

## POOR MEP RESPONSIBLE FOR FIRES?

By Matt Warnock

In the past few weeks, several large fires have flared up at buildings and sites in the UAE, causing millions of dollars of damage, with electricals believed to have been at fault. Several MEP specialists have since criticised the quality of work carried out in the GCC, claiming that many installations are simply accidents waiting to happen.

"The standard of MEP work is generally very poor in the UAE – especially in commercial spaces and warehouses," commented KMI International director Iain Fryer.

"I'll not comment on the quality of materials as I don't know what the job spec was, but things like insulation are very bad; that said, the situation was worse two years ago, as there simply wasn't skilled labour available. Now, there's more experience for fewer projects."

MEP Consultancy's Peter Mills agreed: "My experience is in the UK and the standard of workmanship here in the UAE is working up from a very low base. In the seven years I've been here, I've seen improvements in the quality of new installations, but there's still a long way to go



LEVER BELIEVES THAT NOT ALL MEP WORK IN THE UAE IS OF POOR QUALITY.

before work is generally to a good international standard.

"The largest single cause of fire in buildings is electrical faults. One of the biggest problems with electrical systems is that, even if the building is built to a good standard, modifications are frequently made by people who have little or no training in electrical work with dangerous results."

But Drake and Scull International (DSI) general manager and director for MEP, Charles Lever, warned against painting all MEP contractors with the same brush.

"You have to be careful when making generalisations – my background is in the UK and I've seen installations every bit as good here. Maybe there are some smaller contractors that don't provide the same quality, but there are equally those of us, like DSI, that are actively driving the industry forward and raising the level internationally."