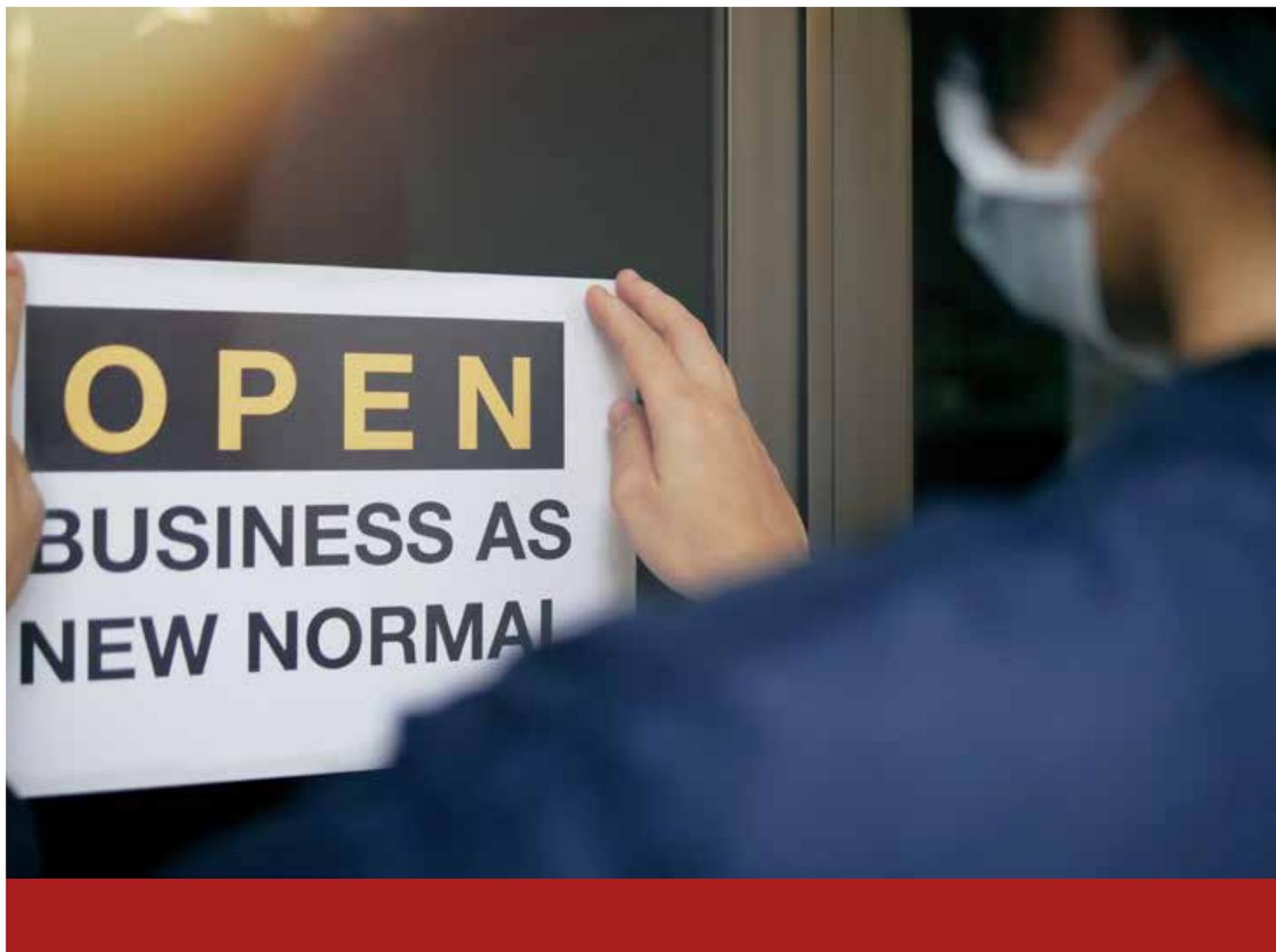


Supporting you  
to protect your business

# RETURNING TO WORK

AFTER COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS



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

**Supporting you  
to protect your business**



## INTRODUCTION

The Welsh Fire and Rescue Services are acutely aware of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on businesses and want to be able to help them to return to work both successfully and safely.

