

Here to help

1. THE ASSOCIATION

In early 2009 the UK Fire Association, also referred to by its abbreviation 'UK-FA' was listed as being 'Limited by Guarantee' and **Alan Price** became Managing Director, with **Alan Palmer** as a Director and Secretary and **Tom Law** as a Director and Treasurer.

By being registered as a 'Limited by Guarantee' company, Members enjoy greater transparency in the day to day operations of the Association. Each Member has one vote and is liable to pay up to a maximum of £1.00 in the unlikely event that the Association should ever go into liquidation. The *UK-FA* is a non-profit making organisation; all income shall be used to further the objectives of the *UK-FA*. Dividends will not be paid to members.

2. ASSOCIATION NAME

The name of the Association is the UK Fire Association Ltd trading as the UK Fire Association and UK-FA.

3. REGISTERED ADDRESS

Unit 19 Enterprise House, 44-46 Terrace Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey. KT12 2SD.

4. ASSOCIATION'S OBJECTIVES

UK-FA members are expected to give impartial advice and conduct their business dealings in a professional manner. All members are encouraged to support one another by way of sharing and discussing information that affects themselves and their customers.

The *UK-FA* also aims to encourage members to;

- take an active role in the development of the *UK-FA*.
- provide impartial advice and have ethical dealings with customers
- reduce the effect of their actions to the environment
- work together to offer nationwide supply and service to customers
- continually share relevant information through the forum pages on the website
- maintain the highest quality and technical standards
- to gain third party accreditation i.e. BS EN ISO 9001 certified by a UKAS recognised accreditation body and/or an appropriate BAFE scheme registration.
- meet periodically, to exchange information and foster harmonious relations between members

Mission statement: *The UK Fire Association provides a service to companies in the fire industry by helping to establish a favourable operating environment, by providing a forum for discussion on non-competitive issues, and by providing information to assist them in developing their business.*

5. MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Membership is granted to the original applicant company with full voting rights. Each member company is allowed one vote only. To qualify for membership a company must have been trading for at least twelve months.

Affiliate Membership, at the discretion of the Directors, may be granted to branches, divisions or satellite companies of parent company members. Affiliate members have no voting rights and are required to pay 50% of the membership fee.

Honorary Membership may be discretionally awarded to anyone who in the opinion of the Directors has provided the organisation with exceptional service for an extended period. Honorary members are not required to pay a membership fee for a term specified by the Directors.

The Directors have the right to arrange for an audit of the business of any member or company applying for membership.

6. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Membership of the *UK-FA* will be open to any company that has an interest in fire protection and meets the requirements outlined below.

Members subject to a take-over or name change will be reviewed by the Directors. Unless deemed by the Directors to be an exceptional case, the member company must re-apply for membership and be subject to a ballot of the members.

Every member company must be adequately insured for the business it conducts, e.g., employers, public, products and professional indemnity liability insurance as appropriate. Members will be expected to take out non-efficacy insurance where appropriate e.g. undertaking the servicing of fire extinguishers.

The Directors reserve the right to request evidence of adequate insurance cover, the same to be recorded and updated annually. The *UK-FA* will endeavour to send annual reminders by email to members but it is the responsibility of the member company to inform the Secretary within FOUR weeks of any significant changes occurring.

If the Member Company for any reason leaves the *UK-FA*, is taken-over or goes into liquidation, the Steering Group Member from that Company shall immediately resign their position.

7. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications for membership can be made online at www.uk-fa.org or the documents printed off and sent by post to the Secretary, supported with the following information;

- company name and contact details
- business history
- name(s) of all Director(s)/Partners/owners
- details and evidence of insurance
- services and products provided
- details of all technicians employed and the qualifications they hold
- two appropriate references

Further information may be sought as required by the Directors during the admission process.

The names and addresses of applicants provisionally accepted by the Directors for admission will be circulated to all Members by email for comment. If any member company has an objection to an applicant being accepted they must present their reasons for the objection (in writing) to the Secretary to arrive within 14 days. This will be investigated thoroughly by the Directors before any decision is taken.

The Directors will assess all membership applications and has the right to reject any applicant with no obligation to provide or disclose reasons for its decision. There is no right of appeal in this matter.

8. MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership and joining fees will be decided by the Directors at the start of the calendar year. For Affiliated Members this will be 50% of the annual membership fee.

Subscriptions are due annually in March.

Members who have not renewed their annual subscription within 30 days from the date of invoice will be deemed to have voluntarily terminated their membership and a joining fee will apply if they then wish to re-new *UK-FA* membership.

The Treasurer is responsible for sending invoices then monitoring and collecting all sums due.

When a new Member joins mid-year the full year's membership and joining fee will still apply and a rebate for unused months will be discounted from the second year's membership fee.

