

Fire Safety Policy



Charity No: 272240

Contents	Page
Fire safety and risk assessment	1
Who is responsible for fire safety?	1
Duties of the 'responsible person'	1
The risk assessment	
Appointing a 'Competent Person'	
The Competent person is responsibilities	1
Fire risk assessment	2
Step 1 – identify the hazards	
Step 2 – identify people at risk	
Step 3 – evaluate, remove or reduce the risk	
Step 4 – record, plan and train	
Step 5 – review the fire assessment	
Building evacuation plans and fire safety equipment	2
Fire detection and warning system	3
Means of escape	3
Fire-fighting equipment	3
Changes to premises	3
Arson in the workplace	3
Fire drills and training	3
Fire safety induction training	4
Record, review and revise your fire safety plans	4
Maintenance records for training	4
Maintenance and testing of fire equipment	4
Review your risk assessment	4
Revise your risk assessment	4

Fire safety and risk assessment

Fire safety legislation applies to all commercial premises and other buildings to which the public have access. It does not apply to private residential premises. The legislation allows businesses the flexibility to remove, reduce and manage their fire risks on the basis of the findings of a fire risk assessment.

Who is responsible for fire safety?

Typically the employer, owner or occupier of the premises is responsible for fire safety. In law, they are known as the 'responsible person'.

Duties of the 'responsible person'

The responsible person is someone who has the duty of carrying out or arranging a risk assessment of their premises. You must also implement and maintain appropriate and adequate fire safety measures to minimise the risk to life from fire.

- You must make sure that fire risks are removed, reduced or managed to an acceptable level to reasonably protect lives.
- You must also ensure that everyone who may be in, or in the vicinity of, your premises can escape if there is a fire.

As part of the risk assessment

- You need to think about all the **people** who might be on your premises, including visitors or members or the general public.
- You need to pay particular attention to those who may need special help, such as elderly or disabled people or children.

You must:

- Carry out a fire risk assessment and identify possible dangers and risks
- Think about who might be particularly at risk – for example disabled employees, or people who work with hazardous chemicals
- Remove or reduce the risk from fire, as far as reasonably possible
- Put in place fire precautions to deal with any risks that remain
- Make sure there is protection if you use or store flammable or explosive materials
- Have a fire management plan to deal with emergencies including evacuation procedures, and appoint a suitable number of competent persons to help implement it
- Record your findings – if five or more persons are employed – and review them regularly

You can appoint someone other than yourself – known as a 'competent person' – to carry out the risk assessment for you, but in law you remain responsible for complying with fire safety legislation.

The Management Trustees as the Responsible persons have appointed a 'competent Person' to act on the behalf of the Society. This nominee can change from time to time and on each occasion this document should be inspected and updated if necessary.

That competent person would normally be the HQ Manager. If no HQ Manager is in place the competent person would be appointed by exception. Currently this is :
Hon Treasurer: Keith Woodward

The Competent person is responsible for

- Fire Risk Assessment
- Appointing Fire Marshalls and training
- Carrying out regular fire drills
- Implementing the Society Smoking policy
- Making sure all fire notices and evacuation plans are in place
- Making sure details identified on the Fire risk assessment are dealt with in compliance with the Fire safety policy.
- Maintaining a visitors book and rehearsal attendance record

Fire risk assessment

The 'responsible person' must manage any fire risk on your premises by carrying out and maintaining an up-to-date fire risk assessment.

The recommended way to carry out a risk assessment is to follow a step-by-step process.

Step 1 – identify the hazards

Hazards include:

- Anything that can **start** a fire, such as naked flames, heaters or commercial processes or equipment such as cookers or hot-air dryers
- Anything that can **burn** in a fire, including piles of waste, display materials, textiles or other flammable products
- Oxygen sources such as air conditioning, medical products or commercial oxygen supplies which might **intensify** a fire

Step 2 – identify people at risk

People at risk include:

- People who work close to or with fire hazards
- People who work alone, or in isolated areas such as storerooms
- Children or parents with babies
- Elderly people
- Disabled people

Step 3 – evaluate, remove or reduce the risk

To comply with fire safety legislation, you will need to:

- Where possible, get rid of the fire hazards you identified – eg remove build-ups of waste – and reduce any hazards you can't remove entirely
- Replace highly flammable materials with less flammable ones
- Keep anything that can start a fire away from flammable materials
- Have a safe-smoking policy for employees or customers who want to smoke in a designated area near your premises (smoking in enclosed spaces is banned)

Once you have reduced the risk as far as is practical, you should assess any remaining risks that can't be removed and manage these with appropriate fire safety measures.

