
THE FIRE SAFETY ORDER

Previous general fire safety legislation

The Order replaces previous fire safety legislation. Any fire certificate issued under the Fire Precautions Act 1971 will cease to have any effect. If a fire certificate has been issued in respect of your premises or the premises were built to recent building regulations, as long as you have made no material alterations and all the physical fire precautions have been properly maintained, then it is unlikely you will need to make any significant improvements to your existing physical fire protection arrangements to comply with the Order. However, you must still carry out a fire risk assessment and keep it up to date to ensure that all the fire precautions in your premises remain current and adequate.

If you have previously carried out a fire risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, as amended 1999, and this assessment has been regularly reviewed, then all you will need to do is revise that assessment taking account of the wider scope of the Order as described in this guide.

Introduction

The Order applies in England and Wales. It covers general fire precautions and other fire safety duties which are needed to protect 'relevant persons' in case of fire in and around most 'premises'. The Order requires fire precautions to be put in place 'where necessary' and to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances of the case.

Responsibility for complying with the Order rests with the 'responsible person'. In a workplace, this is the employer and any other person who may have control of any part of the premises, e.g. the occupier or owner. In all other premises the person or people in control of the premises will be responsible. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises (e.g. a multi-occupied complex), all must take all reasonable steps to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other.

If you are the responsible person you must carry out a fire risk assessment which must focus on the safety in case of fire of all 'relevant persons'. It should pay particular attention to those at special risk, such as disabled people, those who you know have special needs, and children, and must include consideration of any dangerous substance liable to be on the premises. Your fire risk assessment will help you identify risks that can be removed or reduced and decide the nature and extent of the general fire precautions you need to take.

If your organisation employs five or more people, your premises are licensed or an alterations notice is in force, you must record the significant findings of the assessment. It is good practice to record your significant findings in any case.

There are some other fire safety duties you need to comply with:

- **You must** appoint one or more competent persons, depending on the size and use of your premises, to carry out any of the preventive and protective measures required by the Order (you can nominate yourself for this purpose). A competent person is someone with enough training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to be able to implement these measures properly.
- **You must** provide your employees with clear and relevant information on the risks to them identified by the fire risk assessment, about the measures you have taken to prevent fires, and how these measures will protect them if a fire breaks out.
- **You must** consult your employees (or their elected representatives) about nominating people to carry out particular roles in connection with fire safety and about proposals for improving the fire precautions.
- **You must**, before you employ a child, provide a parent with clear and relevant information on the risks to that child identified by the risk assessment, the measures you have put in place to prevent/protect them from fire and inform any other responsible person of any risks to that child arising from their undertaking.

- **You must** inform non-employees, such as students and temporary or contract workers, of the relevant risks to them, and provide them with information about who are the nominated competent persons, and about the fire safety procedures for the premises.
- **You must** co-operate and co-ordinate with other responsible persons who also have premises in the building, inform them of any significant risks you find, and how you will seek to reduce/control those risks which might affect the safety of their employees.
- **You must** provide the employer of any person from an outside organisation who is working in your premises (e.g. agency providing temporary staff) with clear and relevant information on the risks to those employees and the preventive and protective measures taken. You must also provide those employees with appropriate instructions and relevant information about the risks to them.
- If you are not the employer but have any control of premises which contain more than one workplace, **you are also responsible** for ensuring that the requirements of the Order are complied with in those parts over which you have control.
- **You must** consider the presence of any dangerous substances and the risk this presents to relevant persons from fire.
- **You must** establish a suitable means of contacting the emergency services and provide them with any relevant information about dangerous substances.
- **You must** provide appropriate information, instruction and training to your employees, during their normal working hours, about the fire precautions in your workplace, when they start working for you, and from time to time throughout the period they work for you.
- **You must** ensure that the premises and any equipment provided in connection with firefighting, fire detection and warning, or emergency routes and exits are covered by a suitable system of maintenance, and are maintained by a competent person in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

- **Your employees must** co-operate with you to ensure the workplace is safe from fire and its effects, and must not do anything that will place themselves or other people at risk.

The above outlines some of the main requirements of the Order. The rest of this guide will explain how you might meet these requirements.

Responsibilities for short-term hiring or leasing and for shared use

Some premises or structures may be leased as an empty and unsupervised facility (e.g. a sports hall). The fire safety responsibilities of those leasing the building (and, therefore, in charge of the activities conducted within the building), and those of the owner/leasee, need to be established as part of the contract of hire.

In some educational premises, part of the premises (e.g. a lecture theatre) may be hired out to another organisation for a separate function (e.g. a conference). The fire safety responsibilities of those organising the separate function, and those of the remainder of the building, need to be established as part of the contract of hire.