The following content is anticipated to provide some simple advice as staff come back to the workplace and businesses invite the public and others onto their premises.

We are here to help. For further information, or if you wish to speak to a Fire Safety Officer, please visit the website of your Fire and Rescue Service at:

**[www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk)**

**[www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk](http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk)**

**[www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk)**



## FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

It is important that you consider areas such as new working practices, staff numbers and any alterations that you may have made to the premises. Fire doors being held open with unsuitable devices such as door wedges, is a dangerous practise and is not permitted.

If you do not have the expertise to undertake this obligation, you should appoint a competent person, such as a professional risk assessor, to help.

It is important that you review and update your Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) to ensure it is still suitable and sufficient; through doing so, you will be able to identify if your existing general fire precautions are still adequate and where deemed necessary, implement additional control measures to ensure relevant person are kept safe in the event of a fire, at your premises.

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# TRAINING

Do your staff know what to do in a fire situation? If you haven't trained your staff for some time, ensure that all staff still know what to do in the event of a fire.

If you have staff that are yet to return, ensure that other suitably trained staff are available.

Where your staff numbers have changed or new staff employed, you must ensure to continue to provide appropriate staff training.

Remember to consider the fire safety needs of your lone workers.



**Make sure that all staff training is up to date following their return from lockdown.**



# GENERAL FIRE PRECAUTIONS AND OTHER FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

A regular maintenance schedule for all your fire safety provisions, identified as part of your fire risk assessment, will ensure that they remain suitable to protect your workforce and visitors.

Your fire risk assessment may require reviewing to account for any new "Return to Work" Covid 19 guidance. Your staff must be provided with appropriate information, instruction and training about any new and existing fire precautions identified in your significant findings for your workplace.

**ARE YOUR  
STAFF  
PROPERLY  
TRAINED?**

**ENSURE  
SAFETY  
INFORMATION  
IS PROVIDED**

**PROPERLY  
MAINTAINED  
FIRE SAFETY  
PROVISIONS  
SAVE LIVES**



## **FIRE FIGHTING EXTINGUISHERS**

Routine testing and maintenance of all fire safety measures is essential in keeping people safe by ensuring that they operate and perform as required in the event of a fire.

In the event of a fire within a workplace, any person expected to use a fire extinguisher to tackle a fire should be suitably trained to do so. A trained person will:

- Understand which fire extinguisher can be used on which type of fire.
- Be familiar with the operating instructions of the fire extinguisher.
- Be aware of fire extinguisher locations.
- Keep fire extinguishers clean to prevent cross-contamination.
- Identify processes which require fire extinguishers to form part of their procedures e.g. Hot works should not be carried out (unless they are completed by fully competent people with all aspects of the processes including responding to a fire).
- Know that fire extinguishers should be maintained on a regular basis.
- Understand that fire doors are not to be wedged open, particularly by fire extinguishers.

## MEANS OF ESCAPE



Prior to allowing staff or members of the public back into your premises ensure that all escape routes are available and that all doors and gates can be opened quickly and easily without the use of a key. Remember some doors may not have been opened over lockdown - it is possible that locks and hinges have seized and doors have become stiff to open; some maintenance may be required.

If you have introduced temporary barriers or one-way pedestrian systems, remember that all persons must be able to make escape from the building via the nearest available exit. Ensure that any new measures implemented do not result in excessive travel distance (people having to go too far to reach an exit). Review your escape signage. Ensure signs are still visible and pointing in the right direction. Where necessary change your escape signage provision to indicate new or amended routes.

If you or your neighbouring businesses have introduced temporary structures or barriers to assist with a queuing system, they must not compromise any means of escape. Discuss

with your neighbours any potential impact such structures or barriers could have on escape routes and on reaching fire assembly points and work together to resolve any problems.

