



The West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority are committed to assisting business in assessing the risk within their premises by providing clear and concise guidance.

An operational fire crew from the local station has carried out a familiarisation visit of your premises within the last 12 months. As well as identifying significant risks to the crew should they attend an emergency at the premises, they also provide occupiers with information regarding general fire safety matters covering 6 specific areas indicated in the sections below. This Public Advice Note provides practical advice to people responsible for fire safety. It provides entry level guidance on how to make sure you are meeting the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order).

You may need additional information if you have large or complex premises. The Government has produced a series of guides for different business sectors – search for ‘Fire safety in the workplace’ on the www.gov.uk website or use the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-safety-advice-documents>.

These guides will give you more information about how to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment, with specific advice for your type of premises.

General fire safety matters

Section 1a Risk Reduction (including Fire Risk Assessment)

It is a legal requirement to carry out a fire risk assessment.

If your organisation employs five or more people, or your premises are licensed or an alterations notice (under the Order) is in force, then the significant findings of the fire risk assessment, the actions to be taken as a result of the assessment and details of anyone especially at risk must be recorded. You will probably find it helpful to keep a record of the significant findings of your fire risk assessment even if you are not required to do so.

You must:

- carry out a fire risk assessment identifying any possible dangers and risks;
- consider who may be especially at risk;
- remove or reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonably possible and provide general fire precautions to deal with any possible risk left;
- take other measures to make sure there is protection if flammable or explosive materials are used or stored;
- create a plan to deal with any emergency and, in most cases, keep a record of your findings; and
- review your findings when necessary.

The following documents produced by West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service may also assist you:

- Fire Safety Risk Assessment Form (Large Premises) - FSFRM058
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment Form (Small Premises) - FSFRM058A

To access these document visit <http://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/fire-risk-assessments>

Section 1b Maintenance

Where necessary in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons the responsible person must ensure that the premises and any facilities, equipment and devices provided in respect of the premises under the Order are subject to a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained in efficient working order and in good repair.

Section 2 Detection & Alarm (the Means for giving Warning)

You must have a suitable fire detection and warning system. This can range from a shouted warning to an electrical detection and warning system. Whatever system you have, it must be able to warn people in all circumstances.

Where an electrical fire warning system is necessary then a typical arrangement includes the following:

- manual call points (break glass call points) next to exits with at least one call point on each floor;
- electronic sirens or bells; and
- a control and indicator panel.

An alternative system of interconnected combined manual call points and sounders may be acceptable.

If your building has areas where a fire could develop undetected or where people work alone and might not see a fire, then it may be necessary to upgrade your fire warning system to incorporate automatic fire detection. If you provide sleeping accommodation it will be necessary to install an automatic fire detection and warning system.

If, for any reason, your system fails you must still ensure that people in your premises can be warned and escape safely. A temporary arrangement, such as gongs, whistles or air horns, combined with suitable training, may be acceptable for a very short period, pending system repairs.

The fire warning sound levels should be loud enough to alert everyone, taking into account background noise. In areas with high background noise, or where people may be wearing hearing protectors, the audible warning should be supplemented, e.g. with visual alarms.

Section 3 Fire-fighting Equipment

You have responsibility for the provision of appropriate fire-fighting equipment. It is also your responsibility to check that all fire-fighting equipment is in the correct position and in satisfactory order before the premises are used.

Appropriate staff should be trained in the use of all such equipment.

Typically for most premises the provision of one water based (13A rated) extinguisher for approximately every 200m² of floor space, with a minimum of two extinguishers per floor, will normally be adequate.

Where it is determined that there are additionally other classes of fire risk, the appropriate type, number and size of extinguisher should be provided.

Where the fire risk is not confined to a particular location, the fire extinguishers should be positioned on escape routes, close to the exit from the room or floor, or the final exit from the building. Similarly, where the particular fire risk is specifically located, e.g. flammable liquids, the appropriate fire extinguisher should be near to the hazard, and located so that it can be safely used.

They should be placed on a dedicated stand or hung on a wall at a convenient height so that employees can easily lift them off (at about 1m for larger extinguishers, 1.5m for smaller ones, to the level of the handle). Ideally no one should have to travel more than 30m to reach a fire extinguisher. If there is a risk of malicious use you may need to use alternative, and more secure, locations.

Where there are self-contained small premises, multi-purpose extinguishers which can cover a range of risks may be appropriate. Depending on the outcome of your fire risk assessment, it may be possible to reduce this to one extinguisher in very small premises with a floor space of less than 90m².

Section 4 Escape Routes, Escape Signs & Fire Door availability

All exits, passages, landings and stairways should be kept free from obstruction at all times when the premises are occupied.

Stair and floor coverings should be securely fixed so as not to present a trip hazard.

Where tables and chairs are used they should be positioned as to ensure a clear route of adequate width to each exit door from the rooms.