The responsible person for each individual unique, occasional or separate event or function will need to be clearly established and documented, and their legal duties made clear to them. In particular, and where necessary, the responsible person will need to take account of their own lack of familiarity with the layout of the premises, the fire safety provisions, and the duties of other responsible persons within the premises.

Who enforces the Fire Safety Order?

The local fire and rescue authority (the fire and rescue service) will enforce the Order in most premises. The exceptions are:

- Crown-occupied/owned premises where Crown fire inspectors will enforce;
- premises within armed forces establishments where the defence fire and rescue service will enforce;

- certain specialist premises including construction sites, ships (under repair or construction) and nuclear installations, where the HSE will enforce; and
- sports grounds and stands designated as needing a safety certificate by the local authority, where the local authority will enforce.

The enforcing authority will have the power to inspect your premises to check that you are complying with your duties under the Order. They will look for evidence that you have carried out a suitable fire risk assessment and acted upon the significant findings of that assessment. If, as is likely, you are required to record the outcome of the assessment they will expect to see a copy.

If the enforcing authority is dissatisfied with the outcome of your fire risk assessment or the action you have taken, they may issue an enforcement notice that requires you to make certain improvements or, in extreme cases, a prohibition notice that restricts the use of all or part of your premises until improvements are made.

If your premises are considered by the enforcing authority to be or have the potential to be high risk, they may issue an alterations notice that requires you to inform them before you make any changes to your premises or the way they are used.

Failure to comply with any duty imposed by the Order or any notice issued by the enforcing authority is an offence. You have a right of appeal to a magistrates court against any notice issued. Where you agree that there is a need for improvements to your fire precautions but disagree with the enforcing authority on the technical solution to be used (e.g. what type of fire alarm system is needed) you may agree to refer this for an independent determination.

If having read this guide you are in any doubt about how fire safety law applies to you, contact the fire safety office at your local fire and rescue service.

If your premises were in use before 2006, then they may have been subject to the Fire Precautions Act and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations. Where the layout (means of escape) and other fire precautions have been assessed by the fire and rescue service to satisfy the guidance that was then current, it is likely that your premises already conform to many of the recommendations here, providing you have undertaken a fire risk assessment as required by the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations.

New buildings or significant building alterations should be designed to satisfy current building regulations which address fire precautions. Some new schools which are designed using a fire safety engineered solution will have a documented fire safety strategy. This strategy will need to be passed on to management throughout the lifetime of the building and will need to be reviewed and maintained periodically. However, you will still need to carry out a fire risk assessment, or review your existing one (and act on your findings), to comply with the Order.

Fire Risk Assessment

MANAGING FIRE SAFETY

Good management of fire safety is essential to ensure that fires are unlikely to occur; that if they do occur they are likely to be controlled or contained quickly, effectively and safely; or that, if a fire does occur and grow, everyone in your premises is able to escape to a place of total safety easily and quickly.

The risk assessment that you must carry out will help you ensure that your fire safety procedures, fire prevention measures, and fire precautions (plans, systems and equipment) are all in place and working properly, and the risk assessment should identify any issues that need attention.

WHAT IS A FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT?

A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at your premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises.

The aims of the fire risk assessment are:

- To identify the fire hazards.
- To reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable.
- To decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your premises if a fire does start.

The term 'where necessary' (see Glossary) is used in the Order, therefore when deciding what fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary you will need to take account of this definition.

The terms 'hazard' and 'risk' are used throughout this guide and it is important that you have a clear understanding of how these should be used.

- **Hazard:** anything that has the potential to cause harm.
- **Risk:** the chance of that harm occurring.

If your organisation employs five or more people, or your premises are licensed or an alterations notice requiring it 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.

HOW DO YOU CARRY OUT A FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT?

A fire risk assessment will help you determine the chances of a fire starting and the dangers from fire that your premises present for the people who use them and any person in the immediate vicinity. The assessment method suggested in this guide shares the same approach as that used in general health and safety legislation and can be carried out either as part of a more general risk assessment or as a separate exercise. As you move through the steps there are checklists to help you.

Before you start your fire risk assessment, take time to prepare, and read through the rest of Part 1 of this guide.

Much of the information for your fire risk assessment will come from the knowledge your employees, colleagues and representatives have of the premises, as well as information given to you by people who have responsibility for other parts of the building. A tour of your premises will probably be needed to confirm, amend or add detail to your initial views.

It is important that you carry out your fire risk assessment in a practical and systematic way and that you allocate enough time to do a proper job. It must take the whole of your premises into account, including outdoor locations and any rooms and areas that are rarely used. If your premises are small you may be able to assess them as a whole. In some premises, you may find it helpful to divide them into a series of assessment areas using natural boundaries, e.g. areas such as refectories, assembly spaces, classrooms, lecture theatres, offices, laboratories, stores, as well as corridors, stairways and external routes.

