

Why Building Safety Is No Longer Just About The Products You Install.

Overview

The Building Safety Act 2022 has fundamentally changed the way buildings are designed, constructed and managed in the UK.

Introduced following the recommendations of the Hackitt Review, the legislation places greater emphasis on accountability, competence and maintaining accurate information throughout the life of a building.

For those involved in fire-rated glazing, compliance is no longer simply about supplying the correct product. It is about demonstrating that the right system was specified, correctly installed, properly documented and can be identified years after the project has been completed.

Why the Act Matters

Historically, construction projects often relied on fragmented information, unclear responsibilities and inconsistent record keeping.

The Building Safety Act aims to improve this by creating clearer duties throughout the design, construction and occupation of buildings.

Although much of the attention has focused on Higher-Risk Buildings (HRBs), the principles introduced by the Act are increasingly influencing projects across the wider construction industry.

Good documentation, competent people and clear accountability are rapidly becoming the expected standard rather than best practice.

Competence

One of the biggest changes introduced by the Building Safety Act is the increased focus on competence.

Competence is about far more than experience. It combines:

- Knowledge.
- Skills.

- Training.
- Behaviour.
- The ability to recognise the limits of your own expertise.

For those working with fire-rated glazing this includes understanding:

- Fire classifications.
- Product limitations.
- Supporting test evidence.
- Installation requirements.
- Quality assurance procedures.
- When specialist technical advice is required.

Increasingly, clients are looking for evidence of competence rather than simply accepting claims of experience.

Installation Starts Before Products Arrive

The Golden Thread is a key principle of the Building Safety Act.

Rather than being a single document, it is a structured record of information showing how a building has been designed, constructed and maintained.

For fire-rated glazing, this information may include:

- Product schedules.
- Fire classifications.
- Manufacturer details.
- Fire test or classification reports.
- Installation guidance.
- Inspection records.
- Maintenance information.
- Warranty details.

The objective is simple: anyone responsible for the building in the future should be able to identify what has been

installed and access the information needed to maintain or replace it correctly.

Why Good Records Matter

Buildings evolve over time. Glazing is replaced, layouts change, access control is upgraded and refurbishment projects alter the original design.

Without reliable records, identifying the correct replacement products or understanding the original fire strategy can become difficult.

Maintaining accurate documentation reduces this uncertainty and helps ensure future work does not compromise the building's fire safety.

It also reduces the need for costly surveys or technical investigations when alterations are planned years after completion.

Product Traceability

Being able to trace installed products has become increasingly important.

Good practice is to retain information such as:

- System manufacturer.
- Product name.
- Fire classification.
- Glass specification.
- Installation date.
- Location within the building.
- Supporting technical documentation.

This information can make future maintenance significantly simpler and provides confidence that replacement products remain compatible with the original tested system.

Digital Handover

Large paper handover files are rapidly being replaced by digital records.

Electronic compliance packs can include:

- Drawings.
- Fire classifications.
- Installation guidance.
- Inspection records.
- Product literature.
- Maintenance recommendations.

Many organisations are also introducing QR codes or digital asset management systems, making key product information readily available throughout the life of the building.

The principle is straightforward—information should remain accessible long after the project team has left site.

In Practice

One of the biggest challenges during refurbishment projects is identifying exactly what has been installed.

Where accurate records exist, replacement glazing can often be specified quickly and confidently.

Where documentation is incomplete, additional surveys, manufacturer support or technical investigations may be required before replacement work can begin.

Good record keeping during construction often saves significant time and cost years later.

Key Points

- The Building Safety Act 2022 has increased expectations around competence, accountability and documentation.
- Compliance extends beyond product selection to include installation, record keeping and ongoing building management.
- The Golden Thread provides a reliable record of what has been installed and why.
- Product traceability supports future maintenance, refurbishment and replacement.
- Good documentation protects both the building owner and those responsible for future works.

Relevant Standards

- **Building Safety Act 2022.**
- **Building Regulations 2010 (as amended).**
- **Approved Document B – Fire Safety.**
- Project-specific fire strategies.
- Manufacturer technical documentation, fire test evidence and installation guidance.

Disclaimer

This guide provides a general overview of the Building Safety Act 2022 and the principles of the Golden Thread. It should not be regarded as legal advice. Legislative requirements should always be considered alongside current statutory guidance, project-specific fire strategies and professional advice where appropriate.