

**REMEMBER –
THERE IS NO
CHARGE TO
JOIN THE Great
British Furniture
promotional
scheme – if you
are interested
please contact
Mike Dimond**



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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

An interior design partnership is looking for suppliers for furniture for exclusive ski chalets and apartments. Must have good stock levels, quality products and not too long a lead time. Need a trade account with good terms. If you are interested please contact: mikedimond@bfm.org.uk

A retail and design company has been working in conjunction with a Museum to produce a new sofa design which will be put on display at a forthcoming exhibition. A manufacturer is required to produce a prototype. A design brief for the sofa is available. If you are interested, please contact: mikedimond@bfm.org.uk

TRIBUNAL FEES

The Ministry of Justice has set a date, subject to Parliamentary approval, for the implementation of tribunal fees of Monday 29 July (previously they were announced as coming in this summer). All employment tribunal claims from Claimants and appeals to the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) on or after that date will be liable for the following fees unless claimants qualify for a fee exemption, termed a 'fee remission':

Level 1 - for straightforward claims, such as unpaid wages, redundancy, holiday and notice pay, it will cost £160 to start the claim, and £230 to take the claim to a hearing.

Level 2 - for all other claims, such as unfair dismissal, discrimination, equal pay and whistle-blowing, the fee will be £250 to issue the claim, and £950 to proceed to a hearing.

To make an appeal will cost £400, and a fee of £1,200 will be charged if the case goes to an EAT hearing. The new fee remission scheme will be similar to that already existing in the civil courts and is designed to ensure access for justice to claimants who cannot afford to pay the tribunal fees. Claimants will be subject to a 2 stage test, based on their disposable capital and monthly income. Taking into account a claimant's capital as well as income should mean that those who have been dismissed for example and are not currently earning, will not necessarily be excluded from the requirement to pay a fee.

If you want pictures of your products featured on the BFM web site home page slideshow or change your BFM company directory pages please contact:

[Mike Dimond](#)



.....EARLY CONCILIATION

However, the government are to introduce in early 2014 'early conciliation'; through ACAS before many claims can proceed to a tribunal. See - [here for details](#).

BEWARE OF THE HSE INSPECTOR BEARING INVOICES

Fee for Intervention (FFI): the HSE can now charge for its time (at £124 per hour) for time spent on site and subsequent paperwork, where it has identified "material breaches" of regulations. In simple terms, this means if an HSE inspector finds something on which they can issue an improvement notice (or less frequently a prohibition notice) – they will do so and they will charge you for the privilege!

Inspectors are effectively incentivised to charge to preserve their jobs – FFI revenues are expected to make up 25% of the HSE budget this year. One member company has recently experienced exactly this – with an improvement notice and FFE costs on a wood dust issue which would historically have been dealt with by a discussion and advice.

By Alistair Bromhead – BFM Health, Safety & Environment Consultant
Tel: 07932 674707
a@abromhead.co.uk

1ST MEETING OF THE EU PROJECT FREEFOAM

Yecla, 22nd May 2013. CETEM, the science and technology research organisation for wood and furniture based in Yecla, Murcia, Spain has been appointed as the coordinating body for the European Commission project named 'FreeFOAM.' FreeFOAM is concerned with the development of a new polyurethane foaming process which will significantly reduce the risk to health and improve process efficiency. [For more details.....](#)

BUDGET CUTS AFFECT FIRE ALARM RESPONSE RATES

Over the last 4 years, the Fire and Rescue Service has seen budget cuts of up to 25%, resulting in the merger of control rooms; station closures; fire fighter job losses and a change in process as to how the Service respond to Automatic Fire Alarms.

95-98% of all alarm activations are either false alarm activations or Unwanted Fire Signals, costing the UK tax payer an estimated £1 billion each year. The figures include hoaxes, 999 calls made with good intent that do not transpire to be emergencies and

callouts prompted by faulty equipment in business premises. It makes sense therefore, to reduce the number of these types of call to ensure that cuts to frontline services are mitigated.

With this in mind, and the necessity of the Fire Service to work smarter, the Chief Fire Officers' Association set out to develop a common response protocol across all UK Fire and Rescue Services for alarm activations. Unfortunately, despite a lengthy development process, agreement has yet to be reached on best practice, meaning that many Fire and Rescue Services currently 'do their own thing.'

For instance, in Nottingham and Greater Manchester, upon receiving an alarm activation the Service will call back to confirm the existence of a fire. In Berkshire, there is no response to commercial automatic fire alarm between 9am and 9pm unless there is a risk to life or it is classed as a special risk. In Hereford and Worcester, the Fire and Rescue Service will only respond to a alarm activation if it is confirmed by an accompanying 999 call.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue will, unless there is clear evidence of a fire, send one fire engine under blue lights, which is then upgraded to full attendance if a fire is confirmed. Several Fire and Rescue Services even encourage Automatic Fire Alarms to be taken 'off line' during working hours.

The key point to note here is that Fire and Rescue Services response procedures vary across the country so make sure you know what your local Fire and Rescue Service procedures are and ensure that your Company Emergency Plan includes specific arrangements for making a 999 back-up call.

By Simon Whittaker

sjwhittaker@sagarinsurances.co.uk (BFM preferred brokers)

01254 770828

**FOAM PRICES – LATEST DATA
ATTACHED.....**