

LAWPACK



Do-it-Yourself eKit

Fire Risk Assessment

Guidance Manual

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How to use this eKit

In October 2006, new fire safety regulations came into force. These shifted the responsibility for fire safety from the fire service to the occupiers of premises. In other words, it is now an occupier's responsibility to ensure that, as far as practicably possible, all fire safety measures on their premises have been taken.

The relevant pieces of UK legislation are: the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) in England and Wales; [The Fire \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) in Scotland; and [The Fire Safety \(N.I.\) Regulations 2006](#) in Northern Ireland. They apply to practically all premises, including:

- offices and shops;
- premises that provide care, including care homes and hospitals;
- community halls, places of worship and other community premises;
- shared areas of properties in which several households live;
- pubs, clubs and restaurants;
- schools and sports centres;
- tents and marquees;
- hotels and hostels;
- factories and warehouses.

The regulations do not apply to private residences.

Three documents need to be produced by the occupier or 'responsible person', should an inspecting officer from the local fire authority visit the premises:

- 1. Fire Risk Assessment** – a record of the premises' fire risk; where five or more people are employed, the assessment has to be recorded in writing. The purposes of a Fire Risk Assessment are:
 - To identify hazards and the risk environment in which they are found.
 - To focus attention on measures for the reduction or control of risk to acceptable levels, as far as is reasonably practicable.
 - To help employers decide on priorities for action, based upon objective cost - benefit analysis.
 - To assist employers in discharging their legal obligations under the appropriate legislation.
- 2. Emergency Action Plan** – details the actions to be taken should a fire start.
- 3. Fire Safety Log Book** – to record information regarding fire safety.

This eKit provides guidance and templates for employers to produce their own documents, and so comply with their legal obligations. The law is stated as at 1 June 2009. See the flowchart opposite for a summary.

Flowchart for producing a Fire Risk Assessment



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This is an excerpt from Lawpack's *Fire Safety Risk Assessment Kit*.

To get all the risk assessment template forms and guidance you need to make your own fire risk assessment, [click here](#).

Introduction

The purpose of a Fire Risk Assessment is to identify sources of ignition, sources of fuel and people at risk from fire, in order to remove or reduce the risk to the lowest possible level. In addition a Fire Risk Assessment intended to highlight deficiencies in premises' fire precautions that would otherwise have a detrimental effect on people and property in the event of fire; for example, a lack of fire-resistant materials on escape routes, emergency lighting, signage and fire fighting equipment.

Every business, company, establishment, venue, entertainment complex or place of gathering that either employs staff or is used by members of the public is required by law to conduct a Fire Risk Assessment.

It must be stressed that the Fire Risk Assessment in this eKit is an all-purpose document that can be used for most types of premises, facilities or buildings. It is intended to be a user-friendly template for creating a Fire Risk Assessment, be it simple or detailed. In compiling your assessment you may wish to get further advice from your local authority fire service or from government websites such as:

- www.communities.gov.uk
- www.infoscotland.com/firelaw
- www.nifrs.org/fire_safety

The Legislation

There are many different elements to fire safety legislation in use throughout the UK, some of which have been replaced by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in England and Wales, The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 in Scotland, and The Fire Safety (N.I.) Regulations 2006 in Northern Ireland.

The legislation covers general fire precautions and fire safety duties that are needed to protect people in case of fire in and around most premises. The legislation requires fire precautions to be put in place 'where necessary' and to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable to do so in the circumstances.

Responsibility for complying with and implementing the order rests with the 'responsible person'. In a workplace this is the employer, manager or any other person who may have control of any part of the premises; for example, the occupier or owner. In all other premises the person or people in control of the premises are responsible. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises, for example, a multi-occupied complex, all must take reasonable steps to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other.

The responsible person must carry out a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment of the general fire precautions. Where five or more people are employed, this risk assessment must be recorded in writing. Employers of fewer than five people still have to carry out a risk assessment; they do not have to record it, but it is considered good practice to do so.

