

Glass in the workplace - important information

Update on The Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 Regulation 14

Scope

The Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 came into force on January 1st 1996. Regulation 14 imposed on those responsible, a duty to undertake a risk assessment of their glazing in *critical locations* to identify any glass that could create a risk of injury to the buildings users or visitors. If this identified glass was determined to not being of a sufficient safety standard then action must be taken to prevent such injury. Many organisations undertook remedial actions at this time and in the preceding years. However it has been shown that a large number of organisations including Colleges, Schools, Hospitals and other Government buildings as well as a large part of the Commercial sector did nothing.

With avoidable accidents and injuries from glass still happening it is clear that both those that made assessments up to ten years ago and those who did nothing need to review their current situation.

It is a sad but true fact that we are increasingly living in a 'blame culture' and those who choose to ignore **the law** not only face prosecution in the event of an accident but the possible devastating effect of a civil action.



The Regulation

In the ten years of this Regulations existence there has been a lot of confusion as to what the Regulation requires and how to go about conformance. The Regulation actually states;

'Every window or other transparent or translucent surface in a wall or partition and every transparent or translucent surface in a door or gate shall, where necessary for reasons of health and safety: be of safety material or be protected against breakage of the transparent or translucent material and... be appropriately marked or incorporate features so as, in either case to make it apparent.'

The First Steps to Compliance

- Initiate a risk assessment of your glazing is undertaken to ascertain whether or not there is a risk of injury. (Recommendations can be found in BS6262 Part 4).
- Determine the type of glass and its safety rating within those critical locations.
- Create a detailed report of work to be undertaken so that all glazing identified as unsafe for its location will be upgraded.
- Ensure that both the assessment and the schedule of work are fully documented.
- Instigate a programme to monitor and review the current situation on a regular basis. (Ensure the schedule of work is completed and any subsequent reorganisation does not create a new potential risk).

Critical Locations

The recommendations for 'Critical Locations' are recognised (from BS6206 Part 4) as;

Risk Code 1 Panels in doors and panels next to doors (within 300mm) up to 1500mm from finished floor level.

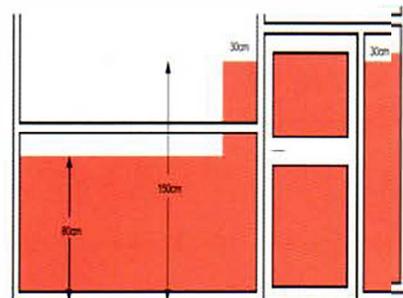
Risk Code 2 Low Level Panels within 800mm from finished floor level.

Risk Code 3 Glazing in Balustrades

Risk Code 4* Glazing in Wet Areas

Risk Code 5** Areas of Special Risk

It must be noted that Risk Code 1 is no more severe than Risk Code 5



***Glazing in Bathing Areas** – any glazing forming part of a bath or shower screen, or located adjacent to, or surrounding a bath, swimming pool, or other associated wet area constitutes a potential danger because of the possibility of a slip accident.

****Areas of Special Risk** – In all those parts where the planned activity generates a special risk for example indoor sports facilities, all glazing should confirm to the requirements for critical locations. In these situations a higher classification requirement should be considered and if additional safeguards such as protective screens or manifestation is required.

Exceptions

Small Panes – ordinary annealed glass may be used in small panes up to a maximum width of 250mm and an area not exceeding 0.5 sq metres. Such glass must be not less than 6mm in thickness except in the case of traditional leaded lights and copper lights where 4mm can be used.

Robustness – robustness refers to the strength of the glazing that forms fronts to non domestic buildings. Some glazing such as polycarbonate is inherently strong. Annealed glass that does not normally comply with BS EN 12600 can gain robustness with increased thickness.

Permanent Screen Protection – if glazing in a critical is protected by a suitably designed protective screen these recommendations do not apply.