If your premises are in a multi-use complex then the information on hazard and risk reduction will still be applicable to you. However, any alterations to the use or structure of your individual unit will need to take account of the overall fire safety arrangements in the building.

Your premises may be simple, with few people present or with a limited degree of activity, but if it forms part of a building with different occupancies, then the measures provided by other occupiers may have a direct effect on the adequacy of the fire safety measures in your premises.

Under health and safety law (enforced by the HSE or the local authority) you are required to carry out a risk assessment in respect of any work processes in your workplace and to take or observe appropriate special, technical or organisational measures. If your health and safety risk assessment identifies that these processes are likely to involve the risk of fire or the spread of fire then you will need to take this into account during your fire risk assessment under the Order, and prioritise actions based on the level of risk.

You need to appoint one or more competent persons (this could be you) to carry out any of the preventive and protective measures need to comply with the Order. This person could be you, or an appropriately trained employee or, where appropriate, a third party.

Your fire risk assessment should demonstrate that, as far as is reasonable, you have considered the needs of all relevant persons, including disabled people.

Below are the five steps you need to take to carry out a fire risk assessment.

1. Identify fire hazards

Identify:

Sources of ignition
Sources of fuel
Sources of oxygen

2. Identify people at risk

Identify:

People in and around the premises
People especially at risk

3. Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring
Evaluate the risk to people from fire

Remove or reduce fire hazards
Remove or reduce the risks to people

- Detection and warning
- Fire-fighting
- Escape routes
- Lighting
- Signs and notices
- Maintenance

4. Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

Record significant finding and action taken
Prepare an emergency plan
Inform and instruct relevant people; co-operate and co-ordinate with others
Provide training

5. Review

Keep assessment under review
Revise where necessary

REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT UNDER REVIEW

STEP 1 IDENTIFY FIRE HAZARDS

For a fire to start, three things are needed:

- a source of ignition;
- fuel; and
- oxygen.

If any one of these is missing, a fire cannot start. Taking measures to avoid the three coming together will therefore reduce the chances of a fire occurring.

The remainder of this step will advise on how to identify potential ignition sources, the materials that might fuel a fire and the oxygen supplies will help it burn.

1.1 Identify sources of ignition

You can identify the potential ignition sources in your premises by looking for possible sources of heat which could get hot enough to ignite material found in your premises. These sources could include:

- electrical, gas or oil-fired heaters (fixed or portable), room heaters;
- hot processes, e.g. welding in workshops and by contractors;
- cooking equipment, hot ducting, flues and filters;
- naked flames, e.g. gas or liquid-fuelled open-flame equipment;
- arson, deliberate ignition, vandalism and so on;
- poor electrical installations, e.g. overloads, heating from bunched cables, damaged cables;
- faulty or misused electrical equipment;
- smokers' material, e.g. cigarettes, matches and lighters;
- light fittings and lighting equipment, e.g. halogen lamps or display lighting;
- central heating boilers; and
- hot surfaces and obstruction of equipment ventilation, e.g. office equipment.

Indications of 'near-misses', such as scorch marks on furniture or fittings, discoloured or charred electrical plugs and sockets, cigarette burns etc., can help you identify hazards which you may not otherwise notice.

1.2 Identify sources of fuel

Anything that burns is fuel for a fire. You need to look for the things that will burn reasonably easily and are in enough quantity to provide fuel for a fire or cause it to spread to another fuel source. Some of the most common 'fuels' found in premises are:

- flammable liquids, solvents and adhesives, paints;
- flammable chemicals, cleaning products or photocopier chemicals;
- flammable gases in serviced spaces, such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG);
- displays of information materials;
- paper, books, clothing, computer equipment and decorations;
- props and scenery for functions;
- cloakrooms in circulation areas;
- textiles and soft furnishings, such as hanging curtains;
- waste and litter products;
- gymnasium mats and crash pads with cellular foam fillings; and
- plastics and rubber, such as video tapes and polyurethane foam-filled furniture.

You should also consider the materials used to line walls and ceilings, e.g. polystyrene or carpet tiles, the fixtures and fittings, and brought-in materials, and how they might contribute to the spread of fire.

1.3 Identify sources of oxygen

The main source of oxygen for a fire is in the air around us. In an enclosed building this is provided by the ventilation system in use. This generally falls into one of two categories: natural airflow through doors, windows and other openings; or mechanical air conditioning systems and air handling systems. In many buildings there will be a combination of systems, which will be capable of introducing/extracting air to and from the building.