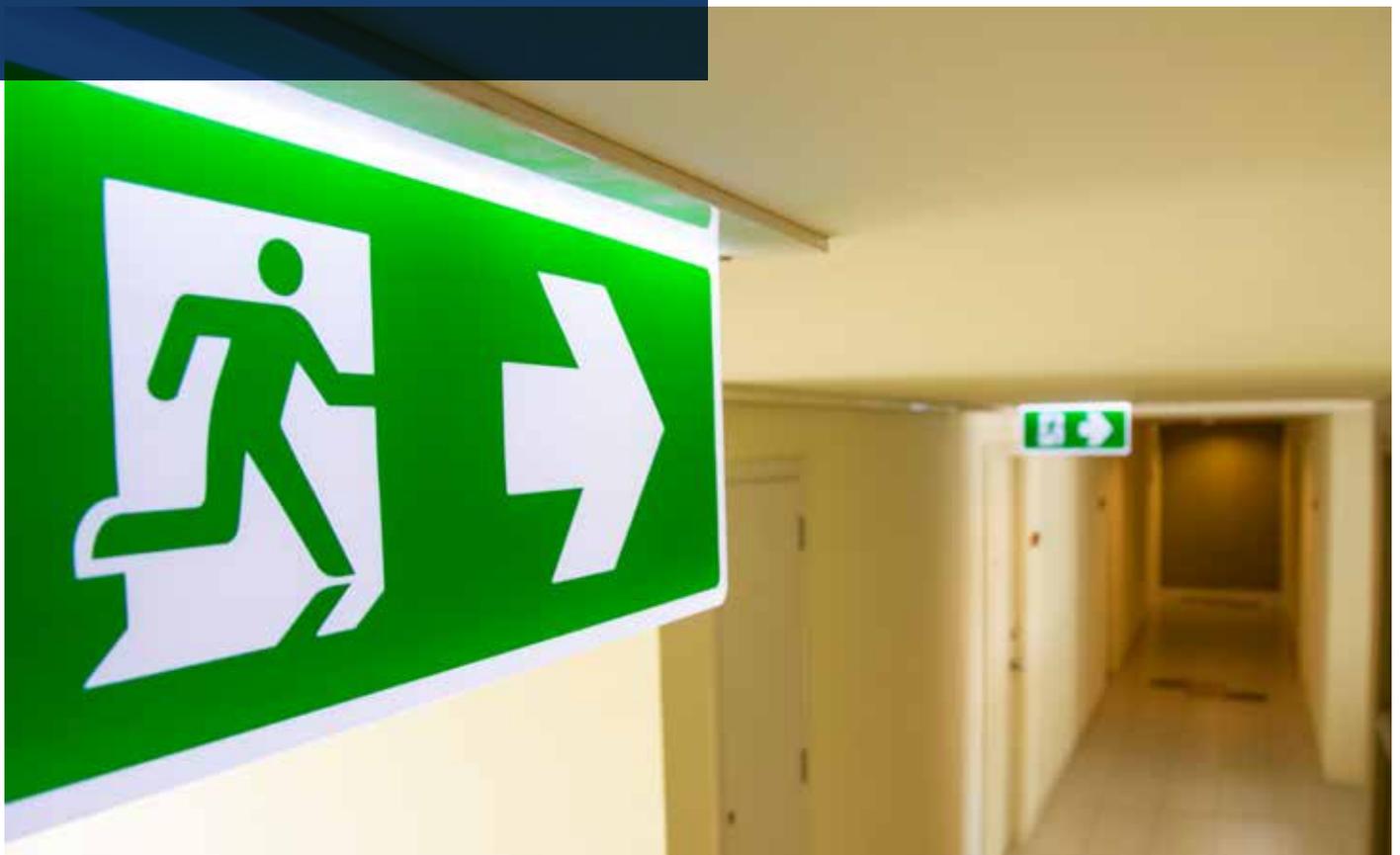
If any such measures have had a significant effect on your escape routes your fire risk assessment must be reviewed.

Ensure that vegetation is cleared away from external lighting and emergency lighting along the route; it is essential that people can see where they are going in order to safely make their escape.

## EMERGENCY LIGHTING

Prior to occupation of your premises ensure that the Emergency Lighting system is inspected and tested to confirm it is fully functional in case of fire and/or failure of the local lighting circuit.

