



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



Self-Catering Holiday Accommodation Guidance



SUPPORTING YOU TO PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS

Who the guide is for?

This guide is intended to give those responsible for self-catering holiday accommodation, information and guidance to help reduce the risk of fire and comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ('Fire Safety Order').



FAILURE TO KEEP PEOPLE SAFE FROM FIRE MAY RESULT IN ENFORCEMENT ACTION, PROSECUTION, FINES OR EVEN IMPRISONMENT.

THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES IN WALES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENFORCING THE 'FIRE SAFETY ORDER'.

This guide must only be used for small single domestic-type accommodation with sleeping accommodation on only the ground and/or first floors such as houses, cottages, chalets or for single flats (whether within a block of flats or a house that has been converted into flats); and smaller types of outdoor accommodation such as caravans, camping and glamping pods, bothies, lodges, shepherds' huts, tents, tree houses and yurts.

If you are looking to convert or make changes to an existing property for the purpose of providing self-catering holiday accommodation, you may need to contact your local authority planning and building control department.

You can get more advice on this through:
<https://gov.wales/building-planning>





What must I do?

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-  **You must** carry out a fire risk assessment to identify the fire safety measures which you need to have in place to keep people safe from fire.
 -  **You must** act on the outcomes of your fire risk assessment, and if necessary, improve your fire safety measures.
 -  **You must** keep the risks and your fire safety measures under review.
 -  **You should** ensure equipment (e.g. fire alarm systems, gas appliances, electrical appliances, emergency lighting) is subject to regular servicing and periodic testing/inspections. A record of the testing and maintenance should be held.

Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)

A fire risk assessment is something you may be able to do yourself. In many cases, particularly in smaller premises, it may be relatively simple. You will need to identify and thoroughly assess the hazards and risks on your premises and then put in place measures to minimise these risks and keep people safe.

You will need to consider the people who are likely to use your premises, including older people, very young children and disabled people and how they will escape in the event of an incident.



A fire risk assessment is carried out in five key steps:

Step 1 - Identify the Risk

Step 2 - Identify people at Risk

Step 3 - Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Step 4 - Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

Step 5 - Review

To further assist you in completing a fire risk assessment, all three Welsh Fire & Rescue Services have developed a template and guidance notes which are available to download free from each Fire & Rescue Services websites.

You may wish to employ a fire risk assessor or consultant to help you, the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) has guidance for choosing a competent Fire Risk Assessor:

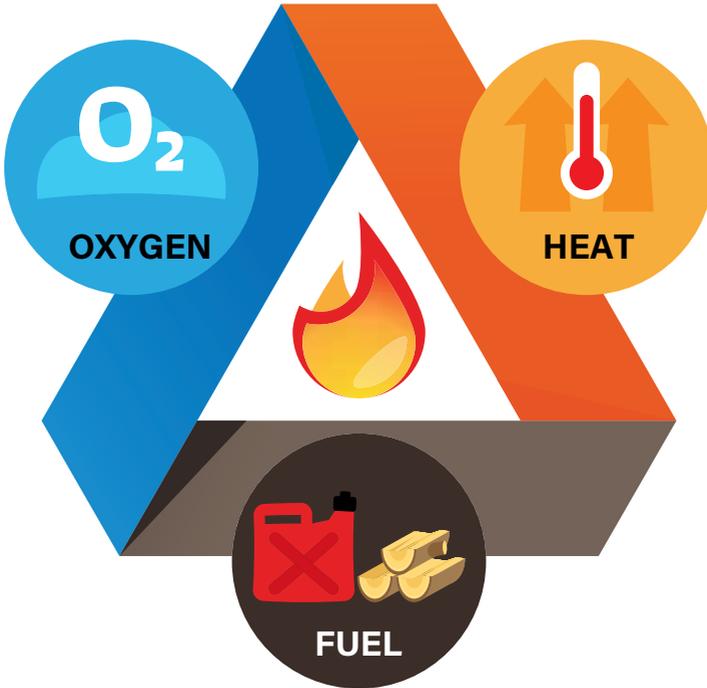
<https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk>





How to reduce the risk of fire

For a fire to occur, three key components need to be present.



HEAT this is an ignition source, such as a flame from a match or spark from defective wiring.



FUEL this is something that can burn, such as wooden furniture, paper etc.



OXYGEN this is in the air that is all around us.

It is useful to keep this in mind when carrying out a fire risk assessment.



Here are some examples of ignition and fuel sources that may be present in self-catering holiday accommodation.

Ignition risks:

- Open fires/ log burners.
- Boilers.
- Candles.
- Antiquated electrical installations.
- Use of portable heaters.
- Cooking appliances and practices.
- Portable electrical appliances (provided and introduced).
- Overloading of sockets.
- Barbecues.