Additional sources of oxygen can sometimes be found in materials used or stored at premises such as:

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- some chemicals (oxidising materials), which can provide a fire with additional oxygen and so help it burn. These chemicals should be identified on their container by the manufacturer or supplier who can advise as to their safe use and storage;
 - oxygen supplies from cylinder storage and piped systems, e.g. oxygen used in welding processes; and
 - pyrotechnics (fireworks), which contain oxidising materials and need to be treated with great care.

CHECKLIST

- Have you identified all potential ignition sources?
- Have you identified all potential fuel sources?
- Have you identified all potential sources of oxygen?
- Have you made a note of your findings?

STEP 2 IDENTIFY PEOPLE AT RISK

As part of your fire risk assessment, you need to identify those at risk if there is a fire. To do this you need to identify where you have staff working, wherever they are in the premises. You will also need to consider who else may be at risk, such as members of the public, visiting contractors etc., and where these people are likely to be found.

You must consider all the people who use the premises, but you should pay particular attention to people who may be especially at risk such as:

- staff in unsupervised areas;
- staff or visitors with language difficulties (e.g. overseas students from a non-English speaking country);
- employees who work alone and/or in isolated areas, e.g. cleaners and security staff;

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- people who are unfamiliar with the premises, e.g. visitors and members of the public;
 - people with disabilities* (including mobility impairment, or hearing or vision impairment, etc.);

*Visit the Disability Rights commission website on www.drc-gb.org for more information.

- people who may have some other reason for not being able to leave the premises quickly, e.g. young children or babies in a crèche, those who you know have special needs or the elderly; and
- other people in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

In evaluating the risk to people with disabilities you may need to discuss their individual needs with them. In more complex buildings used extensively by the public you may need to seek professional advice.

CHECKLIST

- Have you identified who is at risk?
- Have you identified why they are at risk?
- Have you made a note of your findings?

STEP 3 EVALUATE, REMOVE, REDUCE AND PROTECT FROM RISK

The management of the premises and the way people use it will have an effect on your evaluation of risk. Management may be your responsibility alone or there may be others, such as the building owners or managing agents, who also have responsibilities. In multi-occupied buildings all those with some control must co-operate and you need to consider the risk generated by others in the building.

3.1 Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring

The chances of a fire starting will be low if your premises has few ignition sources and combustible materials are kept away from them.

In general, fires start in one of three ways:

- accidentally - such as when smoking materials are not properly extinguished or when lighting displays are knocked over;
- by act or omission - such as when electrical office equipment is not properly maintained, or when waste is allowed to accumulate near to a heat source; and
- deliberately - such as an arson attack involving setting fire to external rubbish bins placed too close to the building.

Look critically at your premises and try to identify any accidents waiting to happen and any acts or omissions which might allow a fire to start.

Arson is a problem in all buildings. Some 85% of the property losses in buildings are due to the effects of fire. You should look for any situation that may present an opportunity for an arsonist.

3.2 Evaluate the risk to people

In Step 2 you identified the people likely to be at risk should a fire start anywhere in the premises and earlier in Step 3 you identified the chances of a fire occurring. It is unlikely that you will have concluded that there is no chance of a fire starting anywhere in your premises so you now need to evaluate the actual risk to those people should a fire start and spread from the various locations that you have identified.

While determining the possible incidents, you should also consider the likelihood of any particular incident; but be aware that some very unlikely incidents can put many people at risk.

To evaluate the risk to people in your premises, you will need to understand the way fire can spread. Fire is spread by three methods:

- convection;
- conduction; and
- radiation.

Convection

Fire spread by convection is the most dangerous and causes the largest number of injuries and deaths. When fires start in enclosed spaces such as buildings, the smoke rising from the fire gets trapped by the ceiling and then spreads in all directions to form an ever-deepening layer over the entire room space. The smoke will pass through any holes or gaps in the walls, ceiling and floor into other parts of the building. The heat from the fire gets trapped in the building and the temperature rises.

Conduction

Some materials, such as metal shutters and ducting, can absorb heat and transmit it to the next room, where it can set fire to combustible items that are in contact with the heated material.

Radiation

Radiation heats the air in the same way as an electric bar heater heats a room. Any material close to a fire will absorb the heat until the item starts to smoulder and then burn.

Smoke produced by a fire also contains toxic gases which are harmful to people. A fire in a building with modern fittings and materials generates smoke that is thick and black, obscures vision, causes great difficulty in breathing and can block the escape routes.

It is essential that the means of escape and other fire precautions are adequate to ensure that everyone can make their escape to a place of total safety before the fire and its effects can trap them in the building.

