

Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
published monthly in Facilities by Lexis Nexis between 2008 and 2016

F

ly-posting

Fly-posting can occur anywhere but is usually found in urban locations. It is generally taken to be the display of advertising on buildings and street furniture without the consent of the owner. Fly-posting can be unsightly and make an area feel unsafe and uncared for. Facility Managers generally have to manage any fly-posting problems.

There are three main types of fly-posting: Advertising for local events - e.g. adverts for band playing in pubs or a local car boot sale; Poster advertising products of large organisations and put up by professional poster companies; Posters displayed by pressure groups or political bodies. These are all illegal forms of advertising if they are displayed on a building without the owner's consent.

In most of the UK there are local by-laws against fly-posting and these can vary from borough to borough. Breaking these by-laws is a criminal offence, which means that if the police catch the culprits, they can be arrested and fined.

Fly-posters can be prosecuted through the Magistrates' court using the Town and Country Planning Act, the Highways Act, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, the Local Government Act, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and/or The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Magistrates Fines range from £1000 to £2500, with authorised council officials able to issue £50 'on the spot' fines.

Many authorities also have bylaws making the venues or the owners of the advertised event or product responsible for any publicity bearing their name, punishable with fines. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 makes the business or event being advertised equally liable, unless they can demonstrate that the posters were being displayed without their knowledge or that they took reasonable steps to prevent their display.

More than eight out of ten local authorities report problems with fly-posting. It is difficult and expensive to remove and can cause damage to property. It costs a good deal of money to remove and buildings with fly-posting outside may damage brands and reputations of the organisations who occupy them.

Councils have a legal duty to remove fly-posting from public buildings. For private buildings it is the property owner that has a responsibility to remove any fly-posting. Using particular site treatments make it more difficult to stick posters on the treated surface, or to make it easier for the posters to be removed. Some of these take the form of 'anti-glue' paints. The most commonly used coatings are treatments, which, by effectively roughening or stippling the surface, deter its use for flyposting.

The Department for Communities and Local Government publish a Good Practice Guide to the Control of Fly-posting on their website www.communities.gov.uk