Potential combustible materials/fuel sources:

- Soft furnishings.
- Hard furnishings.
- Bedding and curtains.
- Domestic cleaning materials.
- Clothing.
- Storage of petrol/ oil/ diesel for lawnmowers and other garden machinery.
- Gas cylinders and oil/ gas storage tanks for cooking and/or central heating systems.
- Firewood.
- Carpet.
- Domestic waste.

Note: In many cases combustible materials/ fuel sources will be similar to those of a domestic dwelling.



Electrical safety and fire risk reduction:

Ensure that you have suitable arrangements in place for the recorded inspection and testing of portable electrical appliances in order to reduce the risk of a fire starting (PAT Testing).



ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES SHOULD BE INSPECTED AT EACH CHANGE-OVER.

Please see the HSE document: "Maintaining portable electrical equipment in low risk environments"

for further guidance:
www.hse.gov.uk



- Ensure that the electrical installation of the building is subject to a suitable programme of testing and inspection (EICR) by a competent person in order to reduce the risk of fire in the premises.
- Ensure suitable evidence is retained for your records.

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg85.pdf



Housekeeping and fire risk reduction:

- Ensure occupants are provided with clear information on your smoking policy.
- If you have facilities such as log-burners, open fires or barbecues, provide clear instructions on their safe use.
- In the case of log burners and open fires, consider limiting the quantity of logs available.



NOTE: CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN ALL ROOMS WHERE A GAS, OIL OR SOLID FUEL APPLIANCE IS PRESENT, WITH CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW THEY OPERATE.

- Provide occupants with information on the regular disposal of rubbish, including reference to different types (food waste, recycling etc.) of bins that you may have. Where relevant, carefully consider the location of external bin areas in order to reduce the risk of a fire starting and the risk of fire spread to the building. This could include the use of metal bins, lockable stores or secure bins to fixed object by use of chains and away from escape routes.
- If keys to the premises are obtained by occupants via a key safe, consider periodically changing the code to prevent unauthorised access. Avoid leaving keys in unsecured locations such as under mats or plant pots etc.

REGULARLY CHECK THE PREMISES WHEN UNOCCUPIED.



Furniture:

- All furniture and furnishings that are provided in self-catering premises should comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.
- The Regulations set the levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery.
- Furniture that complies with the regulation should display a permanent label – this label should be displayed on both new and second-hand furniture. You should only purchase furniture and furnishings that carry a permanent label and/or ensure that the furniture complies with **BS7177**.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.fira.co.uk/images/FLAM-FAQs-July-2017.pdf>



Limiting the spread of fire

Generally, if a fire occurs, you will want it to remain in room of origin for as long as possible and not spread through the property. The materials from which your premises are constructed, the quality of building work and state of repair could contribute to the speed with which any fire may spread, and potentially affect the escape routes the occupants will need to use. A fire starting in a building constructed mainly from combustible material will spread faster than one where fire-resisting construction materials have been used.

Depending on the findings of your fire risk assessment, it may be necessary to protect the escape routes against fire and smoke by upgrading the construction of the floors, ceiling and walls to a fire-resisting standard. You should avoid having combustible wall and ceiling linings in your escape routes.

Do I need automatic fire detection (Smoke Alarms)?



YES, ALL PREMISES USED AS SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION ARE LIKELY TO NEED A FIRE DETECTION AND WARNING SYSTEM.

In the smallest of sleeping accommodation premises such as caravans, camping and glamping pods, bothies, lodges, shepherds' huts, tents and yurts a long-life sealed battery automatic fire detection known as a **Grade F1 system under BS5839 Part 6** may be suitable.

If more than one detector is needed, the detectors are required to be interlinked.

In small sleeping accommodation premises similar to single domestic-type accommodation such as houses with sleeping accommodation on only the ground and/ or first floors, cottages, chalets and for individual flats, an interlinked main wired with integral battery back-up system will be required.

Detectors should be installed within areas where a fire might start. This includes halls, corridors, staircases, lounges, dining rooms and bedrooms.

This is technically known as a **Grade D1, LD1 fire alarm system under BS5839 Part 6**.





Remember, smoke alarms can be accidentally set off by steam and therefore should not be installed in bathrooms, shower rooms or toilets.

- Kitchens, and any other rooms (such as laundry, or utility rooms) may generate false alarms due to smoke and dust, should have heat or multi-sensor detectors interlinked to the system throughout the property.
- You will also need to consider how vulnerable occupants will be alerted in the event of a fire; specialist systems, based on vibration units and flashing lights are available to alert people with hearing impairment.