In evaluating this risk to people you will need to consider situations such as:

- fire starting on a lower floor affecting the only escape route for people on upper floors or the only escape route for people with disabilities;
- fire developing in an unoccupied space that people have to pass by to escape from the building;

- fire or smoke spreading through a building via routes such as vertical shafts, service ducts, ventilation systems, poorly installed, poorly maintained or damaged, walls, partitions and ceilings affecting people in remote areas;
- fire and smoke spreading through a building due to poor installation of fire precautions, e.g. incorrectly installed fire doors, or incorrectly installed services penetrating fire walls;
- fire starting in a store room affecting hazardous materials (such as chemicals);
- fire spreading rapidly through the building because of combustible structural elements and/or large quantities of combustible material; and
- fire and smoke spreading through the building due to poorly maintained and damaged fire doors or fire doors being wedged open.

3.3 Remove or reduce the hazards

Having identified the fire hazards in Step 1, you now need to remove those hazards if reasonably practicable to do so. If you cannot remove the hazards, you need to take reasonable steps to reduce them if you can. This is an essential part of fire risk assessment and as a priority this must take place before any other actions.

Ensure that any actions you take to remove or reduce fire hazards or risk are not substituted by other hazards or risks. For example, if you replace a flammable substance with a toxic or corrosive one, you must consider whether this might cause harm to people in other ways.

Remove or reduce sources of ignition

There are various ways that you can reduce the risk caused by potential sources of ignition, for example:

- Replace naked flame and radiant heaters with fixed convector heaters or a central heating system. Fire guard naked flames and restrict the movement of portable heating appliances.

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- Strictly control hot processes/work undertaken, and control hot work by contractors by operating permit to work schemes.
 - Wherever possible replace a potential ignition source a safer alternative.
 - Take precautions to avoid arson.
 - Ensure electrical, mechanical and gas equipment is installed, used, maintained and protected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Operate a safe smoking policy in designated smoking areas, ensuring sufficient ashtrays are provided and cleaned appropriately, and prohibit smoking elsewhere.
 - Separate ignition hazards and combustibles, e.g. ensure sufficient clear space between lights and combustibles.
 - Ensure cooking and catering equipment is installed, used, maintained and protected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Check all areas where hot work (e.g. welding) has been carried out, to ensure that no ignition has taken place or any smouldering materials remain that may cause a fire.
 - Ensure that no one carrying out work on gas fittings which involves exposing pipes that contain or have contained flammable gas uses any source of ignition such as blow-lamps or hot-air guns.

Remove or reduce sources of fuel

There are various ways that you can reduce the risks caused by materials and substances which burn, for example:

- Reduce stocks of flammable materials, liquids and gases on display in public areas to a minimum. Keep remaining stock in dedicated storerooms or storage areas, preferably outside, where the public are not allowed to go, and keep the minimum required for the operation of your premises.

- Ensure flammable materials, liquids and gases, are kept to a minimum, and are stored properly with adequate separation distances between them.
- Ensure that display materials and stands are fire retardant, or have been treated with a proprietary fire-retardant treatment designed to enhance their fire performance.
- Minimise the amount of combustible display materials in corridors and circulation spaces (e.g. art work, etc.).
- Ensure that all upholstered furniture, curtains, drapes and other soft furnishings, are fire retardant, or have been treated with a proprietary fire-retardant treatment designed to enhance their fire performance.
- Remove, cover or treat large areas of highly combustible wall and ceiling linings, e.g. polystyrene or carpet tiles, to reduce the rate of flame spread across the surface.
- Do not keep flammable solids, liquids and gases together.
- Take action to avoid any parts of the premises, in particular cloakrooms, locker rooms, storage areas and rooms for ground staff equipment, being vulnerable to arson or vandalism.
- Develop a formal system for the control of combustible waste by ensuring that waste materials and rubbish are not allowed to build up and are carefully stored until properly disposed of, particularly at the end of the day.
- Ensure that foam mats (e.g. gymnasium mats), contents of foam pits and similar equipment are of combustion modified foam. Cover pits when not in use. Foam mats should be stored in a fire-resisting store.

Remove or reduce sources of oxygen

You can reduce the potential source of oxygen supplied to a fire by:

- closing all doors, windows and other openings not required for ventilation, particularly out of working hours;

- shutting down ventilation systems which are not essential to the function of the premises;
- not storing oxidising materials near or within any heat source or flammable materials; and
- controlling the use and storage of oxygen cylinders, ensuring that they are not leaking are not used to 'sweeten' the atmosphere, and that where they are located is adequately ventilated.

3.4 Remove or reduce the risks to people

Having evaluated and addressed the risk of fire occurring and the risk to people (preventative measures) it is unlikely that you will be able to conclude that no risk remains of fire starting and presenting a risk to people in your premises.

