



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru  
Mid and West Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru  
South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

## Fire Risk Assessment Guidance

This document is a guidance note to accompany the example fire risk assessment template. The example fire risk assessment template has been designed with small to medium sized businesses in mind and can be extensively edited to suit your requirements. It is possible to add, remove or amend sections as appropriate in order to provide suitable, sufficient and relevant detail.

The Welsh Fire and Rescue Services provide the example fire risk assessment template and this accompanying document to assist businesses in improving fire safety at their premises. A worked example of a fire risk assessment has also been provided on our websites for this purpose.

It is emphasised that the person undertaking the fire risk assessment should be competent to do so. Please see the [Guide to choosing a competent fire risk assessor](#) for more information. It is also emphasised that the content of the fire risk assessment and the identification and addressing of any fire safety deficiencies are the responsibility of the responsible person. This is the person who has control of the premises.

The use of the example fire risk assessment template and this accompanying document will not prejudice any enforcement action that may be taken by the respective Fire and Rescue Authority as a result of significant fire safety deficiencies found during a fire safety audit or inspection.

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## Introduction

The *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005* (FSO) applies to most premises, with a few exceptions. Under the FSO a 'responsible person' (usually the owner, employer, or person in control of the premises) must carry out a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment for the purposes of identifying the general fire precautions required to be undertaken. In simple terms this means identifying and implementing measures to keep people safe from fire.

If five or more people are employed, the premises is subject to a licence or if the conditions of a current alterations notice require it, the significant findings of the fire risk assessment must be recorded. In all circumstances it is recommended that the whole fire risk assessment is recorded in order to assist with the process of ongoing review and to demonstrate that an assessment has taken place.

The significant findings of the fire risk assessment should include:

- Details of the protective and preventative measures already in place to control the risks
- Fire safety deficiencies identified and details on how and when it is intended for these deficiencies to be resolved (the preventative and protective measures)

It may be necessary to appoint one or more competent persons to assist in undertaking the preventative and protective measures needed to comply with the FSO.

If the premises are part of larger, multi-occupancy premises, the overall fire safety arrangements (e.g. for the whole building/ site) must be considered. Co-operation and co-ordination with other responsible persons will be necessary to ensure the safety of everyone.

The fire risk assessment is required to be regularly reviewed (recommended annually) to ensure that it is kept up to date. A review of the fire risk assessment should also be undertaken in the event of any significant changes to work practices and staffing levels, structural or material alterations to the premises or in the event of any near miss or fire.

The example fire risk assessment template and this accompanying document suggest information that should be contained in a fire risk assessment. The recording of information in the template should be in a narrative format; "Yes/ No" answers can be supplemented with a descriptive commentary.

Further guidance can be found in a series of Fire Safety Risk Assessment documents published by the Department for Communities and Local Government; these documents are available via the following link:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business)

Before you start the fire risk assessment, take time to prepare and read through this guidance note. It is important that you allocate sufficient time and that the assessment is undertaken in a practical and systematic way. It must take the whole of your premises into account, including relevant outdoor areas and infrequently used rooms.

## 1 Premises particulars

Specify the following particulars:

- Name and address of premises
- Use of premises
- Employer/ Owner/ Person(s) in control of the workplace
- Telephone number
- The date of the original assessment
- The date(s) it was reviewed
- The date for the next scheduled review
- Name and relevant details of the person carrying out the Fire Risk Assessment/ review.

## 2 General statement of policy

A fire safety policy general statement is a written declaration of the responsible person's intent to ensure the safety of relevant persons and to achieving compliance with fire safety legislation. See below example:

*'It is the policy of (employer/ company etc.) to protect all persons including employees, customers, contractors and members of the public from potential injury and damage to their health as a result of fire.*

*The company will provide and maintain safe working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all employees, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.*

*The company will give a high level of commitment to fire safety and will comply with all statutory requirements'*

## 3 General description of the premises

Give a general description of the premises, for example:

- Construction details of the premises (e.g. brick/ timber/ concrete)
- Approximate age of the premises
- Layout
- Utilities isolation points

Occupancy details:

- Times in use
- Maximum number of employees present at any one time
- Maximum number of persons (employees + non-employees) present at any one time

The size of the premises:

- Footprint of the building(s) in square metres (length x width)
- Number of floors and staircases

## 4 Plan drawing

A plan of the premises is very useful; it can help the assessor in identifying and recording issues and can help employees understand the findings of the assessment. A diagrammatic representation of the premises can also be utilised when considering and formulating the emergency evacuation procedures. It is recommended that a single line drawing of the premises/ area/ room/ floor is prepared, which can then be either placed in or attached to the document. If existing plans of the premises are available these could be used.