Step 4 – record, plan and train

You should:

- record significant findings and action taken – this is a legal requirement if you have more than five employees
- prepare an emergency plan
- inform and instruct relevant people, and co-operate and co-ordinate with others to ensure fire safety
- provide training

Step 5 – review the fire assessment

You should:

- Keep the assessment under regular review and revise it where necessary.

Building evacuation plans and fire safety equipment

A fire in your premises must be detected quickly and a warning given so that people can escape safely.

Fire detection and warning system

You must have an appropriate fire-detection and warning system. Whatever system you have, it must be able to warn all people in the building in all circumstances.

Means of escape

The arrangements to evacuate your premises form an important part of your emergency plan. You should:

- Make sure the escape route is as short as possible.
- Consider how many people are going to be using the escape route.
- Consider the impact if one of the means of escape has been blocked.
- Ensure there is a clear passageway to all escape routes – passageways should be one metre wide.
- Ensure escape routes are kept free of any obstructions, eg they are not used for storage
- Make arrangements for the evacuation of elderly or disabled people. You must also consider other less able-bodied people who may have access to the building, taking into account both physical and mental impairment.
- Inform and train all employees in how to escape the building.
- Install an emergency lighting system.
- Identify all escape routes with appropriate signs.
- Ensure the place to which you are evacuating – the muster point – is safe.

Fire-fighting equipment

- Your risk assessment may highlight that it may be appropriate to provide portable fire extinguishers so that people on your premises can tackle a fire in its early stages.
- These extinguishers should be installed, tested and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.
- They will require a 'competent person' to instruct staff how to use them.
- It may be necessary to show the location of extinguishers with suitable signs.

Changes to premises

If you make any changes to your premises, you will be responsible for managing the risk you create. You will still have to comply with the planning process and Building Regulations. You will need to:

- Revisit your fire risk assessment
- Assess how the changes will affect the risk in your premises
- Decide whether your risk management measures are adequate and adopt further measures if necessary

Arson in the workplace

There are some warning signs that you should look out for that might indicate that your business is at increased risk of an arson attack – for example:

- Small fires in or around your premises previously – these could be a warning of worse to come
- Fires occurring locally – you should make sure that the police are informed of these

- Other forms of vandalism – eg graffiti or damage

Fire drills and training

- You should carry out a fire drill at least once a year. It is good practice not to announce fire drills in advance so you get a realistic idea of how effective your fire evacuation plans are.
- Everyone must participate in the fire drill. You should record the result of each fire drill in your fire log book.
- You must nominate and train a sufficient number of staff to help you carry out your fire drills and emergency evacuation procedures.
- This includes training on how to operate any fire-fighting equipment considered necessary.

Fire safety induction training

As the responsible person, you must provide all employees with instruction and training so that they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Every employee, including those on temporary or short term contracts, and others likely to be on the premises must know:

- how to raise the alarm if they discover a fire
- how to contact the fire brigade
- how to use the fire-fighting equipment and in what circumstances
- how to evacuate the building
- where to assemble and who to report to

Record, review and revise your fire safety plans

If you employ more than five people, you must keep a written record of the significant findings of your fire safety risk assessment. You should keep the following:

- a record of the hazards you have identified, the people at risk, and any action you have taken
- an emergency plan designed for your premises, including the action you need to take if there is a fire on your premises or nearby
- records of fire-fighting arrangements in place to control the fire risk

Even if you have fewer than five employees, it is good practice to make a written record of your risk assessment.

Maintenance records for training

These include details of fire training and instruction provided and details of fire drills carried out, including the date, evacuation time and any problems encountered. You should give staff and visitors to your premises instructions on what to do in the event of fire.

Maintenance and testing of fire equipment

All equipment, eg fire doors or fire-fighting equipment must be regularly checked and maintained. This includes checking that:

- The control panel shows that all electrical fire detection and alarm systems are working – if not, that all faults are recorded and dealt with immediately
- All emergency lighting is working – if not, that all faults are recorded and dealt with immediately
- All escape routes and fire exits are clear of obstacles and the floor is in good repair
- All fire escapes can be opened without any delays
- All automatic fire doors close correctly when activated
- All fire exit signs are in the correct position

Review your risk assessment

You must make sure that your fire risk assessment is reviewed regularly, is up to date and takes into account any changes to your premises or business that may affect fire safety. You should, for example, look again at your fire risk assessment if:

- There was a fire which was caught in time
- You are storing more flammable materials
- You start a new night shift
- You have more people using your premises
- You make a significant change to your premises, eg adding an extension or subdividing offices

Revise your risk assessment

If your review shows that there have been significant changes that might affect the fire risk in your building, you may need to do another risk assessment. If you are in any doubt at all, it is best to conduct the assessment, even if it turns out that your risk management measures are adequate and there is no need for any further action. See the page in this guide