NOTE: IF THE SELF-CATERING HOLIDAY UNIT IS LOCATED WITHIN A LARGER RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SUCH AS A BLOCK OF FLATS, COMPONENTS OF THE COMMUNAL FIRE DETECTION SYSTEM MAY BE LOCATED WITHIN THE UNIT.

If you are unsure of what fire alarm system you should install, please do not hesitate to contact your local Fire and Rescue Service or consult a competent fire risk assessor.

Means of escape



OCCUPANTS MUST BE ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THE PREMISES AS QUICKLY AND AS SAFELY AS POSSIBLE IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE.

Emergency routes and exits must be kept clear, be available at all times and lead as directly as possible to a place of safety. An escape route includes any rooms, corridors, stairs and external areas that you must go through to escape from the building to a place of safety.

No-one should have to travel too far to reach an exit. In most cases the total distance from any point in the building should not exceed 18m. In open-plan flats, the distance from any part of the unit to the flat entrance door should not exceed 9m.

Escape routes need to be appropriate for the whole range of potential occupants, considering age, mobility and language. This means that allowing for escape through a window is unlikely to be suitable in all cases. All exit routes should be suitable for use by disabled people, other vulnerable people or children.

If this is not achievable, the premises should be clearly advertised and marketed as not suitable for people with specific disabilities, vulnerable people or children.

People staying in your accommodation are unlikely to be familiar with the premises. A simple plan drawing indicating escape routes in your guest information pack may be useful for occupants, along with information on how to call the emergency services and location details, especially if the postcode might not identify the location accurately. Include any other relevant contact details as appropriate.



It is not acceptable to rely on the intervention of the fire and rescue service to evacuate occupants.

Exits

Any exits provided, such as the front and back doors, should be easily openable without the use of a key; thumb turn or night latch type latch locks are potential solutions.



Internal doors

Doors should be of solid construction, not of an “egg box” type, fit well in their frames and in a good state of repair with no holes or damage.

Keeping doors closed, especially at night, can help prevent the spread of fire and smoke and help occupants to safely escape. This is of particular importance in the case of higher risk rooms such as lounges and kitchens. Self-closing devices are a good way to make sure doors are closed. It is acknowledged that they can impact on appearance and ‘in-frame closers’ may be an acceptable option.



NOTE: IF THE SELF-CATERING HOLIDAY UNIT IS PART OF A BLOCK OF FLATS AND THE MAIN FLAT ENTRANCE DOOR OPENS ONTO THE COMMUNAL CORRIDOR/ STAIRS, IT MUST BE A SELF-CLOSING FIRE DOOR PROVIDING AT LEAST 30 MINUTES FIRE RESISTANCE (FD30S).

IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE INTERNAL DOORS OF THE FLAT ARE REQUIRED TO BE FIRE DOORS IN ORDER TO HELP PREVENT SMOKE ENTERING THE COMMUNAL AREAS.

Open plan / Inner rooms



AN “INNER ROOM” IS A ROOM IN WHICH THE ONLY ESCAPE ROUTE FROM THE ROOM IS THROUGH ANOTHER ROOM (CALLED THE “ACCESS ROOM”).

This situation occurs with an open plan layout. It must be considered whether a fire in the access room could prevent occupants of the inner room from making their escape. Occupants must not have to pass through more than one access room to make their escape.

If the escape routes from bedrooms are via open plan lounges or integral kitchen, lounge or dining areas, you will probably require additional measures to detect fire and smoke at the very earliest stages and to reduce the risks in those open plan areas.

Some examples are:

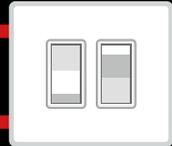
- a multi-sensor detector in the kitchen rather than a heat detector.
- smoke detection in the access room;
- a fire suppression system.
- ensuring cooking appliances are located away from the escape route/ exit.
- automatic cooker cut off devices.
- the replacement of open fires with safer heaters.
- prohibiting smoking, candles and deep fat frying within the premises.



Emergency escape lighting

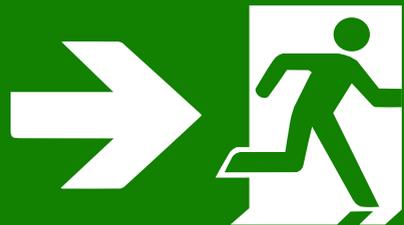
There is typically no requirement for emergency escape lighting within small units of self-catering accommodation; conventional artificial lighting is normally considered sufficient.

Light switches should be easy to find.