The plan should show the location of:

- Escape routes
- Exits
- Stairways (internal and external)
- Fire resisting doors
- Fire resisting walls and partitions
- Places of safety
- Fire safety signs and notices (e.g. pictographic fire exit signs, fire action notices).
- Fire warning devices (e.g. break-glass points, smoke/ heat detectors, sounders, rotary gongs)
- Emergency lighting (to include hand held torches if provided).
- The location and type of fire-fighting equipment (e.g. water extinguishers, fire blankets)

## 5 Identify fire hazards

Consider any fire hazards present within the premises. This could be assessed via a room/area/floor approach:

- **Ignition sources:**  
Smoking materials/ matches, lighters etc  
Naked flames/ hot work processes  
Fixed/ portable heaters  
Boilers/ motors/ machinery  
Cooking  
Lighting equipment  
Friction/ sparks  
Arson
- **Fuel sources:**  
Flammable liquids such as solvents or oils  
Chemicals  
Wood/ paper/ cardboard  
Plastics/ rubber/ foam  
Furniture and furnishings

Flammable gases  
Textiles  
Display materials  
Waste materials

- **Work processes:**

What do the work processes involve? Can any fire risks related to the work processes be removed, replaced or reduced (e.g. switch computers, fax machines and photocopiers off when not in use/ at night)?

- **Structural features:**

Consider any structural features that could contribute to the spread of fire, such as open staircases, openings in walls and floors, large voids above ceilings and below floors, gaps around pipework. Consider the potential combustibility of any structural feature.

## 6 Identify people at risk

Identify people at risk in the event of a fire and their location within the premises. Outline why they are at risk and what control measures are (or need to be) in place.

**Consider:**

- Employees
- Visitors/ customers
- Employees, visitors, and other persons whose mobility, hearing or eyesight is impaired
- Other persons in the premises if the premises are multi-occupied
- Varied working practices (e.g. areas of your premises which are occupied when others are not)
- Areas where employees work alone
- Contractors
- Persons who may be asleep in your premises

## 7 Means of escape – horizontal evacuation

- Do all escape routes lead to a place of safety (e.g. not to an enclosed yard)?
- Are the escape routes and exits adequate for the maximum number of occupants? For example: How many exits are there? How wide are they? Do they open in the direction of travel?
- Are all escape routes and exits clear of obstructions? This includes the exterior of the premises, e.g. outside exits and on external paths.
- Door fastenings. Can doors be opened quickly and easily without the use of a key or a code?
- Are occupants familiar with the premises?
- Are all escape routes and exits clearly identified by appropriate signs where required?
- Dead-end conditions. Are there any areas where there is only escape route?

- Travel distances. How far is it from the furthest point in the building to the nearest exit?
- Inner room situations. Are there any rooms where the only escape route is through another room?
- Provisions for people with disabilities (e.g. sensory impairments, mobility issues or special needs) – where required, are exits wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs?
- How long would/ does it take for everyone to evacuate?

## **8 Means of escape – vertical evacuation**

- Are there sufficient stairways for occupants to be able to escape? Consider the implications of a stairway being inaccessible due to fire.
- Are the stairways adequate for the maximum number of occupants? For example: Are they wide enough to accommodate the people that would use them, including persons with impaired mobility?
- Could a fire in any part of the premises simultaneously compromise more than one stairway?
- Are all stairways (including external) clear of obstructions and free from slips, trips and falls hazards?
- Where provided, are external stairways in a good state of repair?
- Are doors that open onto the stairways fire resisting?

## **9 Fire safety signs and notices**

- Where required is there sufficient signage to clearly indicate escape routes and exits (e.g. directional arrows and fire exit signs)?
- Where necessary, are internal fire resisting doors indicated with '*Fire door - Keep Shut*' notices?
- Where necessary, are internal fire resisting doors to cupboards indicated with '*Fire door - Keep Locked*' signs?
- Where necessary, are fire exit doors marked with '*Fire exit - Keep clear*' notices on the outside?
- Are there signs indicating how to use door opening mechanisms (e.g. '*Push bar to open*')?
- Are general fire action notices displayed stating what to do in a fire situation?
- Is fire-fighting equipment indicated by corresponding photo-luminescent information signage?

## **10 Fire detection and warning**

- Is there a means of alerting all occupants in the event of a fire (a shout of 'FIRE!' may be adequate in very small, open plan premises)
- Can all occupants, including persons with hearing impairments, be alerted when the alarm is raised?
- If a fire alarm system is installed, what is the category? Is it suitable for the risks present/ does it meet the current required standard for the type of premises? Was it installed by a competent person in accordance with the relevant British Standard (BS5839)?

- Is there a need for automatic fire detection, or for additional automatic fire detection, to provide early warning of a fire to occupants (e.g. sleeping risks, multi-occupied premises, varied working, areas where a fire could start and develop unnoticed or inner room situations)?
- Provide a brief summary of the provisions such as the location of fire alarm components.
- Do other provisions actuate with the fire alarm (e.g. magnetic automatic hold-open/ release devices for doors, emergency shut-off for the kitchen gas supply)?

