

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Fire Safety

**For full details on the Authority's provisions for Fire, please see the Fire Policy.**

### 1. What is a fire risk assessment?

A fire risk assessment is basically a risk assessment considering the fire safety of a building. It must be carried out by a competent person – often in cases of large or complex premises this is someone with knowledge of building fabrication. The fire risk assessment considers many aspects of fire safety including:

- Reducing ignition sources
- Reducing sources of combustion
- Reducing sources of oxygen
- Fire detection and warning
- Means of escape
- Means of fighting fire
- Maintenance and testing
- Fire procedures and training
- Providing for disable people

### 2. My building has a fire certificate; does it still require a risk assessment?

The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regs 1997 made it a legal requirement for all premises without fire certificates to have a fire risk assessment. However, In 1999 this requirement was extended to all premises [via the Fire Precautions (Workplace) (Amendment) Regs 1999]. **Therefore all buildings must have a fire risk assessment regardless of whether or not it is subject to a fire certificate.**

### 3. What is a fire certificate and is it legally binding?

A fire certificate is issued by the Fire Authority under the Fire Precautions Act, 1971. It is an offence to fail to comply with the requirements of the certificate and the fire authority may take enforcement action. In 2005/6 the legislation is due to change and fire certificates will become obsolete. Fire Safety requirements will be solely managed in accordance with the

fire risk assessment so it is important that this risk assessment is current and undertaken by a competent person.

#### 4. How often should a fire drill be held?

In the absence of a fire certificate which usually specifies the frequency of fire drills, they should be held at least annually and include a full de-brief with all fire marshals / wardens to identify any necessary improvements in the procedure.

#### 5. How many fire marshals / fire wardens / muster officers should we have?

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 specifies that a sufficient number of competent persons be appointed to implement procedures for evacuation.

The number of fire marshals will depend on the size and layout of the workplace. Fire marshals should not have too big an area to check and a deputy should be available to carry out duties if the fire marshal is unavailable. One of the fire marshals should be appointed to take overall control in the event of an incident, duties would include liaising with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service if they are in attendance.

Fire Marshals / wardens / muster officers must receive appropriate training.

#### 6. What fire safety training do I require?

Basic induction training should always be provided whenever you move to a different location. The following topics should be covered:

- Basic legal requirements
- Nature of fire and fire spread
- Basic fire prevention
- How to raise the alarm and details of the local fire procedure

#### 7. Which fire extinguishers should I use?

Fire extinguishers should be located on escape routes and usually will be mounted on the wall. They should all be coloured red with a coloured panel to indicate the contents as follows:

<b>Colour</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Use</b>
Red	Water	Wood, paper, textiles etc.
Yellow	AFFF (Aqueous Film-Forming Foam)	Liquid fires
Blue	Dry Powder	Liquid and electrical fires
Black	Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> )	Liquid and electrical fires

The fire risk assessment will establish the number and type of fire extinguishers required for the premises.

#### 8. How often should our fire alarms be tested?

Unless otherwise specified by the fire certificate fire alarms should be tested weekly and records should be kept. The alarms may be tested at the same time each week, contact your building manager for further information. More specialist testing by competent people is required at different intervals.

#### 9. Where Can I Get Further Information?

You can get further information from your Directorate Health and Safety Officer, telephone the HSE Infoline on 08701 545500 or you can access the following web site. You must have external Internet access to view this site:

➤ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/index.htm>

The following publications may also provide you with further information:

➤ Fire Safety An Employer's Guide – (Home Office and HSE publication)

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