

# DEBATE SUMMARY

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## Latest Fire Safety Strategies for High-Rise Buildings

The discussion underscored the industry's quest for clarity on safety requirements, highlighting the evolving role of measurements. **New challenges** come with **new elements in our environment**; behind them, there must be **no new but reliable solution**. Collaboration, education, and adapting to new regulations emerged as vital elements in shaping the future of fire safety. The coming year is **not only about learning but also about unlearning** old habits.

### Pannelists:

- Paul Hayles, Canary Wharf Group
- Will Perkins, Smoke Control Association
- Iain C. Roberts, Vinci Construction
- David Stow, ARUP
- Neville Tomblin, Southampton City Council
- David Fitzpatrick, SMAY Ventilation



# Inside The Talk

The discussion began with **the requirement for two staircases** – Ceri Roberts from Vinci Construction pointed out that the industry still does not know the requirements, so they are trying to design the safest facilities possible. However, **due to the usable area, the second staircase forces the building upwards, which is often limited by local limits.** The answer could be a scissor stairwell, but it is uncertain how the authorities will approach them, and pressure differential systems, which are definitely safer than AOV.

D. Stow, admitted that **there are no guidelines as to the requirements – whether separation by a wall or a distance is sufficient** for two stairwells.

D. Fitzpatrick highlighted the importance of **pressurisation as a significant step forward, provided it is designed by competent people, taking into account issues such as the stack effect.** He emphasized the lack of knowledge and competence as the primary obstacle that contributed to the lack of popularity of overpressure systems, which is now changing. **The education of designers, installers, and those responsible for acceptance is crucial.** They must first understand the differences between fire and smoke dampers, and then install them correctly.

Mr. Fitzpatrick has been working in the industry for 35 years and understands that **competencies include not only experience but also skillset, background, and expertise.** He is not the right person to design a smoke control system, but fortunately, he works with people who have these competencies.

Other important topics:

**1. The golden thread:** W. Perkins from SCA noted that while it is important to maintain a golden thread of information for fire safety, guidelines are needed as there is an overwhelming amount of information to collect and process.

**2. Involvement of residents:**

N. Tombling pointed out that educating residents on fire safety is challenging. While meetings are held, fire safety is often not a top priority for residents, who are more concerned about issues such as mould or CCTV. P. Hayles from Canary Wharf admitted that residents often fail to comprehend the fire risk.

**3. New regulations under the Fire**

**Safety Act:** D. Fitzpatrick believes that the new regulations are a step in the right direction. However, there are still many grey areas, and regulations will have to continue to evolve. The majority of current dilemmas are expected to be solved in 2-3 years.

## Establishment of SMAY's branch in the UK!



David Fitzpatrick became SMAY's General Manager. David is known for his open-door policy. If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch on his email:

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