

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT



Please note that this is only a guide intended for use for premises that do not present a high or specific fire risk.

Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires the Responsible Person (RP) of any non domestic premises to carry out a fire risk assessment, including measures to reduce or eliminate the risk of fire, and identify persons at risk. Where there are 5 or more employees, a record must be kept of significant findings and a definition of a Responsible Person is contained in the above Order.

Objective of a Risk Assessment.

The principles contained in the fire safety order is to use a risk assessment approach, which is goal based and flexible. The RP identifies the risks in the workplace, therefore, to safeguard the safety of employees, the RP must :

- Identify fire hazards and people at risk and to remove or reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as is reasonably practicable;
- Determine what fire safety measures and management policies are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the building should fire occur; by Reducing the probability of a fire starting.
- Ensure that all occupants are alerted and can leave the premises safely its the event of a fire, limiting the effects should a fire occur.

Providing the premises have been built and maintained in accordance with building regulations and is of normal risk or lower, this should be a simple matter without significant expenditure. However if the premises are not in accordance with the building regulations, further guidance and action will be necessary, depending on the complexity, size, occupancy and consequential risks.

Concept of Fire Hazard

When considering fire risk assessment it is useful to understand the definition of fire hazard. A fire hazard has two components balanced against each other, one is the possibility of a fire occurring and the other the magnitude of consequences of that fire.

Record Fire Safety Risk Assessment Information

Having carried out a fire safety risk assessment for the premises, the findings must, in some circumstances be recorded, including any action taken or action still to be taken. The assessment record should be retained and made available, on request, to the enforcing authority. Fire safety law requires information to be recorded where five or more employees are employed (whether they are on site or not) or the premises are subject to licensing or registration or an 'Alterations Notice' has been issued requiring this.

It should indicate :-

- Date the assessment was made.
- The hazards identified.
- Any staff and other people especially at risk (where applicable)
- What actions needs to be taken and by when.
- The conclusions arising from the assessment.

Produce an Action Plan

The action taken is common sense and in the main inexpensive. Should any requirements prove to be expensive, interim measures should be put in place until they can be implemented (providing persons are not put at an unacceptable risk).

All that remains to do is to make a record of the assessment, prepare the action plan and monitor and review as appropriate.

Prepare your Fire Procedure

The aim of the plan is to ensure that in the event of fire everyone, including contractors and casual employees are sufficiently familiar with the action they should take, and that the premises can be safely evacuated to a location where persons will not be in danger. The RP is responsible for preparing the plan, and in most small premises this should not be difficult. In smaller premises it may simply take the form of a fire action notice that everyone has received training on.

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Potential Sources of Ignition

Subject	Risk Element	Measures to Control Risk
1A Electrical Equipment	Faulty Electrical Equipment overheating or causing sparks.	Ensure regular inspections are carried out. Portable Appliance Testing should be carried out and records kept.
1B Electrical Wiring	Faulty wiring can cause overheating or sparks.	A Five Yearly electrical inspection should be carried out and the certificate retained for examination if requested.
1C Misuse of Electrical Equipment	Overloading circuits or sockets by for example, the inappropriate use of adaptors can lead to overheating.	Instruct staff on use and carry out regular checks to ensure compliance.
1D Machinery	Faulty machinery can cause overheating or sparks.	Machinery should not be left unattended unless it is been designed to operate unsupervised. All machinery should be serviced in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.
1E Smoking	Discarded cigarette ends etc. can cause a fire.	Provide a designated exterior smoking area with means to properly extinguish smokers materials. Ensure the area is kept free of combustible materials and rubbish etc.

Fuel Sources		
Subject	Risk Element	Measures to Control Risk
2A Used Packaging	Used Packaging ignited by ignition source.	Ensure used packaging is stored away from ignition source and stored in an appropriate container.
2B Inflammable Liquids or Chemicals	Inflammable Liquids or Chemicals ignited by ignition source.	Ensure Inflammable Liquids or Chemicals are stored away from ignition source and stored as per HSE guidelines.
2C Files and Paper in Offices	Paper ignited by ignition source.	Ensure all vents in office in electrically office equipment are kept free. Folders and paper etc. should not be spread out and should be kept away from ignition sources.
3A Fire (escape) Doors Fire (check) Doors	Obstructed fire doors could lead to injury or death in an emergency. Fire check doors should be kept closed at all times to reduce the spread of smoke.	Ensure fire doors are free of obstructions (inside and out) and that they operate as they should. Ensure fire check doors are not wedged open. Alternatively, fit hold back magnets which will release the door if the fire alarm activates.
3B Fire Exit Routes	Obstructed fire exit could lead to injury or death in an emergency.	Designated fire exit routes should be clearly marked and all staff should be made aware of the importance of keeping them clear.

