



SPONSORED BY SOLUTIONS FIRE SAFETY



Means of Escape

A Guide to THE FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

AN INTRODUCTION

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WHAT IS THE REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005?

There previously existed over 70 pieces of legislative documentation relating to Fire Safety Law.

This proved at times to be confusing and conflicting.

Under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001 the Regulatory Reform Order was formed and made law in 2005. It replaces the 70 odd pieces with one simple legislative order.



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What are the main requirements?

You must:



- Carry out a fire-risk assessment identifying any possible dangers and risks
- Consider who may be especially at risk
- Reduce the risk from fire as much as is reasonably possible
- Create an emergency plan and, in most cases, keep a record of your findings.
- Review your findings at reasonable intervals.

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WHERE DOES THE ORDER APPLY?

The order applies to virtually all premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open space.

For example Offices, Shops, Pubs, Clubs, Restaurants, Factories, Care Homes, Community Halls, Shared areas of properties, HMO's, Schools, Sports Centres, Hotels & more.

It does not apply to:

People's private homes, including individual flats in a block or house.

Who is responsible for meeting the order?

The "Responsible Person" is whoever has control of the premises or over a certain section such as a department director.

For example, it could be:

- The employer, manager or owner
- A properties managing agent or owner for shared parts of premises
- Any other person who has some control over the premises

There are times when no one person will be responsible and the duty of care is shared between a number of responsible persons



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HOW DO I COMPLY?

A fire risk assessment is a definite requirement. This can be conducted by the responsible person or the task can be given to another competent person, such as a Fire Safety Consultant.

Further requirements

A far as it is reasonably practical the responsible person must make sure that everyone within the premises can escape safely in the event of a fire.

You must consider everyone who may be in your premises. This is regardless of whether they are employees, visitors or the public.

Special consideration should be given for those who may need special help to evacuate such as those with a disability.

Previously Fire authorities issued fire certificates, however, following the introduction of the Regulatory Reform Order these are no longer valid.

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CONDUCTING YOUR FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

The responsible person is still required to ensure that the order is complied with. It is the duty of the responsible person to ensure the risk assessment has been carried out properly implemented regardless of whether they themselves conducted it.



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Step 1

Identify the hazards within your premises

You need to identify:

- Sources of ignition such as naked flames, heaters or some commercial processes
- Sources of fuel such as built-up waste textiles or overstocked products
- Sources of oxygen such as air conditioning or medicinal / commercial oxygen supplies

Step 2

Identify people at risk

You will need to identify those people who may be especially at risk such as:

- People working near to fire dangers or in isolated areas.
- Children or parents with babies; and the elderly or infirm and people who are disabled

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FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

TIP

Break your premises down into manageable assessment areas such as hallways, catering areas, warehouse, storage etc.

Conduct the steps outlined for each individual assessment area to ensure all risks are covered.

Step 3

Evaluate, remove, reduce & protect from risk

Evaluate the level of risk in your premises. You should remove or reduce any fire hazards where possible and reduce any risks you have identified.

For example, you should:

- Replace highly flammable materials with less flammable ones

You must reduce any risk as far as possible, for any that are left you must decide whether there are any further measures you can take to make sure a reasonable level of safety exists.

Careful consideration should be given to each part of the premises. More detailed information is available for specific types of premises in the form of government guides.



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Other items to consider;

- Emergency lighting & fire safety signs
- Staff training and those expected to use the premises
- A fire system management system to ensure continued compliance
- Fire Wardens/First Aiders for allocated Assessment areas

Important considerations for Step 3

Means to fight a small fire when safe and trained to do so:

- You should have one extinguisher for every 200 metre squared (m²) of floor space with at least one on each floor.

Safe routes for people to leave the premises

- If only one route is available, you may need to make it fire-resisting (protected) or install an automatic fire-detection system.
- The travel distance people need to go to escape should be as short as possible.
- The fire escape route should be clear of obstructions / material which can catch fire.
- The escape route should lead to a final exit and a safe place.
- High-risk rooms should not generally open directly into a fire-protected stairway.
- You should be able to use fire exit doors without a key and or specialist knowledge.
- Ensure everyone can evacuate

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FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Review your Fire Risk Assessment regularly and upon any change or incident within the premises.

Information relating to your fire risk assessment and actions taken should be recorded within your 'Fire Safety Log Book' details of which are available within our interactive guides webpage.



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Step 4

Record, plan, instruct, inform and train

Identified dangers and people you have deemed as especially at risk in step 1 and step 2 should be recorded in this step.

The actions taken in step 3 should also be recorded.

With the risks identified and solutions proposed you now need to make an emergency plan outlining the actions to be taken in the event of a fire.

You will need to give staff, and occasionally others, training in the plan.

If other responsible persons exist ensure they are more thoroughly trained.

Step 5 – Review

You should review your assessment at regular intervals.

Any changes to the premises or if any cause is apparent, such as an almost accident, you will need to re-conduct the assessment.

This could include storing more materials which can catch fire easily or additional people using the premises

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ENFORCING THE ORDER

Information relating to your fire risk assessment and actions taken should be recorded within your 'Fire Safety Log Book' details of which are available within our [interactive guides webpage](#).

The responsibility for enforcing the order falls with local Fire authorities.

They will look into complaints about fire safety, carry out investigations after fires where poor fire-safety management is discovered and may carry out targeted inspections.

Failure to meet the order will result in the fire authority providing practical advice or a formal notice.

In the event of a very serious transgression, the fire authority can issue a notice preventing people from using all or part of the premises.



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