

NEWS RELEASE

Date:	21 st July 2009
Subject:	Thousands of UK companies risk falling foul of new Companies House reporting rules

London July 21st July 2009 Upcoming changes from the Companies Act 2006 require businesses to substantially change the way in which they file their records.

From October 1st 2009, companies will have to meet stringent new rules, such as including details of Voting Rights in their annual return; re-filing any register locations outside of the main registered address and making sufficient provision for a declaration of Directors' interests.

Thousands of companies are simply not aware of the potentially huge administrative burden that they have to be prepared for by the first of October and have not put into place procedures and process for coping with the changes.

The new Statement of Capital requirement means 'Voting Rights' must be entered for every share class of every company and to be replicated within the body of the annual return and associated forms. This could range in size from 1 to 100 pages of text, depending on company type.

Also from October 1st, Directors have a legal duty to 'avoid a situation in which [they have], or can have a direct or indirect interest that conflicts, or possibly may conflict, with the interests of the company'. It is essential that companies have in place a mechanism for declaring Directors' interests to other Directors in a timely and accessible manner.

In addition, tens of forms that are either new or which require extra information will be introduced from the October date.

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According to Mark Selinger, Managing Director of Computershare Governance Services (CGS), many companies are risking non-compliance: "We spend a huge amount of time speaking with listed companies relative to reporting requirements and it worries me that so many are not ready for these changes. Almost every day, we're meeting with companies who have not yet started thinking about introducing the necessary changes for October 1st. Really, they should be taking a good six to eight weeks to ensure that they'll be fully compliant with the requirements and will not be risking penalties by being badly prepared."

Failure to comply with reporting requirements under the Companies Act can lead to fines or even imprisonment for repeat offenders and Companies House has said that it will be much more stringent in imposing penalties on defaulters going forward.

CGS will be introducing an upgrade to its software in August 2009, which will include functionality to meet all of the new requirements, giving Company Secretaries plenty of time to prepare to meet the October deadline.

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