



## The Importance of Competence

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Park City would like to remind business owners and companies of the importance of their duties to ensure either their own competence internally or - if using external advisors - the need for ensuring their competence in undertaking safety-related activities following the conviction of two men in Nottingham.

A hotelier who ran two hotels in Mansfield, was jailed for eight years after pleading guilty to fifteen Fire Safety offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and his fire safety consultant was also jailed for eight months and was ordered to pay £5,862.38 after he pleaded guilty to two breaches, in relation to the inadequacy of Fire Risk Assessments he provided for the hotels.

Fire Officers from Nottinghamshire Fire Service had visited both premises and found that the fire precautions which should have been provided to protect residents and employees in the event of a fire were wholly inadequate. This presented a serious risk to the lives of customers and staff, so they issued prohibition notices preventing any further use of both premises as hotels until suitable improvements had been made.

The case in Mansfield is a reminder to all owners and occupiers of buildings of their legal responsibility to protect their customers and staff against the risk of fire. It also serves as a warning that, where necessary, legal action will be taken against anyone found to be in serious breach of Fire Safety regulations.

Our advice to business owners and others is that the consequence of using poor advice could potentially be a custodial sentence and more seriously, can also lead to death or injury to people in fires. When it comes to sourcing services business owners and companies should ensure that any person they employ to assist them have the necessary training, experience and knowledge, ensure you see examples of previous work and get references you can check for previous customers.

Doing these basic checks at the early stages shows your commitment to health and safety or fire safety and will ultimately save what could be costly remedial action at a later date and equally possibly save you from a court appearance.