

Fire Safety Essentials: A step-by-step guide for fire safety management

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24/7 professional support for businesses,
across **Employment Law, HR and Health & Safety**



The detail contained within this webinar is based on GB & Northern Ireland employment legislation.

Members in the jurisdictions of the Republic of Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man are asked to please contact the Advice Service to obtain the information relevant to your jurisdiction.

Today We Will Cover

- Essential fire safety steps every employer should take
- The legislation surrounding fire safety
- How to carry out fire safety risk assessments

Elements of Fire

Fires occur when the three elements come together.

Sources of Fuel

- Wood, Paper, Textiles.
- Furniture & Upholstery.
- Flammable Liquids.
- Waste.
- Virtually Anything.

Sources of Oxygen

- Air Conditioning/Ventilation Systems.
- Windows and Doors.
- Oxygen Tanks/Cylinders.
- Medical Use Apparatus.

Sources of Heat

- Naked Flames.
- Smoking Products.
- Electrical Apparatus.
- Hot Surfaces/Sparks.
- Chemical Reactions.



Main Causes of Workplace Fires

- Faulty or misused electrical equipment
- Flammable or combustible materials
- Dirt and clutter
- Human Error
- Smoking
- Cooking
- Arson
- Substandard safety measures



Legal Requirements



- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Is the primary piece of legislation relating to fire safety, known as the Fire Safety Order (FSO)
- Places responsibility occupiers and owners of premises (Responsible Person) to assess the risks to persons affected, to nominate and allocate responsibilities and to put suitable and sufficient control measures in place to reduce the risks of harm
- Legal requirement to perform a specific Fire Risk Assessment

Fire Prevention Methods

- Fire Risk Assessments
- Testing
- Servicing
- Active fire control measures
- Passive fire control measures
- Training



Fire Risk Assessments (FRA)



- A comprehensive FRA is key to identifying the shortfalls and developing an action plan (Active and Passive)
- Active Fire Protection requires action to be taken to detect and alert, stop or contain a fire. This may involve a person taking a manual action, such as using a portable fire extinguisher. On the other hand, this may be a smoke detector that triggers an alarm or automatic sprinkler.
- Passive Fire Protection is a group of components used to compartmentalise a building so come the outbreak of a fire it will contain or slow the spread. No action is required for this to kick-in.
- Recommended to conduct a FRA every 12 months minimum.

Active & Passive Controls



Active

- Fire Blankets
- Fire/Smoke Alarm Systems
- Sprinkler Systems
- Fire Extinguishers

Passive

- Fire-resistant walls and floors
- Fire doors
- Dampeners

Active & Passive Control Limitation



The fire has to start and grow to a level where these controls need to be used or automatically kick in e.g.:


Active

- Heat / Smoke detection from Alarm Systems need to be in the location of the fire to activate
- Sprinkler Systems will only slow the spread, unusual for the fire to be extinguished
- Fire Extinguishers / Blankets rely on a competent person noticing the early stages of a fire then using them correctly (PASS)

Passive

- Fire-resistant walls and floors will compartmentalise the fire usually until the fuel runs out
- Fire doors (usually FD30S) will only hold smoke and flames back if closed completely and maintained correctly

Testing & Servicing



- Ensures that fire safety equipment, such as fire alarms, extinguishers, and sprinkler systems, are in working order.
- Helps to identify and address any potential issues before they lead to a fire.
- Includes regular inspections and maintenance of electrical equipment to prevent overheating and short circuits, which are common causes of fires.

Testing/Serviceing Active & Passive Controls



- Regular Inspection and maintenance of systems
- Fire Alarm Testing (Weekly / Monthly) and Servicing (6 Monthly / Annual)
- Emergency Lighting checks (Flick on / off monthly & Full discharge annually)
- Evacuation Drill (Six monthly)
- Fire doors:
 - Check automatic holding devices work on each alarm test
 - Check Closers work (less than 10 seconds from 90 degree)
- Intumescent strips and cold smoke seals in place
- PAT–Portable Appliance Testing (Between 3 months and 5 Yearly)

Testing/Service Active & Passive Controls



- Sprinkler systems (*Annual / Six monthly wet / dry systems*)
- Extinguishers (*Annual service & recharge after 5 years*)
- Lightning Protection (*Annual service*)
- Wet / Dry Risers & Fire Fighting Lifts – Bespoke
- Penetrations through compartment walls e.g., for services (*Intumescent materials*)
- Construction materials of protected escape routes
- Loft hatches and Loft spaces
- Escape routes and final exits (*Including external staircases*)
- Signage

Responsible & Competent Person



- The FSO requires businesses to have a Responsible Person, the responsible person is usually the employer, or a person who has, to some extent, control over the workplace, e.g. corporate body, property owner etc.
- The responsible person must nominate Competent Persons to implement fire safety measures.
- A Competent Person is personnel and/or others who have sufficient training, knowledge or experience to implement fire control measures.

Prevention Best Practice



- Good Housekeeping standards
- Regular Inspections / Tours
- Appropriate storage of Flammables (accelerants)
- Training of employees (Online system eLearning / Warden training)
- Robust Emergency Procedures-Trained out and practiced
- Electrical Condition Reports (Mostly 5 years)
- PAT–Portable Appliance Testing (Between 3 months and 5 Yearly)
- Controls for Employees items (Phone chargers not CE marked)
- Smoking and smoking materials controls e.g., Smoking areas and ash trays
- Deterrents against Arson (CCTV, Signage, Security)

Prevention Best Practice

- External Audits
- Competent Advice line support
- Fire Risk Assessment reviews Annually / If there is a fire / If there is a significant change to business tasks (premises or personnel) / If legislation dictates.
- Safe systems of work
- Permits to work for hot works
- Maintenance schedule
- Gas safety checks (mains and LPG) Annually Gas Safe Engineer
- Industry news / Best practice

Fire Wardens

- In a larger company or building, it might be too much for you to keep track of everything all by yourself.
- Fire wardens can be appointed as an additional responsible person.
- Some responsibilities could include:
 - Checking the functionality of emergency lighting
 - Testing of fire alarms, meeting points, and sounders
 - Checking functionality and accessibility of fire extinguishers
 - Testing the fire exit routes and fire doors

Summary

- Employers are responsible for the fire safety in their business, including the safety of employees, visitors, contractors or paying guests.
- These responsibilities include conducting fire risk assessments and implementing prevention measures.
- Fire Risk Assessments are a legal requirement in the UK under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.



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Thank you!

Any questions

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