Other than some specialist premises, the local Fire Authority will be the enforcing authority under the legislation. The Fire and Rescue Service, on behalf of the Fire Authority, may at any reasonable time, arrange to audit the premises and the risk

assessment in order to confirm compliance with the legislation. It will be the duty of the Fire and Rescue Service to work with the responsible person to ensure safe premises; however, options for enforcement in the case of non-compliance include:

- A notification of deficiencies – a formal communication from the enforcing authority (local Fire Authority/council) outlining areas identified under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order that need attention.
- An enforcement notice – issued when the enforcing authority has identified breaches in the regulations that require immediate improvements to the premises or the way in which it is managed in terms of fire safety.
- An alterations notice – if a premises has the potential to be high risk, the enforcing authority may issue an alteration notice which requires them to be informed should any alteration to the property be proposed.
- A prohibition notice – if the enforcing authority is dissatisfied with the action (or lack of action) which has been taken, they may then restrict the use of part or all of the premises until such improvements are made.

The Five Steps to a Fire Risk Assessment

By following the following five steps to a fire risk assessment, the application and implementation of good fire safety management can be applied to the workplace in order to remove or reduce and therefore control fire hazards so as far as is reasonably practicable. This can be achieved by walking through the property and inspecting processes and procedures, to identify any area of concern, including the review of existing control measures currently in place. This may involve assistance from colleagues and other members of the workforce so that a true and accurate picture of the hazards may be established.

Step 1

Identify fire hazards

For a fire to start or continue to burn, three elements are required (often referred to as the ‘triangle of fire’): a fuel (something that burns), a heat source (flame, spark, hot surface), and oxygen. In order to identify fire hazards, you must look at combustible materials, sources of heat, process operations and unsafe acts and practices.

Step 2

Identify people at risk

You need to consider any person that is likely to use your facility and identify their particular requirements. There may be occasions when people are particularly at risk, such as those who are physically, mentally or visually challenged.; those in sleeping accommodation who might be slow to react; even those who work alone or are isolated.

Step 3

Remove or reduce the risk, and evaluate the current procedures and practices to determine if the existing arrangements are adequate

Having identified the hazard, you need to reduce the chance of a fire starting, thereby minimizing the chance of harm to people and property by:

- **REMOVING** the hazard
- **REDUCING** the hazard to its lowest practical level
- **REPLACING** the existing hazard with an alternative
- **SEPARATING** the hazard from the area
- **DEVELOPING A PREVENTION POLICY** to ensure that hazards do not occur

The risk should then be evaluated. The risk factor is simply the severity of the hazard multiplied by the probability of the risk occurring therefore: hazard x probability = risk factor

High risk – Where there is a serious threat to life from fire; there are substantial quantities of combustible materials; there are highly flammable substances; or there exists the likelihood of rapid spread of fire, heat and smoke

Normal risk – Where there are sufficient quantities of combustible materials and sources of heat to be greater than a low fire risk but where a fire would remain confined, or spread slowly

Low risk – Where there is hardly any risk from fire, few combustible materials, no highly flammable substances and virtually no sources of heat

Step 4

Record plan and train

Where five or more people are employed, the risk assessment must be recorded in document form or electronically and made available to the inspecting authorities on request. Any areas of concern highlighted in the assessment must be acted upon, e.g. by contractors commissioned to carry out work. Staff must be informed about the findings of the assessment, which includes regular fire safety training.

Step 5

Review

The Fire Risk Assessment is not a one-off. It must be reviewed at regular intervals and if there are changes to:

- Staffing/occupancy levels
- Work activity and processes

- Materials used or stored
- Building use
- Building alterations

Completing your Fire Risk Assessment

Use the template Fire Risk Assessment document in this eKit and refer to the completed example included in this Manual for guidance, beginning on page 12.

Management Overview and Authorised Signatories

Complete the Management Overview and Authorised Signatories according to your circumstances. Authorised signatories can be any staff involved in or informed of the fire risk assessment; in some circumstances it might be the same person; this page is not compulsory and merely acts as confirmation that the document has been read and understood.

