

Paignton hotel partner guilty of 'reckless' fire safety breaches

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THE business partner of a Paignton hotel has been ordered to pay £11,500 after breaching fire safety laws.

Peter Wilks, a business partner at the Summerhill Hotel, Braeside Road, pleaded guilty to four failures under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

In summing up the magistrates in Torquay told him: "This was a reckless breach that potentially put lives at risk and over a period of eight years. When told to undertake the necessary upgrades you did this and spent over £25,000 in doing so.

"For the four offences you are ordered to pay £1,500 per offence and a victim surcharge of £120 and to pay full costs of £5,430. This is a total of £11,500 to be paid within six months."

Wilks admitted failing to make a **suitable and sufficient assessment** of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed in the event of a fire occurring. He also pleaded guilty to failure to ensure that the premises were, to the extent that it is appropriate, equipped with appropriate fire-fighting equipment and with fire detectors and alarms.

The remaining two charges related to failures with emergency routes and exits for evacuations; emergency doors and exit signs; and maintenance.

On June 2, 2015, fire protection officers attended the Summerhill Hotel after concerns were raised following an earlier basic fire safety check at the premises. The officers found the following serious deficiencies at the premises:

- Areas of the hotel did not have any automatic fire detection and warning system fitted, including 11 bedrooms.
- A number of fire doors on the bedrooms were below the acceptable standard.
- The doors to the hotel's kitchens and the boiler room were not to the appropriate standard for fire doors.
- The fire escape route from the rear of the hotel was not signed, did not have emergency lighting provided and did not lead to a place of safety, one route being to a dead end.
- The fire-fighting equipment had not been serviced by an **approved contractor** for 15 years and the fire extinguishers needed to be replaced.
- The fire alarm system that was installed in part of the building and the emergency lighting that was provided **was not being maintained by competent companies** or contractors.
- A fire alarm company attended at the premises in 2007 to assess the fire detection and warning system. They found it to be well below the standard for hotels.