

# Sprinkler News

## **OUT OF COURT SETTLEMENT SECURES SPRINKLERS IN EDINBURGH HOUSE OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY**

The Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service secured sprinklers in a number of Edinburgh HMO's after a landlord appealed against an enforcement notice in Edinburgh last month.

On the morning of the case, QC's and expert witnesses from both sides agreed on a minute of amendment to install a domestic suppression sprinkler system and a number of other fire safety measures on the lower level of a two level HMO to compensate for the lack of a second means of escape.

The Scottish regulations "guide for small premises providing sleeping accommodation" requires two means of escape from any premises providing sleeping accommodation which fall within the scope of The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, as amended including any HMO which is over 7.5 meters. Due to the construction of tenement properties within the city of Edinburgh a second means of escape can be extremely difficult to achieve and as such a number of alternate solutions including domestic sprinklers are offered by the fire authority to compensate for this recommendation.

HMO accommodation is traditionally utilised for students and as such the fire authority consider these premises a higher risk occupancy where maintenance of the means of escape through good housekeeping and self closing doors can sometimes be very difficult to achieve.

So far, a number of Edinburgh landlords have taken up the option of domestic suppression system which proves to be a cost effective solution considering the potential income that can be generated in properties of this type.

The legal costs were however contested in court and the sheriff found in favour of the fire authority and as such full and considerable costs were attributed to the appealing landlord.

Tom Kane Group Manager Community Safety says "this case, although settled out of court, gives us more confidence when recommending domestic sprinklers in HMO's which we consider high risk. More importantly it ensures a safer living environment for our young people during their student years in the city of Edinburgh".

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