



| Press Release

Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority**
Making Derbyshire Safer

28 MARCH 2017

HOTEL OPERATOR CONVICTED OF OFFENCES AGAINST REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

On Tuesday 28 March 2017 at a hearing held at Derby Crown Court, Gurnam Singh Rai, the lease holder and current operator of the International Hotel, Burton Road, Derby, pleaded guilty to 4 breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Mr Rai was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment concurrent for each offence, fined a total of £40000, and ordered to pay costs of £20000.

On 20 January 2015 Fire Safety Inspecting Officers from Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service carried out a routine Fire Safety Audit and compliance assessment of the International Hotel and discovered significant findings of the fire risk assessment had not been acted upon, the general fire precautions were inadequate, structural maintenance was insufficient, the external fire escapes were corroded, fire doors were found to be wedged open, the fire alarm and emergency lighting had numerous defects, fire extinguishers had not been tested and staff training incomplete. Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service subsequently served an Enforcement Notice on 13 March 2015 with a compliance date of 20 April 2015. Despite numerous visits and warnings, the work required had still not been completed by August 2015 and the Fire Authority commenced legal action.

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, Area Manager Alex Johnson said: 'Today's sentencing of Mr Rai serves as a harsh reminder of the danger that occupants of the International Hotel would have been placed in should a fire have broken out. Occupants of the hotel were put at significant risk due to the apparent lack of fire safety precautions and building maintenance. If a fire had broken out, this could easily have led to serious injuries, or the loss of life.'

Hotel operators and owners should recognise that they have a responsibility to ensure that any sleeping accommodation they provide for their guests has a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment in place, which is reviewed regularly, and facilities provided for safety from fire are maintained to a suitable standard.

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Hotels, Guest Houses and other Sleeping accommodation in Derbyshire are regularly inspected for fire safety compliance by Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, the vast majority of these are well managed, maintained and compliant with current fire safety regulations.

Area Manager Johnson went on to say: 'Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service would like to remind all providers of sleeping accommodation of their legal responsibility to protect their guests from the risk of fire.

'The Fire and Rescue Service will consider formal action against anyone found to be in breach of Fire Safety regulations and particularly where they fail to comply with any statutory notices issued. The Service will advise and give support to both local and national businesses and are always willing to help make sure they comply with Fire Safety Legislation. However, the public should continue to be reassured that legal action will be used when necessary, where any serious breaches of Fire Safety Regulations are identified.'

In sentencing Judge Coke said: "It is quite clear to me that there was an unwillingness to spend monies and no intention or willingness to comply for the safety of guests.

"The entire history of this case expresses a cavalier attitude to the safety of guests.

"I have a duty to make it clear how important these regulations are and, when flouted as they have been, there can be no other sentence than immediate imprisonment."

For more information regarding business safety visit www.derbys-fire.gov.uk

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