9. QUALITY AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

Members are actively encouraged and will be assisted in obtaining third party UKAS recognised accreditation to BS EN ISO 9001.

Extinguisher service technicians must demonstrate competence by passing a recognised examination in the theory and practice of servicing and installing portable fire extinguishers as prescribed in BS5306 parts 3 and 8.

Extinguisher service technicians must undertake a recognised refresher course as prescribed and at the intervals required in BS5306 part 3.

It is the responsibility of the member company to ensure that their technicians are appropriately qualified.

10. THE UK FIRE ASSOCIATION EMBLEM

The UK Fire Association emblem (logo) is copyright property of the *UK-FA* and may be used by Members and Affiliate members only. The emblem may be used on Members vehicles, stationery and appropriate marketing materials. Manufacturers or distributors are not permitted to use the logo on equipment they make, import and supply as this could be misconstrued as being an indication of approval or acceptance of conformity of these products by the *UK-FA*. Service companies can use the emblem on extinguisher maintenance labels provided that the technician signing the label is appropriately qualified.

Members resigning from the *UK-FA*, for any reason, will be given three months grace to use up their printed stationery. This period may at the discretion of the Directors be extended or reduced. Applications for extension must be submitted in writing by the Secretary within the first two months period of grace allowed. After this time ex-Members still using the emblem will be liable to prosecution except in the case of maintenance labels and documentation issued before or during the period of grace. Labels on fire equipment and maintenance certificates bearing the *UK-FA* logo are required to have been removed 13 months from the date of the Members resignation, if this equipment is still being serviced by the ex-Member.

Upon the Directors terminating membership, that Member shall with immediate effect no longer use the UK-FA emblem on their vehicles, documentation, maintenance labels, etc.

11. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

The *UK-FA* is a Company Limited by Guarantee, managed by three Directors. Each Director shall be assigned a specific area of responsibility;

- Managing Director (Chairman) - spokesperson and Chair of meetings.
- Company Secretary (Secretary) - responsible for statutory returns to Companies House and general secretarial activities including; .setting meetings, recording and circulating minutes from meetings, membership, correspondence, database management and security, records and archives. Running meetings and acting as Vice Chair in the absence of the Managing Director at meetings.
- Financial Director (Treasurer) – responsible for filing statutory returns, membership renewals, invoicing, credit control and bank reconciliation. Presenting a financial account at meetings and acting as Vice Secretary in the absence of the Secretary at meetings.

Directors may establish and be guided by the directives and instructions issued collectively by a Steering Group.

The Directors form the hub of the Steering Group which consists of the Directors and up to SEVEN additional Members. A Steering Group Member may be given a dedicated responsibility, e.g. PR, marketing, quality, web management, training, a technical committee representative, etc. Ideally Members of the Steering Group should where practicable be elected on a regional basis so that all regions of the UK are represented, i.e. England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Directors and Steering Group Members shall be elected to serve for a period of THREE years. They must be proposed, seconded and elected by ballot at the Annual General Meeting. They may offer themselves for re-election at the end of their term of office if they so wish.

The Directors may delegate any of their powers. The Steering Group with the permission of the Directors may establish and maintain sub-committees/project groups, and may delegate matters to them.

Director and Steering Group Member's positions can be terminated with immediate effect subject to a ballot by Steering Group Members in favour of the proposition.

Directors and Steering Group Members shall be employed by a Member company. If the Member Company for any reason leaves the *UK-FA* (or the Fire Industry), is taken-over or goes into liquidation, the Director/Steering Group Member shall immediately resign their position.

A Director or Steering Group Member leaving the employment of a Member company must resign their position on the Steering Group.

12. GENERAL MEETINGS

The *UK-FA* will hold at least one General Meeting a year for the membership – which will be the Annual General Meeting, but may run more meetings if the membership shows sufficient interest.

In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson (the Secretary), an acting Chairperson can be appointed by the remaining Directors present

Meetings are for the benefit of the members and therefore the meeting and lunch for ONE representative of each member company attending will be free of charge. Additional representatives of Members or their invited guests are welcome subject to adequate notice being received by the Secretary and a charge will be made for each additional delegate.

The Annual General Meeting and any entertainment provided will be free of charge for ONE representative of a Member company and their partner. Additional attendees are welcome subject to adequate notice being received by the Secretary and a charge will be made for each additional delegate.

An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called if a matter arises which, in the view of the Directors, necessitates action before the next Annual General Meeting.

Unless otherwise sanctioned by the Directors, attendance at meetings is restricted to two delegates from each member company and to outside speakers. No guests are to be admitted without approval granted by the Directors in advance of the meeting.

13. VOTING

All propositions should be sent, in writing, to the Secretary at least SIX weeks before the AGM, to allow the proposal to be put before the Directors and for a postal ballot to be arranged. All propositions must be seconded.