Means of Escape		
Subject	Risk Element	Measures to Control Risk
<p>3C Internal Stairs</p>	<p>Obstructed Stairs could impede the ability to escape in an emergency.</p>	<p>Stairs should be kept free of debris which could impede escape and possibly cause a person to fall.</p>
<p>3D Signage - Exit Signage - Fire Door</p>	<p>Emergency Exit signage reduces the risk of a person being unable to locate the exit and make their escape.</p> <p>Fire check doors must be identified with the appropriate signs instructing that they must be kept</p>	<p>Exit signage should comply with the statutory requirements.</p> <p>Fire door signage should comply with the statutory requirements.</p>
<p>3E Emergency Lighting</p>	<p>Emergency Lighting is designed to illuminate exit routes to assist with a safe evacuation in the event of an emergency involving a mains power failure.</p>	<p>Emergency Lighting must be provided in the appropriate areas and regularly tested.</p>
<p>4A Fire Alarm System - General</p>	<p>The purpose of the Fire Alarm System is for the protection of life, to provide early warning to allow those within the best chance of escape.</p>	<p>The Fire Alarm System should incorporate manually operated call point at all exits and at the top of each stairwell. The sounders must provide a sufficient level of sound to be clearly audible throughout the premises.</p>
<p>4B Fire Alarm System - Testing and Records</p>	<p>Regular testing ensures proper activation in the event of a fire and could help to save lives.</p>	<p>The Fire Alarm System should be tested in accordance with BS 5839 -1:2002 and a record of all testing and servicing recorded in the log book. (Further information provided on page 8).</p> <p>All those present should be informed when testing is to take place to avoid confusion.</p>

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Fire Detection & Fire Fighting

Subject	Risk Element	Measures to Control Risk
4C Fire Extinguishers	Fire extinguishers not adequate for their purpose could cause delay and the preventable spread of a fire.	Fire extinguishers should be provided as necessary and regularly maintained as appropriate. Records of testing should be kept for inspection.
5A Training	The lack of training can lead to delays and confusion in an emergency.	Ensure all staff are properly instructed on procedures to be followed in the event of a fire. Have a designated assembly area and carry out fire drills. Ensure staff are made aware when fire alarm testing is carried out to help to prevent the possible assumption that a genuine activation is a test.
5B Fire Safety Checks	Safety checks will help to ensure that potential problems such as obstructed escape routes or lack of extinguishers are identified and the appropriate action taken.	Ensure safety checks are carried out by a suitable nominated person. Keeps records of checks including faults and remedial action.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FIRE ALARM TESTING & INSPECTING

IT IS THE USERS RESPONSIBILITY TO CARRY OUT OR HAVE CARRIED OUT ROUTINE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM INSPECTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH Clause 45 OF BS5839 :1- 2002.

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM INSPECTION PROCEDURES

Note: Monitored Systems MUST NOT be tested without notifying the Alarm Receiving Centre

DAILY INSPECTION

Check the Mains Indicator is lit. Check no other lights are lit or sounders operating. Notify any faults to the installation company.

WEEKLY TEST

Turn the key switch/enter code (or follow control panel manufactures instructions) to ARM CONTROLS and press RESET. Check that the WARNING BEEPER sounds. Operate a call point or sensor to test the fire alarm. Check that the alarm sounders operate. Reset the system by pressing SILENCE and then RESET. Each week test a different call point so that all call points and sensors are tested in rotation. Check all call points and sensors and verify that none is obstructed in any way.

QUARTERLY TEST

Check all previous Log Book entries and verify that remedial action has been taken. Visually inspect the batteries and their connections. Test the fire alarm as in the weekly test above. Remove the mains supply and check that the batteries are capable of supplying the alarm sounders.

ANNUAL TEST

As for the weekly and quarterly tests but check every detector, call point, sounder and all auxiliary equipment for correct operation.

EVERY 2-3 YEARS

Clean the smoke detectors to ensure correct operation and freedom from false alarms.

EVERY 4 YEARS

Replace Sealed Lead Acid Batteries.

It is recommended in accordance with BS5839 that as an absolute minimum, the annual test be carried out and be certified by a competent Fire Alarm servicing organisation.