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Be a glass act and install window film

BROKEN glass stayed relatively intact after the student protests at Millbank Tower, **writes Ian Penfold** of Solar Guard UK.

This highlighted how any small business owner must keep up-to-date on their legal obligations.

No one was seriously injured or killed by a shard of glass. This was not down to luck. It was down to a micro-thin technology.

Since 1992, when Health, Safety and Welfare Regulation 14 came into force, business premises owners have been required to ensure that "every window or other transparent or translucent

surface in a wall, partition, door or gate should, where necessary for reasons of health or safety, be of a safety material or be protected against breakage of the transparent or translucent material; and be appropriately marked or incorporate features to make it apparent".

This regulation, designed to protect building occupants as well as passers-by, applies to a range of workplaces including offices, shops, schools, hospitals, hotels and places of entertainment.

The business owner is responsible for keeping

their glass safe, or they could be held liable.

The cost implications of this, for many small businesses, could be catastrophic.

Further threats to glass windows could come with the London 2012 Olympics. There is also the threat of terrorism.

Almost 90 per cent of all injuries from a bomb blast are related to flying glass, rather than the blast itself. In an explosion, glass particles can travel at speeds of up to 150mph.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) advises that building designers take counter-terrorism measures into

consideration when designing public open spaces as well as urban areas. This reflects the threat posed not just to urban office buildings, but to public areas such as shopping centres, implicating the small businesses working within them.

Installing safety window film, a relatively inexpensive and unobtrusive process, reinforces existing glass and helps to hold broken pieces together in the event of an explosion, greatly reducing the chance of glass causing property damage, injury or death.