Each Member shall be entitled to one vote. The Chairperson of a Steering Group and General Meetings shall have a second, or casting, vote in the event of equality.

Members are entitled to a postal vote when they are unable to attend a meeting. These must be posted in an envelope clearly marked 'POSTAL VOTE' to be received by the Secretary at least 48 hours before the

meeting. Postal vote envelopes that have been appropriately marked will be opened at the meeting, where all postal votes will be counted and the result(s) announced.

14. MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES

Membership Certificates will be issued annually by the Secretary upon receipt of the full Membership Fee.

The certificate will be valid for one year only and remains the property of the *UK-FA*.

15. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Changes to the Constitution can only be made at the Annual General Meeting. Any proposals for a change to the Constitution shall be submitted, in writing, to the Secretary at least six weeks before the AGM, to allow time for the proposal to be put before the Directors and for circulation to the Members. All propositions must be seconded.

16. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

In the event of a member appearing to contravene the Constitution or to have acted inappropriately to the detriment of the *UK-FA* they will be referred to the Directors for investigation. If, in the Director's opinion, the transgression is justified, action appropriate to the severity of the transgression will be taken. This may be in the form of a warning or termination of membership.

Any Member owing monies to a fellow Member without good reason and shown to be a long term debtor, will be suspended from membership until such time as the debt is settled. Persistent slow payers may, at the discretion of the Directors, have their membership terminated.

Members disciplined by the Directors have the right to appeal through the Grievance Procedure.

17. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

In the event of a complaint against a *UK-FA* Member by a fellow member, a customer, or other organisation, the complaint will be referred to the Directors for investigation. Complaints will only be considered if substantiated and submitted in writing. If, in the Director's opinion, the complaint is justified action appropriate to the severity of the complaint will be taken. This may be in the form of a warning or termination of membership.

18. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

a) Grievance with a Member Company

Any Member with an internal complaint or grievance should first try to resolve the issue with the other member company involved. Failing this, the matter should be raised, in writing, with the Secretary who will endeavour to arrange investigation, action and resolution. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

If the matter remains unresolved, it will be referred to the next meeting or teleconference call of the Director's or a specifically convened sub-committee. After due consideration, the decision of the Director's will be given in writing.

If dissatisfied with the decision, the complainant has the right to appeal to the Members direct, either in writing through the Secretary.

All disputes will be given the highest priority possible.

b) Grievance with the *UK-FA*

In the first instance the complainant should raise the matter in writing with the Secretary. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

In the event that the complaint involves the Secretary or his actions directly, then the complainant should raise the complaint in writing with any other Director where it will be referred to the next meeting or teleconference call of the Directors or a specifically convened sub-committee. After due consideration, the decision of the Directors will be given in writing.

If dissatisfied with the decision, the complainant has the right to appeal to the Members direct, either in writing through a Director.

All disputes will be given the highest priority possible.

19. ABUSE POLICY

Anyone working for or on behalf of the UK-FA, while carrying out their duties for and on behalf of the UK-FA has the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect.

We define work-related abuse as: any incident in which a Director or anyone instructed by a Director to work for and on behalf of the UK-FA, is abused, threatened or actually assaulted in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her work for the UK-FA. This is based on the Health and Safety Executive's definition.

If during the course of the work for and on behalf of the UK-FA a person is being verbally abused they should in the first instance advise the abuser that their actions are unacceptable and that if they continue communications will be immediately discontinued. If the abuser continues communication should be discontinued, a note made of what was said and the incident reported immediately to a UK-FA Director. The Director may if deemed appropriate and in all cases where a Member is the abuser, respond to the situation by talking to the perpetrator explaining that their behaviour is not acceptable and try to resolve the problem. If resolution is not possible and depending upon the severity of the abuse the membership of the UK-FA can be revoked where a Member is the abuser and/or police may be informed of a serious case of threatening or verbal abuse.

20. REMUNERATION OF DIRECTORS AND STEERING GROUP MEMBERS

The reasonable expenses of Directors and Steering Group Members incurred on behalf on the *UK-FA* will be reimbursed when these have been agreed in advance by the Directors.

Directors and Steering Group members may receive honorary membership in appreciation of the unpaid work they do subject to this being agreed by the membership attending the Annual General Meeting.

Certain responsibilities may receive an annual honorarium, commensurate with the duties performed. Such amounts will be proposed by the Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting and agreed by the membership in attendance.

21. INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION RULES

The Constitution is aimed to provide outline guidance in the running of the *UK-FA* so a decision having to be made upon a question concerning the interpretation of the Constitution or upon matters affecting the *UK-FA* and not provided for by the Constitution shall be the responsibility of the Directors.