A clear and unobstructed route leading from each fire exit to a place of safety outside the premises should be provided and maintained available for use at all material times.

Emergency exit doors should not open directly over a step. This is hazardous and the step should be extended to a distance of 300 mm beyond the leading edge of the door when in the fully open position.

A protected stairway is a stairway which is adequately protected from the accommodation parts of the building on every floor by fire resisting construction. The purpose of the protected stairway is to provide a protected route from fire and smoke for people evacuating the building.

It is important that these areas are kept especially free of anything that can burn as it is part of the function of a protected route to be as safe as possible in all fire cases. Therefore no furniture or storage of materials can be accepted in these areas.

Corridors need to be kept unobstructed at all times to avoid tripping and collision risks so as not to hinder passage in the event of an emergency evacuation. Corridors may not be regarded as an extension to the accommodation that adjoins it.

Fire doors protecting stairways or corridors should each be fitted with self-closing devices and should be made and maintained effectively self-closing and close fitting in their frames. They should never be held or wedged open.

Fire Door availability

Doors on escape routes should not be fitted with a lock, latch or bolt fastenings when the premises are in use. Any barrel bolts should be removed.

All doors on escape routes should be maintained so as to be capable of being opened easily and immediately from the inside when required.

Final exit doors should only be fitted with a fastening, which can be readily operated, without the use of a key, magnetic card or digital code system by persons evacuating the premises.

However, it is recognised that in certain circumstances there will be a need to secure exit doors for purposes such as improved security. In these cases ONE of the following types of fastenings is acceptable:

- a) Push bar operated panic bolts and push pads which must not be locked with a padlock or any other type of locking device whilst persons are on the premises. These devices are acceptable fastenings for members of the public.

- OR
- b) Break glass bolt type fastenings (generally these should not be used where members of the public are present)
- OR
- c) Electrically powered locks which should return to the unlock position:
1. on operation of the fire alarm system;
 2. on loss of power or system error;
 3. on activation of a manual door release unit (Type A) to BS EN 54-11:2001 positioned at the door on the side approached by people making their escape. Where the door provides escape in either direction, a unit should be installed on both sides of the door.
- OR
- d) Single action thumb turn lock for use by small numbers of staff only. (Hotel bedroom doors are an exception)

The method of operation of the chosen fastening should be clearly indicated on or immediately above the device.

NOTE: Any type of fastening where glass has to be broken and a lever, latch, button or other similar type of apparatus has to be operated is not acceptable.

Escape Signs

In simple premises, a few signs indicating the alternative exit(s) might be all that is needed. In larger and more complex premises, a series of signs directing people along the escape routes towards the final exit might be needed.

Escape signs should meet the following criteria:

- They should provide clear, unambiguous information to enable people to safely leave a building in an emergency.
- Every escape route sign should, where necessary, incorporate, or be accompanied by, a directional arrow. Arrows should not be used on their own.
- If the escape route to the nearest exit is not obvious then it should be indicated by a sign(s).
- Signs should be positioned so that a person escaping will always have the next escape route sign in sight.
- Escape signs should be fixed above the door in the direction of escape and not be fixed to doors, as they will not be visible if the door is open.

For a sign to comply with safety signs and signals regulations it must be pictographic. The pictogram can be supplemented by text if this is considered necessary to make the sign easily understood, but you must not have a safety sign that uses only text. Either type of sign can be used but different types should not be mixed. Appropriate signs should take into account the needs of those who may need to use them.

Section 5 Emergency Lighting

The primary purpose of emergency escape lighting is to illuminate escape routes but it also illuminates other safety equipment.

The size and type of your premises and the risk to the occupants will determine the complexity of the emergency escape lighting required.

Borrowed lighting may be suitable in small premises where the light is from a dependable source, e.g. street lamps, and it will adequately illuminate escape routes. Where borrowed lighting is not suitable,

single 'stand-alone' escape lighting units may be sufficient in small premises and these can sometimes be combined with exit or directional signs

In larger more complex premises a more comprehensive system of fixed automatic escape lighting is likely to be needed. This will be particularly true in premises with extensive basements, in sleeping accommodation or where there are significant numbers of staff or members of the public.

You will have identified the escape routes when carrying out your fire risk assessment and need to ensure that they are all adequately lit.

Section 6 Emergency Action & Training

You have responsibility for the provision of an appropriate Emergency Action Plan for the premises and to train staff by way of regular fire practices.

All staff should be informed of and be trained in the Emergency Action Plan including the alternative routes of exit and assembly points when they join the company / workplace.

This information should be enforced on at least an annual basis (or more regularly if there is a high turnover of staff).

The training for an emergency should also relate to any member of staff with a disability as it is no longer acceptable to wait for the fire service to provide rescue. Staff with a disability should have their own Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).