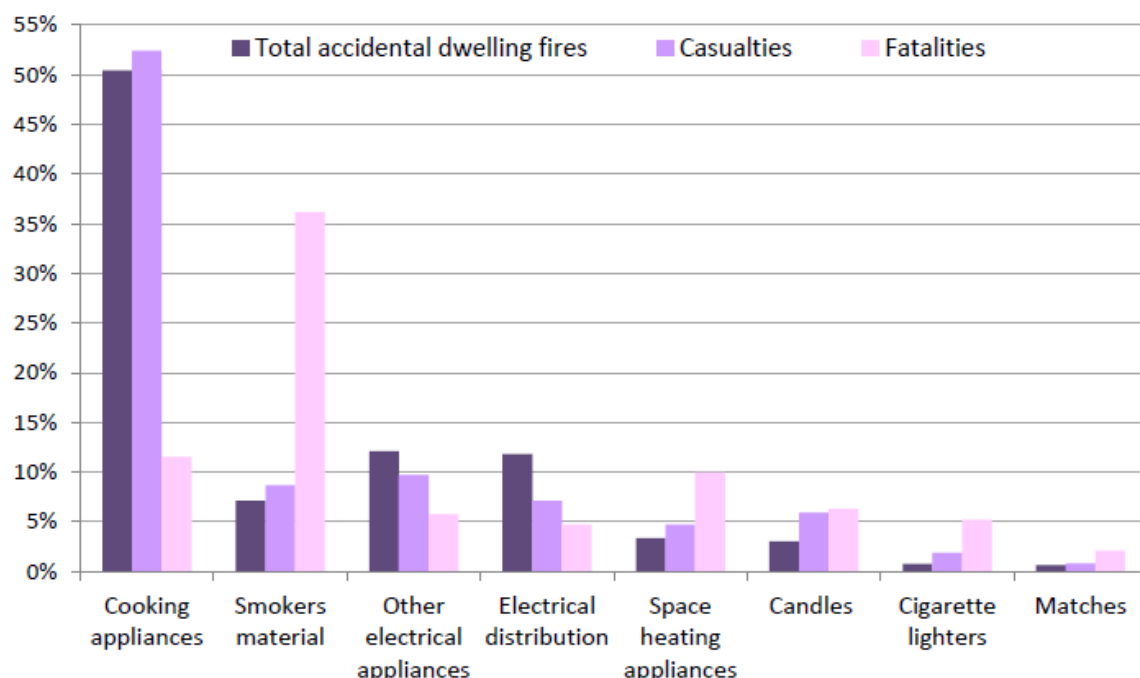
Following the dreadful fire at Grenfell Tower, we have received requests from Chamber members about fire safety. We turned to Russ Timpson of Horizonscan, a world authority on the subject. He kindly granted the Chamber an exclusive interview which will be of interest to tenants, property owners and anyone with responsibilities for residential or commercial buildings. Russ advises the following:

Firstly, tenants should address their concerns to the appointed Responsible Person in their block and ask to see any fire risk assessment identifying measures to eliminate or reduce the risk of fire. Depending on who has the ultimate control, as well as listing the ‘significant risks’ there should also be details of what to do in common areas and other guidance on issues such as evacuation procedures.

Secondly, Russ said: “Every fire starts somewhere” and requires a source of oxygen and fuel together with a source of ignition. He gave a useful list of the most common causes of fires in a building: defective electrical equipment or misuse of electrical apparatus; cooking; ‘hot work’ in which category Russ included DIY tasks and the burning of candles; arson which is encouraged by the accumulation of combustible waste materials around the base of buildings; and smoking materials, notably cigarettes, cigars, pipes and hookahs, also known as ‘hubbly bubbly’ pipes. Apparently, people having barbecues on their balconies is also a distressingly common cause of many fires in high rise buildings.

Russ directed our attention to the Home Office publication: “Fire Statistics: England April 2015 to March 2016” published on 27 April 2017 where we found the graph below.

Figure 4.1. Percentage of incidents and fatalities by selected sources of ignition in accidental dwelling fires, England; 2015/16



Thirdly, Russ emphasised how important it is to know your means of escape from any building. He lamented the frequency in which escape routes can be blocked with furniture or other obstructions. If the building has a fire control centre, it is also important that it is contacted at the first opportunity. Each building should have a policy which should be followed unless advised otherwise by the Fire Service or the official fire fighters at the scene. Russ made the point that in the event of a fire, windows, doors and shutters should be kept firmly closed, especially if leaving an apartment or building.

Finally, Russ said that after evacuation, people should congregate at the designated assembly area which should be well away from the premises. As a rule, he said that falling objects could reach a distance of one and a half times the height of a building.

For expert advice, here are the contact details where Russ can be reached.

Russ Timpson CEng BEng (hons) FIFireE AMBCI
CEO, Horizonscan Ltd
Innovation House, Discovery Park, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9FF
Tel: 01304 806873
Email: russ.timpson@horizonscanbcp.com

[450 words]

<< END >>

Information

Dover District Chamber of Commerce was established in 1850 and gives business support to the private and voluntary sector in Dover, Deal, Sandwich and Shepway. Thanet & East Kent Chamber provides business support to firms in Ramsgate, Margate, Deal, Broadstairs, Manston, Sandwich, Birchington, Hersden and increasingly elsewhere in East Kent and the UK.

Contact

Chamber Research Office, Innovation House, Discovery Park, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9FF
Dover District Chamber of Commerce, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Kent CT16 3EH
Thanet & East Kent Chamber, Kent Innovation Centre, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2QQ
Dover Town Office, Maybrook House, Queens Gardens, Dover, Kent CT17 9AH

T: 01304 892484, 01843 609289

E: admin@tekc.co.uk info@doverchamber.co.uk

W: www.tekc.co.uk www.doverchamber.co.uk

Official Photographer

<http://www.rosieantonphotography.co.uk/menu/clients/dover-thanet-and-east-kent-chamber>