Your fire risk assessment however may deem that some form of emergency lighting is required, such as fixed “stand alone” emergency lighting units or torches in order to help occupants escape to a place of safety. Consider whether any “borrowed lighting” such as external street lighting could assist.

- Ensure that torches are provided if occupants are required to escape into areas with no external lighting. This is particularly relevant for remote cottages or isolated locations without street lighting.
- Information should be provided to occupants in the form of signs or in the guest information pack outlining what the torches are for and how they operate. Rechargeable torches located in the corridors and/ or bedrooms that illuminate automatically if the electrical supply fails are a possible solution.



Fire-fighting equipment



IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE OCCUPANTS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO EVACUATE THE PREMISES AND CALL 999, HOWEVER IT IS ADVISABLE TO PROVIDE SIMPLE PORTABLE FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE OCCUPANTS WITH A MEANS OF TACKLING SMALL FIRES IF APPROPRIATE.

Your fire risk assessment should determine what is required; as a minimum a fire blanket should be provided in the kitchen with clear instructions on how to safely use it.



Automatic fire suppression systems

Existing premises:

Automatic fire suppression systems such as sprinklers or water mist can be installed to enhance the fire protection of the premises. These can be especially useful for complex or open plan layouts.



They can be effective in suppressing and containing a fire, allowing more time for people to escape to a place of safety, as well as limiting the damage caused by a fire.

SPECIALIST ADVICE SHOULD BE SOUGHT IF THE INSTALLATION OF AN AUTOMATIC FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM IS BEING CONSIDERED.



New-builds and conversions:

ANY NEW BUILD SELF-CATERING PREMISES IN WALES MUST BE FITTED WITH AN AUTOMATIC FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATION 37A OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS 2010.



Regulation 37A also applies to premises converted from non-residential (e.g. a barn or stable block) to residential accommodation-including self-catering premises. Such a conversion is a material change of use under Regulation 5(h) of the Building Regulations therefore the provision of automatic fire suppression is mandatory in Wales.

Testing and Maintenance



IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU TEST AND MAINTAIN ALL FIRE SAFETY MEASURES REGULARLY AND SUITABLY RECORD YOUR RESULTS.

Ensure that all your fire safety systems are regularly tested and undergo suitable maintenance to ensure they are in good working order.

Smoke Alarms should be tested on each change-over:

- Inspect for damage and check if the detectors have been tampered with. Ensure the alarm can be heard in all areas of the premises. Record the results of your tests and inspections.
- Fire detectors should be cleaned periodically in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Emergency Lighting:

- If you have provided fixed emergency lighting, ensure that the system is tested and maintained in accordance with **BS5266-8**.
- This includes a recorded monthly function test and an annual service by a competent person. During the function test, ensure that the units provide sufficient light in order for occupants to make their escape.
- At each changeover check to ensure that the units are both clean and undamaged. Record the results of your tests and inspections.
- If you have provided torches check these at each change-over to ensure they are in full working order and are correctly positioned.



Fire-fighting Equipment should be inspected at each change-over:

- Ensure all firefighting equipment is in its dedicated location and check to ensure it has not been tampered with.
- Remember all firefighting equipment will have a life span and this is usually stamped onto the item. If expired or damaged, replace the equipment. Record the results of your tests and inspections.
- Instructions on the use and maintenance of equipment vary with each manufacturer; refer to manufacturer's guides for further information.
- If any defects are found during your inspections and tests, ensure that suitable remedial action is taken prior to occupation.



To assist you in the recording of testing and maintenance you may download a free copy of a Fire Logbook from any of the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Service websites.



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FIRE LOGBOOK



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FIRE LOGBOOK



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FIRE LOGBOOK



Example change-over checklist:

Before each occupancy ensure that the premises are safe for occupation:

- Test the fire detection system to ensure it is in working order. Record the test and any subsequent actions.
- Check emergency lighting / torches to ensure correct operation. Replace bulbs/ batteries if required.
- Check that the fire-fighting equipment has not been used and is in its correct location. Replace as necessary.
- Check thumb turns/ night latches/ levers to ensure easy operation and check that exits can be easily opened.
- Check internal and external escape routes for slips, trips and falls hazards. Ensure escape routes are clear from obstruction.
- Check portable electrical appliances for signs of damage and wear etc. Repair or replace as necessary.
- Are fire safety information and contact details sheets in their correct locations/ still in the guest information pack?
- Ensure all doors fit into their frames, are in a good state of repair with no holes or damage.
- Ensure fireplaces and/ or wood burning stoves are clean, free from soot or dust where possible, in a good state of repair and in safe working order. Test your Carbon Monoxide detectors.

For further Fire Safety advice please contact your local Welsh Fire & Rescue Service.



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