

Fire Risk Assessments in the Workplace

Recent tragic events in London have focused attention on fire safety for everyone. Understandably you may be concerned about fire safety for your employees, visitors and others affected by your activities.

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, if you are an employer in control of non-domestic premises you have responsibility for fire safety. If the building you work in is under the control of a third party such as a landlord or a management company, this does not remove your responsibilities but it does mean that some of the fire safety precautions may be organised by the third party.

The first step is to establish who is the responsible person. If this is not you then ask to see evidence that a suitable fire risk assessment has been conducted by a competent person and that fire precautions are adequate. If you are the responsible person, you will need to conduct the fire risk assessment, or engage the services of an expert to help undertake this.

Regardless of who the responsible person is, you should make it your business to ensure the items on the checklist below are taken of.

- Workplace clean, tidy and free from dust and rubbish
- Combustible waste removed from buildings and stored in a safe place
- Combustible materials stored in a safe place and quantities kept to a minimum
- Smoking prohibited or restricted to controlled areas with adequate cigarette disposal facilities
- High risk items identified and stored correctly (gas bottles, petrol cans, etc)
- Heating system installed to avoid the use of portable heaters
- Machinery appropriately maintained, inspected, lubricated, etc.
- Security arrangements in place to prevent arson
- Fire wardens appointed & trained if needed
- Clear, unobstructed escape routes marked with the correct signage
- All exit doors marked and open easily from the inside
- Clearly marked assembly point in a safe location
- Employees and others instructed on emergency actions on their first day
- Policy, training and supervision in place to prevent exit route blockages
- Automatic fire detection system in place
- Installed detection and alarm system tested at least weekly and regularly maintained
- Fire alarm system connected to a monitoring centre
- All employees know what the fire alarm sounds like
- Suitable firefighting equipment is available for use in the correct locations
- Firefighting equipment inspected regularly and tested as necessary by competent persons
- Employees know how to use the fire fighting equipment provided
- Arrangements are made for liaison with emergency services
- Ready to access to fire fighting appliances, kept clear at all times
- Information available for firefighters (hazardous substances in the building, services, etc.)
- Contingency plans in place to ensure continuity of business

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