You now need to reduce any remaining fire risk to people to as low as reasonably practicable, by ensuring that adequate fire precautions are in place to warn people in the event of a fire and allow them to escape safely.

The rest of this step describes the fire protection measures you may wish to adopt to reduce the remaining fire risk to people (see Steps 3.4.1 to 3.4.6).

The level of fire protection you need to provide will depend on the level of risk that remains in the premises after you have removed or reduced the hazards and risks.

Flexibility of fire protection measures

Flexibility will be required when applying this guidance; the level of fire protection should be proportional to the risk posed to the safety of the people in the premises. Therefore, the objective should be to reduce the remaining risk to a level as low as reasonably practicable. The higher the risk of fire and risk to life, the higher the standards of fire protection will need to be.

Your premises may not exactly fit the solutions suggested in this guide and they may need to be applied in a flexible manner without compromising the safety of the occupants.

For example, if the travel distance is in excess of the norm for the level of risk you have determined, it may be necessary to do any one or a combination of the following to compensate:

- Provide earlier warning of fire using automatic fire detection.
- Revise the layout to reduce travel distances.
- Reduce the fire risk by removing or reducing combustible materials and/or ignition sources.
- Control the number of people in the premises.
- Limit the area to trained staff only (no public).
- Increase staff training and awareness.

Note: The above list is not exhaustive and is only used to illustrate some examples of trade-offs to provide safe premises.

If you decide to significantly vary away from the benchmarks in this guidance then you should seek expert advice before doing so.

3.4.1 Fire detection and warning systems

In some simple, open-plan, single-storey premises with limited activities (e.g. a small village primary school), a fire may be obvious to everyone as soon as it starts. In these cases, where the number and position of exits and the travel distance to them is adequate, a simple shout of 'fire' or a simple manually operated device, such as a bell, gong or air horn that can be heard by everybody when operated from any single point within the building, may be all that is needed. Staff will need a managed fire evacuation plan to do this.

In most premises, particularly those with more than one floor or incorporating a range of activities, where an alarm given from any single point is unlikely to be heard throughout the building, an electrical system incorporating sounders and manually operated call points (break-glass boxes) is likely to be required. If sounders (e.g. bells) are used for both a break or end of shift sounder system and the fire alarm system, ensure that

the respective sounds are distinct from one another (e.g. a continuous or intermittent sound for each mode of operation) and known to all, staff, etc. This type of system is likely to be acceptable where all parts of the building are occupied at the same time and it is unlikely that a fire could start without somebody noticing it quickly. However, where there are unoccupied areas or common corridors and circulation spaces or laboratories in multi-occupied premises, in which a fire could develop to the extent that escape routes could be affected before the fire is discovered, an automatic fire detection system may be necessary.

You may need to consider arrangements for times when people are working alone, are disabled, or when your normal occupancy patterns are different, e.g. when a large premises is partially occupied such as for evening classes or a meeting.

In complex premises, particularly those accommodating large numbers of people, such as some university buildings, it is likely that a more sophisticated form of warning and evacuation, should be provided.

For these approaches to be effective, it is essential that robust management arrangements are in place (particularly if your premises contains very young children), including the instruction and training of staff.

False alarms from electrical fire warning systems are a major problem (e.g. malicious activation of manual callpoints) and result in many unwanted calls to the fire and rescue service every year. To help reduce the number of false alarms, the design and location of activation devices should be reviewed against the way the premises are currently used. If you have an alarm system, then it is desirable to have an alarm repeater panel at the building entrance and a means of briefing the fire and rescue service when they arrive.

CHECKLIST

- Can the existing means of detection ensure a fire is discovered quickly enough for the alarm to be raised in time for all the occupants to escape to a place of total safety?
- Are detectors of the right type and in the appropriate locations?

- Can the means of warning be clearly heard and understood by everyone throughout the whole building when initiated from a single point? Are there provisions for people or locations where the alarm cannot be heard?
- If the fire detection and warning system is electrically powered, does it have a back-up power supply?

3.4.2 Firefighting equipment and facilities

Firefighting equipment can reduce the risk of a small fire, e.g. a fire in a waste-paper bin, developing into a large one. The safe use of an appropriate fire extinguisher to control a fire in its early stages can also significantly reduce the risk to other people in the premises by allowing people to assist others who are at risk. The purpose of your fire safety strategy should be to primarily ensure the safety of pupils/students, staff and visitors. In case of fire, the first priority should be to raise the alarm to ensure that all pupils/students, staff and visitors are safely evacuated. If teachers/lecturers are in any doubt, they should concentrate on evacuation rather than firefighting.