Section A Building construction

This section can be divided into three parts:

- i) A breakdown of its general use, e.g. 'A hotel with 60 bedrooms over four floors and catering for the holiday trade'.
- ii) A description of the internal layout, e.g. 'Entry to the building is via the main doors to the front the building which leads into the main reception, from here two further doors lead into a bar area and a restaurant'.
- iii) A list of the materials used in its construction – don't forget to include floor and roof/ceiling construction.

Section B Occupancy of building

Give a brief outline of the number of staff employed and the hours they work: start, finish, overtime and shift patterns.

Section C People at risk

List all those who are likely to use the premises; this includes all staff, contractors, members of the public and people with special needs.

Section A: Building Construction

DESCRIPTION

This building is to be used as a residential home for young persons. It was originally constructed in 1997 as a domestic/private dwelling and is now in the process of being converted to its proposed use by the current owners. It is comprised of two floors and an attic. This fire risk assessment has been carried out on the property in its current state and will need to be reviewed once all work is complete.

Entry to the home is direct through the main entrance at the front of the property and in to a hallway. From here there is a single doorway leading in to the lounge with further access to a dining area, kitchen and conservatory located to the rear of the building. Access to the first floor is provided from the hall via a wooden stairway leading onto a landing. Off this landing is the sleeping accommodation which comprises a shower room, bathroom, and three bedrooms, two are to be used for the residence and one is for staff use out of hours.

In addition there is a converted garage to the side of the house which is to be used as an office and storeroom.

The building construction is made up of a traditional brick and breeze block build to all external and most internal walls with some partitioning to the first floor. The ground floor is of self-levelling concrete construction with a timber and plaster board ceiling. The first floor is also of a timber and plaster board design and both floor areas have a carpeted and linoleum surface covering. The external roof is a pitched and wood trussed design with a slate covering to external surfaces. The garage and storeroom are of the same build as the main property and both are accessed individually. The property is supplied with mains electricity and gas services.

This facility is to be fitted with an interlinked automatic smoke detection system to both floors, and fire resistant material is to be included in work carried out which conforms to current standards. Particular attention should be directed at maintaining means of escape i.e. doors, walls and floor coverings etc.

Section B: Occupancy of Building

There will be nine members staff in total, this figure includes full-time/part-time and weekend staff and two residents when in full occupancy. The facility will be staffed 24 hours and will be used for sleeping accommodation. It will cater for a maximum of two children with learning disabilities between the ages of 11 and 17.

Section C: People at Risk (Life Risk)

Outside normal working hours the facility will provide accommodation for up to two residents and one to two members of staff depending on the nature of the child's needs. When two members of staff are employed at night, one will work a waking shift. At all other times the people listed below may also be present on the property:

1. All staff and management
2. Residents
3. Residents visitors
4. Contractors
5. Delivery persons
6. Cleaning staff
7. Any person not mentioned above

Section D: Fire Safety Check

MEANS OF ESCAPE		ACTION
Are fire exit routes clearly marked and free from obstructions?	✓	Maintain clear access and egress at all times
Are fire exit doors fully serviceable and not edged/forced open?	✓	
Are escape routes adequately signed?	N/A	Work ongoing. See emergency lighting below
Are the final exits unlocked when the premises are in use?	X	Exits are locked. See actions/recommendations D1
Are the devices on final exits capable of being opened immediately?	✓	
Do fire exits lead to a place of safety?	✓	
Are steps and stairs in a good state of repair?	✓	
Do doors on escape routes open in the direction of travel?	X	The main entrance external door opens inwards
Are all call points serviceable and unobstructed?	N/A	
EMERGENCY LIGHTING		ACTION
Are escape routes adequately lit?	X	Work ongoing. See actions/recommendations D2
Is the emergency lighting in working order?	X	See above
Is the emergency lighting tested?	X	See above
Is emergency lighting provided on external escape routes?	X	See above
Are records kept of testing/maintenance?	X	See above