

# Arson Advice

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- 1.** Look at the building and what goes on within it. Note the possible ways in which fires could be started deliberately. Identify the vulnerable points both inside and outside the buildings and in the external areas within the building perimeter. In addition, consider the area in which the business is located in order to assess the likelihood of an arson attack in the neighbourhood.
- 2.** A key element of the arson risk assessment is to identify, and reduce as far as is practical, the sources of ignition and combustible materials that are available to the opportunist arsonist. Although it is recognised that these cannot be eliminated completely, steps can be taken to eliminate or reduce the threat (see step 4). Steps should be taken to identify voids, unprotected ducts, unstopped gaps around services and similar features.
- 3.** All staff should receive appropriate training so as to be aware of the danger of arson, and the threat that it presents to life and jobs. Everyone should take part in regular fire drills and be aware of the need to assist people with any form of disability.
- 4.** Where possible, action should be taken to remove potential sources of ignition, flammable liquids and combustible materials from the workplace. It may be possible, for example, to replace a flammable solvent with a non-flammable one with similar properties. Checks of the premises should be made last thing at night, especially when contractors have been present. A fire risk assessment should be undertaken and appropriate action taken as necessary.
- 5.** Ensure that the best use is made of existing security measures before considering new complex or expensive installations or procedures. For example, many intruders enter buildings through windows or doors that are left insecure so ensure that a check is made at the end of each day.
- 6.** Much can be done, often at little cost, to reduce the threat of arson and limit the horizontal and vertical spread of fire; effective compartmentation is a key element in reducing the damage caused by fire. The installation of a sprinkler system that will not only sound the alarm but will automatically fight the fire is a further advance in protection.
- 7.** Allocating the risk category need not involve complex mathematical formulations. A simple low, medium or high categorisation for each part of the premises may be sufficient.
- 8.** The business continuity plan should have a clearly defined purpose. Key members of staff should be identified and their roles defined. Key contractors should be listed with their contact points. Provision should be made for staff welfare as well as practical steps to ensure that the effect on business operations is minimised. A copy of the plan should be kept off the site.
- 9.** The assessment should be reviewed if the nature of the business, the number of staff, the materials used or the character of the neighbourhood changes significantly.

For more information visit [www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk](http://www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk)

# Fire Safety Risk Assessment

► Follow the 5 key steps ► Fill in the checklist ► Assess your fire risk and plan fire safety

## 1

### Fire hazards

Fire starts when heat (cause of ignition comes into contact with fuel (anything that burns), and oxygen (air).

You need to keep sources of ignition and fuel apart.

#### How could a fire start?

Think about heaters, lighting and naked flames, electrical equipment, hot processes such as welding or grinding, cigarettes, matches and anything else that gets hot or causes sparks.

#### What could burn?

Packaging, rubbish and furniture could all burn, just like the more obvious fuels such as petrol, paint, varnish and white spirit. Also think about wood, paper, plastic, rubber and foam. Do the walls or ceilings have hardboard, chipboard or polystyrene? Check outside too.

- Have you found anything that could start a fire?  
*Make a note of it.*

- Have you found anything that could burn?  
*Make a note of it.*

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## 4

### Record, plan & train

#### Record

Keep a record of any fire hazards and what you have done to reduce or remove them. If your premises are small, a record is a good idea. If you have five or more staff or have a license then you must keep a record of what you have found and what you have done.

#### Plan

You must have a clear plan of how to prevent fire and how you will keep people safe in case of fire. If you share a building with others, you need to coordinate your plan with them.

#### Train

You need to make sure your staff know what you do in case of fire, and if necessary, are trained for their roles.

- Have you made a record of what you have found and action you have taken?

- Have you planned what everyone will do if there is a fire?  
 Have you discussed the plan with all staff?

#### Have You?

- Informed and trained people (practised a fire drill and recorded how it went)?  
 Nominated staff to put in place your fire prevention measures, and trained them?  
 Made sure everyone can fulfil their role?  
 Informed temporary staff?  
 Consulted others who share a building with you, and included them in your plan?

## 2

### People at risk

Everyone is at risk if there is a fire. Think whether the risk is greater for some because of when or where they work, such as night staff, or because they are not familiar with the premises, such as visitors or customers. Children, the elderly or disabled people are especially vulnerable.

- Have you identified?  
Who could be at risk?  
 Who could be especially at risk?  
*Make a note of it.*

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## 5

### Review

Keep your risk assessment under regular review. Over time, the risks may change. If you identify significant changes in risk or make any significant changes to your plan, you must tell others who share the premises and where appropriate re-train staff.

#### Have You?

- Made any changes to the building inside or out?  
 Had a fire or a near miss?  
 Changed work practices?  
 Begun to store chemicals or dangerous substances?  
 Significantly changed your stock, or stock levels?  
 Have you planned your next fire drill?

## 3

### Evaluate, and act

#### Evaluate

First think about what you have found in steps 1 and 2: what are the risks of a fire starting, and what are the risks to people in the building nearby?

#### Remove and reduce risk

How can avoid accidental fires? Could a source of heat or sparks fall, be knocked or pushed into something that would burn? Could that happen the other way round?

#### Protect

Take action to protect your premises and people from fire

- Have you assessed the risks of fire in your workplace?  
 Have you assessed the risks to staff & visitors?
- Have you kept any source of fuel and heat /sparks apart?  
 If someone wanted to start a fire deliberately, is there anything around they could use?  
 Have you removed or secured any fuel an arsonist could use?  
 Have you protected your premises from accidental fire or arson?  
**How can you make sure that everyone is safe in case of fire?**  
 Will you know there is a fire?  
 Do you have a plan to warn others?  
 Who will make sure everyone gets out?  
 Who will call the fire service?  
 Could you put out a small fire quickly & stop it spreading?  
**How will everyone escape?**  
 Have you planned escape routes?  
 Have you made sure people will be able to safely find their way out, even at night if necessary?  
 Does all your safety equipment work?  
 Will people know what to do and how to use equipment?

**Make a note of what you have found**

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### Completed the checklist?

### Do you need more information?

The checklist above can help you with the Fire Risk Assessment but you may need additional information especially if you have large or complex premises.

You can complete an on-line Compliance Self Assessment at [www.fire.gov.uk/workplace+safety/RROpageforform.htm](http://www.fire.gov.uk/workplace+safety/RROpageforform.htm)

You can complete an example of a Fire Risk Assessment (BT redcare/FPA) at [www.fpa-fireriskassessment.com](http://www.fpa-fireriskassessment.com)

We have produced a series of guides for different business sectors. These guides will give you more information about how to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment, with specific advice for your type of premises. These guides are free to download at [www.communities.gov.uk/fire](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire)