

# ***FIRE***

## Service welcomes progress on fire safety and electrical intakes



East Sussex Fire and Rescue is welcoming progress on work looking at fire safety in the area of electrical intakes, after a key report from the Service was mentioned in Parliament.

The topic was recently raised by Jim Fitzpatrick, MP for Poplar and Limehouse in London, in questions to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Brandon Lewis in November 2013.

In reply, Mr Lewis confirmed that BSI (British Standards Institution) is currently considering the issue of overheated cut out fuses following a report by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and also that the Institution of Engineering and Technology has recently established a Project Team to look into this issue. This team will advise BSI on the adequacy of current standards.

The background to this debate comes in part from a fatal fire in Eastbourne on Saturday 9 May 2009. This prompted East Sussex FRS Mark Hobbs – who investigated the fire – to consider whether there were wider issues around fires in electrical intake areas.

Following further investigations and research an investigation report was subsequently released in July 2010 in order to promote awareness and understanding of the issue of fires caused by localised resistance heating in the electrical intake area of a property.

Mark also produced a paper and presentation entitled, 'A Journey in Fire Investigation: Achieving Wider Outcomes' which focussed on fires involving electrical intakes which won an international fire research award at an event arranged by the Institution of Fire Engineers and the Fire Service College.

The issues raised in Mark's work prompted the creation of a new warning label produced jointly by the Chief Fire Officers Association and the Electrical Safety Council. Distributed in the millions along with a leaflet, the sticker is designed to be placed near to electrical intake positions.

The label is designed to make the public aware of the potential fire hazards of storing combustible materials near to this equipment. It highlights how electrical energy can create heat - especially if a fault develops and how storing items near to this equipment could also create damage to the equipment, which may increase the likelihood of a fault developing.

Mark Hobbs said: "I am very pleased that this work is continuing. The benefits of sharing the wider outcomes from fire investigations are huge. It is the job of the Fire Service to know everything about fire and to share this as widely as possible. "

For access to further information on electrical intake fires including Mark's report:  
<http://www.esfrs.org/blackmuseum/electricalintake3.shtml>