- Replacement of defective bulbs or complete light units must be carried out to ensure that the system remains fully functional.
- Ensure that the emergency lighting system is tested and maintained in accordance with BS5266; this includes a recorded monthly function test of the system and an annual service by a competent person.
- Further information can be found in Section 5 of the relevant Fire Safety Risk Assessment guidance document for your premises. Alternatively, contact your servicing contractor or your Fire & Rescue Service for guidance.





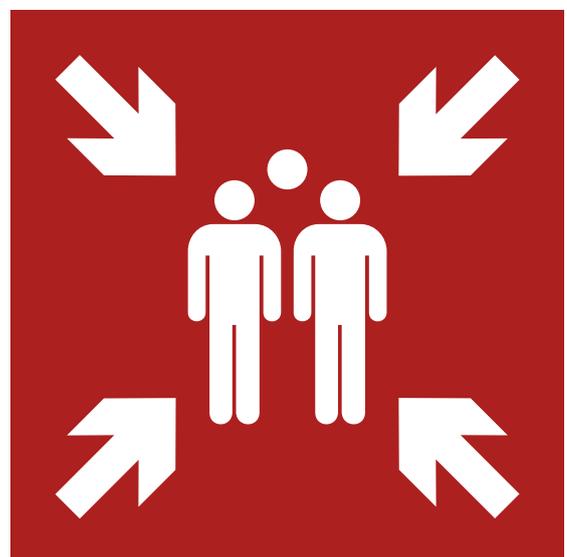
## SIGNS & NOTICES

Ensure that escape signs and notices directing persons to exits are visible from all locations and where required are suitably illuminated. Fire Action Notices (instructions on what to do in the event of a fire) should be positioned in prominent locations such as near break glass call points and at final exits.

Ensure that all safety signs and notices are unobstructed and clearly visible. Examples of such signs and notices include (but not exclusively):

1. Fire Door Keep Shut
2. Fire Door keep Locked
3. Fire Exit
4. Fire Exit Keep Clear
5. Fire Assembly Point
6. Fire-fighting equipment information signage.

Further information can be found in Section 6 of the relevant Fire Safety Risk Assessment guidance document for your premises.



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# FIRE DETECTION AND WARNING SYSTEMS

Ensure that the arrangements you have in place for detecting fire and raising the alarm are tested and inspected to confirm that they are in full working order. Your fire risk assessment should help to identify if any amendments to the existing arrangements are required taking into account any changes to the premises as a result of Covid-19 control measures.

Ensure that if you have a fire alarm system installed it is tested and maintained in accordance with BS5839. This includes weekly recorded testing of the system via the manual call points (a different call point each week) and six-monthly servicing by a competent person. Typically competency of persons- such as fire alarm engineers- is assured via 3rd party accreditation. Ensure that the fire alarm contractor appointed to undertake servicing/ any necessary remedial works on the system has suitable accreditation.

Any safety devices linked to the fire alarm such as automatic door releases and ventilation systems should also be tested and inspected to ensure their correct operation.

If you are in doubt or have concerns regarding any of your alarm functions, then make arrangements for your Alarm Servicing Company to inspect.

## FIRE DOORS

Fire doors are essential in helping prevent smoke and fire spread throughout the building; they protect escape routes to help ensure that occupants can quickly and safely escape in the event of a fire. Many people will be worried about returning to work and will look for ways to limit the number of surfaces- including doors- they touch to help reduce the likelihood of contracting and/ or transmitting the virus.

Emerging intelligence suggests that some businesses are wedging open self-closing fire doors as a Covid-19 control measure (intended to reduce the need to touch locks and door handles etc). Whilst this is understandable in the context of the coronavirus outbreak, such practices could have a detrimental effect on the safety of your building and its occupants; it must be avoided. If certain doors are identified as being required

to be held open, your fire risk assessment will require reviewing and suitable control measures implemented.

The Welsh Fire and Rescue Services strongly advises against the practice of wedging fire doors and asks responsible persons to consider other control measures.



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