

## OVERVIEW

**History** - A number of high profile and severe fires in 2006-2007 led to a long standing debate over the risks associated with timber-framed builds, particularly whilst under construction due to their vulnerability to fire and the speed at which they burn; putting the lives of construction workers and the fire service at risk.

**Scale of the problem** – A 2012 study from the Department for Communities and Local Government\* reported there was little difference in terms of fire damage between completed timber-framed buildings and those of other structural frames. However the damage is statistically significantly different during the construction phase.

**The ABI** – In 2014, following the £20M fire at Nottingham University's landmark laboratory, the industry body confirmed insurers would continue to provide cover for projects regardless of structural framing material; with risks continuing to be assessed on an individual basis.

**Arson & The Economy** – Arson is the primary cause of construction site fires and the Arson Prevention Bureau has reported a rise in fire claims when the economy is in decline.

\* <http://tinyurl.com/gv8slpk>

## HINTS AND TIPS

Review the guidance set in the following documents:

HSG 168: Fire safety in construction sites

FPA: Fire protection on construction sites

### Consider:

Effective site security is essential including access control to prevent unauthorised persons entering regardless of the site size.

The site should have available their fire risk assessment and emergency plan.

Good, on site, housekeeping and refuse removal at the end of each working day.

Lockable waste skips and gas stores should be remote from the building construction.

Effective hot working procedures in place with continual monitoring for at least 1 hour following completion of work.

No smoking policy - enforced.



## REGULATION OVERVIEW

Current Building Regulations were changed in 1991 to allow up to 8 storeys for timber-framed builds.

The Greater London Assembly, Fire Protection Association and Chief Fire Officers Association are calling for Building Regulations to be urgently reviewed and updated.