People with no training should not be expected to attempt to extinguish a fire. However, all staff should be familiar with the location and basic operating procedures for the equipment provided, in case they need to use it. If your fire strategy means that certain people (e.g. fire marshals) will be expected to take a more active role, then they should be provided with more comprehensive training. This may include staff who are designated to use specialist extinguishers (e.g. in science, engineering or workshop areas).

You should locate extinguishers in areas where they can be easily accessed by trained members of staff, but not in areas where equipment is open to misuse or vandalism.

This equipment will need to comprise enough portable extinguishers that must be suitable for the risk.

In simple premises, having one or two portable extinguishers of the appropriate type, readily available for use, may be all that is necessary. In more complex premises, a number of portable extinguishers may be required and they should be sited in suitable locations such as on the escape routes

at each floor level. It may also be necessary to indicate the location of extinguishers by suitable signs.

Some premises will also have permanently installed firefighting equipment such as hose reels, for use by trained staff or firefighters.

Other fixed installations and facilities to assist firefighters, such as dry rising mains, and access for fire engines, or automatically operated, fixed fire suppression systems such as sprinklers and gas or foam flooding systems, may also have been provided.

Where these have been required by law, e.g. the Building Regulations or local Acts, such equipment and facilities must be maintained.

Similarly, if provided for other reasons, e.g. insurance, it is good practice to ensure that they are properly maintained.

In most cases it will be necessary to consult a competent service engineer. Keeping records of the maintenance carried out will help you demonstrate to the enforcing authority that you have complied with fire safety law.

CHECKLIST

- Are the extinguishers suitable for the purpose?
- Are there enough extinguishers sited throughout the premises at appropriate locations?
- Are the right types of extinguishers located close to the fire hazards and can users get to them without exposing themselves to risk?
- Are the extinguishers visible or does their position need indicating?
- Have you taken steps to prevent the misuse of extinguishers?
- Do you regularly check equipment provided to help maintain the escape routes?
- Do you carry out daily checks to ensure that there is clear access for fire engines?

- Are those who test and maintain the equipment competent to do so?
- Do you have the necessary procedures in place to maintain any facilities that have been provided for the safety of people in the building (or for the use of firefighters, such as access for fire engines and firefighting lifts)?

3.4.3 Escape routes

Once a fire has started, been detected and a warning given, everyone in your premises should be able to escape to a place of total safety unaided and without the help of the fire and rescue service. However, the type of occupancy of educational premises varies significantly in terms of age and mental and physical ability. Very young children (e.g. in nurseries) and some people with disabilities will require the help of teachers/lecturers and staff who will need to be designated for the purpose.

Escape routes should be designed to ensure, as far as possible, that any person confronted by fire anywhere in the building should be able to turn away from it and escape to a place of reasonable safety, e.g. a protected stairway. From there they will be able to go directly to a place of total safety away from the building.

Those who require special assistance (e.g. very young children and some people with disabilities) could be accommodated on the same level as the final exit from the premises to facilitate escape. Where they need assistance to evacuate, you should make sure that there are sufficient staff to ensure a speedy evacuation.

The level of fire protection that should be given to escape routes will vary depending on the level of risk of fire within the premises and other related factors. Generally, premises that are simple, consisting of a single storey, will require fairly simple measures to protect the escape routes, compared with a more complex multi-storey building, which would require a more complex and inter-related system of fire precautions.

When determining whether your premises have adequate escape routes, you need to consider a number of factors, including:

- the type and number of people using the premises;

- escape time;
- the age and construction of the premises;
- the number and complexity of escape routes and exits;
- the use of phased or delayed alarm evacuation;
- assembly points; and
- assisted means of escape/personal evacuation plans.

The type and number of people using the premises

The people present in your premises will primarily be a mixture of teachers/lecturers, employees, pupils, students, visitors and members of the public and can vary significantly in terms of age and physical and mental ability. Teachers/lecturers, employees, students and pupils can reasonably be expected to have an understanding of the layout of the premises, while visitors (particularly in larger premises) or very young children will be unlikely to have knowledge of alternative escape routes.

The number and capability of people present will influence your assessment of the escape routes. You must ensure that your existing escape routes are sufficient and capable of safely evacuating all the people likely to use your premises at any time, particularly during times such as public performances when additional numbers of people may be present. If necessary you may need either to increase the capacity of the escape routes or restrict the number of people in the premises.

Escape time

In the event of a fire, it is important to evacuate people as quickly as possible from the premises. Escape routes in a building should be designed so that people can escape quickly enough to ensure that they are not placed in any danger from fire. The time available will depend on a number of factors, including how quickly the fire is detected and the alarm raised, the number of escape routes available, the nature of the occupants and the speed of fire growth.

