

# GIVE YOUR KITCHEN A FIRE SAFETY MOT



New certification for kitchen fire protection systems gives care home managers a helping hand with safety compliance, says **Richard Jenkins**, chief executive of the National Security Inspectorate (NSI).

**K**itchen fires are statistically the third most likely cause of large fires behind situations involving open flames or applied heat or friction, and arson, according to BAFE, the UK's independent register of quality fire safety service providers.

Mitigating risk by installing a kitchen fire protection system is recommended by Government, and the fire and rescue services across the UK. These systems protect premises by automatically activating as soon as fire is detected, preventing the spread of fire to other parts of the building. This can be crucial, particularly when fire breaks out 'out of hours' in an unattended area.

In conjunction with

certification body NSI, BAFE now offers a Kitchen Fire Protection Systems Scheme, providing safety certification for kitchen fire protection systems installed in care homes. This will support managers in their risk assessment responsibilities and related legal obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005). The first certificates of compliance under the new scheme were issued in the first quarter of 2019.

Care home operators should note that the new NSI/BAFE scheme for commercial kitchen fire protection systems has the broad support of insurers. Managers are advised to check policy terms before or after installation of a kitchen fire protection system.

During 2017 and 2018 a series of fires in care homes across the region prompted the London Fire Brigade to conduct a detailed inspection of 177 properties. 57 per cent of care homes assessed received formal notification of fire safety breaches requiring urgent action. These include:

- Fire risk assessments conducted by people without proper skills and experience
- Roof voids omitted from fire risk assessments (lack of adequate compartmentation in roof voids is known to increase the spread and severity of a fire)
- Inadequate or poorly maintained fire doors
- Confusion within premises about fire evacuation strategies was widespread.



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