## 11 Emergency lighting

- Is there adequate conventional lighting provided to ensure occupants can see to evacuate the premises?
- Are the premises in use during the hours of darkness (also consider shorter days in winter months)? If so, some form of emergency lighting is required; borrowed lighting, for example, via adjacent street lighting through external glazing, may be considered.
- If the premises are large and/ or complex, an emergency lighting system should be installed in accordance with the current British Standard (BS5266).
- Where the premises are small, a number of hand-held torches strategically located may be sufficient.
- Do internal spaces/ rooms of the premises with no natural light require emergency lighting (e.g. windowless rooms and toilet accommodation exceeding 8 m<sup>2</sup>)?
- Where required, are external escape routes to a place of safety sufficiently illuminated by both conventional and emergency lighting?
- Does the emergency lighting system operate on sub-circuit failure?
- Is there sufficient illumination to cover:
  - i) Changes in level and direction?
  - ii) Fire exit doors and the means for opening them?
  - iii) Fire alarm manual call points and fire-fighting equipment?
- Provide a brief summary of the provisions such as the location of the luminaires and their type (e.g. maintained/ non-maintained/ combined).

## 12 Fire-fighting equipment

- Is fire-fighting equipment provided?
- Is there a sufficient amount and is it appropriate for the risks?
- Is the fire-fighting equipment simple to use?
- Is it unobstructed and easily accessible?
- Does the equipment conform to the current British Standard (i.e. BS5306)?
- Is the fire-fighting equipment suitably located (on the escape route, near to exit doors or near to the specific relevant risk) and positioned (wall brackets/ floorplates)?
- Is the equipment indicated by corresponding photo-luminescent information signage?

### 13 Other fire safety systems

Detail any other systems provided, for example:

- Life safety sprinkler system to BS EN 12845 / domestic sprinkler system to BS9251
- Kitchen suppression system
- Automatic opening smoke vents
- Are the provisions adequate?

### 14 Maintenance

- Is testing, inspection and maintenance of the fire safety provisions taking place?
- Are the arrangements suitable? State "Yes" or "No" and provide brief comments. Include in the commentary who is involved (including any appointed contractors), how often inspections take place and how defects are reported and addressed.
- Confirm whether suitable records are being kept of any testing, inspection and maintenance and the location of these records.

The below table provides an example of the recommended arrangements for the testing and maintenance of fire alarm systems, emergency lighting and fire-fighting equipment. It may be necessary to undertake additional inspections and tests on provisions as required.

Equipment	Period	Action
Fire detection and fire warning system	Weekly	Activate the alarm via a manual call points, check the operation of all warning devices and the control panel for any indicated faults
	6 monthly (BS5839-1 systems/ systems with control and indicating equipment)	Periodic inspection and test of the system by a competent service engineer
	Annually	Full inspection and test of the system by a competent service engineer
Emergency lighting system	Monthly	Operate the test facility and check whether all units have illuminated
	Annually	Full service of the system by a competent service engineer in accordance with BS5266
Fire-fighting equipment	Monthly	Check all extinguishers for correct installation and apparent working order
	Annually	Full service of equipment by a competent service engineer in accordance with BS5306

## **15 Method of calling the fire and rescue service**

Establish and record the method by which the fire and rescue service would be called in the event of a fire. Who makes the call? Is the fire alarm system linked to a monitoring company? If so, what are the monitoring arrangements?

## **16 Fire emergency plan (FEP)**

Is there a Fire emergency plan? Is it suitable? Example issues to consider include (but not exclusively):

- How people will be warned if there is a fire
- The actions employees should take if they discover a fire and upon hearing the fire alarm
- The actions non-employees should take
- The identification of escape routes
- Identity and duties of persons with specific responsibilities in the event of a fire
- The arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk (as referenced in Section 6)
- Where people should assemble after evacuating the premises
- Procedures for checking that the premises have been evacuated
- The arrangements for fighting fire
- How the fire service are called and by whom (as referenced in Section 15)
- Liaison with the fire and rescue service on their arrival
- Contingency plans for business continuity

Reference can be made in this section of the template as to the suitability of any existing FEP.

## **17 Training**

Do employees receive suitable fire safety training upon commencement of employment and periodically thereafter (for example annually)?

Does the fire safety training cover:

- The content of the FEP?
- How fire safety is managed in the premises
- The fire safety provisions in the premises and how they work
- Any other relevant information such as general fire safety principles and good housekeeping

Reference can be made in this section of the template as to the suitability of the fire safety training provided.

### **Fire drills:**

Are regular fire drills being conducted?

Regular fire drills should be conducted to both support the training given and to test that the FEP (as referenced in Section 16) is suitable.

## **18 Significant findings**

Record the significant findings. These are the hazards and risks to persons found during the assessment. Suitable control measures may already be in place for some of these risks whilst other risks will require appropriate protective and preventative measures to be implemented in order to protect persons from fire.

### **a) Existing control measures:**

Detail the protective and preventative measures currently in place to control the risks and ensure the safety of persons.

### **b) Fire safety deficiencies to be rectified:**

Note any issues encountered and the protective and preventative measures required to be implemented in order to reduce risk to relevant persons.

- Note each deficiency, how it is intended for the deficiency to be rectified and by whom
- Set a priority – High/ Medium/ Low. (for example: 1 week/ 1 month/ 3 months). Issues that present a higher risk should be prioritised accordingly
- Set a target date for completion of each one in accordance with the priority
- Once the deficiency is rectified, provide the date of completion in the end column of the table
- Review the fire risk assessment as appropriate to take into account that the deficiency has now been addressed