The age and construction of the premises

Older buildings may comprise different construction materials from newer buildings and may be in a poorer state of repair. The materials from which your premises are constructed and 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.

If you wish to construct internal partitions or walls in your premises, perhaps to divide up a classroom or laboratory area, you should ensure that any new partition or wall does not obstruct any escape routes or fire exits, extend travel distances or reduce the sound levels of the fire alarm system. Any walls that affect the means of escape should be constructed of appropriate material.

CLASP* (Consortium of Local Authority Special Programme) and SCOLA (Second Consortium of Local Authorities) are total or systematic methods of construction that were developed to provide consistent building quality, while reducing the need for traditional skilled labour. They consist of a metal frame upon which structural panels are fixed. This results in hidden voids through which fire may spread. It is important that cavity barriers that restrict the spread of fire are installed appropriately, especially to walls and floors that need to be fire-resisting. If you are in any doubt as to whether any remedial work will be required, then ask for advice from a competent person.

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. You may need to seek advice from a competent person. Any structural alterations may require building regulation approval.

The number of escape routes and exits

In general there should normally be at least two escape routes from all parts of the premises but a single escape route may be acceptable in some circumstances (e.g. part of your premises accommodating less than 60 people or where the travel distances are limited).

Where two escape routes are necessary and to further minimise the risk of people becoming trapped, you should ensure that the escape routes are completely independent of each other. This will prevent a fire affecting more than one escape route at the same time.

When evaluating escape routes, you may need to build in a safety factor by discounting the largest exit from your escape plan. You can then determine whether the remaining escape routes from a room, floor or building will be sufficient to evacuate all the occupants within a reasonable time. Escape routes that provide escape in a single direction only may need additional fire precautions to be regarded as adequate.

Exit doors on escape routes and final exit doors should normally open in the direction of travel, and be quickly and easily openable without the need for a key. Checks should be made to ensure final exits are wide enough to accommodate the number of people who may use the escape routes they serve.

*Further information about CLASP is available at www.clasp.gov.uk

Management of escape routes

It is essential that escape routes, and the means provided to ensure they are used safely, are managed and maintained to ensure that they remain usable and available at all times when the premises are occupied. Tell employees in staff training sessions about the escape routes within the premises.

Corridors and stairways that form part of escape routes should be kept clear and hazard free at all times. Items that may be a source of fuel or pose an ignition risk should not normally be located on any corridor or stairway that will be used as an escape route.

Emergency evacuation of persons with mobility impairment

The means of escape you provide must be suitable for the evacuation of everyone likely to be in your premises. This may require additional planning and allocation of staff roles – with appropriate training. Provisions for the emergency evacuation of disabled persons may include:

- stairways;
- evacuation lifts;

- firefighting lifts;
- horizontal evacuation;
- refuges; and
- ramps.

Use of these facilities will need to be linked to effective management arrangements as part of your emergency plan. The plan should not rely on fire and rescue service involvement for it to be effective.

Marquees, tents, temporary structures and classrooms

Exit routes from marquees, tents, temporary structures and classrooms may be over uneven ground or temporary flooring, duckboards, ramps etc. These factors should be taken into account when you complete your risk assessment to ensure that there are safe egress routes. Travel distances should be shorter than in conventional buildings.

CHECKLIST

- Are the escape routes and final exits kept clear at all times?
- Do the doors on escape routes open in the direction of escape?
- Can all final exit doors be opened easily and immediately if there is an emergency?
- Will everybody be able to safely use the escape routes from your premises?
- Are pupils, students and staff who work in the building aware of the importance of maintaining the safety of the escape routes, e.g. by ensuring that fire doors are not wedged open and that combustible materials are not stored within escape routes?
- Are there any particular or unusual issues to consider?
- Is your building constructed, particularly in the case of multi-storey buildings, so that, if there is a fire, heat and smoke will not spread uncontrolled through the building to the extent that people are unable to use the escape routes?

- Are any holes or gaps in walls, ceilings and floors properly sealed, e.g. where services such as ventilation ducts and electrical cables pass through them?
- Can all the occupants escape to a place of total safety in a reasonable time?
- Are the existing escape routes adequate for the numbers and type of people that may need to use them, e.g. staff, pupils and students, members of the public, disabled people, and young children?
- Are the exits in the right place and do the escape routes lead as directly as possible to a place of total safety?
- If there is a fire, could all available exits be affected or will at least one route from any part of the premises remain available?

3.4.4 Emergency escape lighting

People in your premises must be able to find their way to a place of total safety if there is a fire by using escape routes that have enough lighting. Where any escape routes are internal and without windows, or your premises are used during periods of darkness, including early darkness on winter days, then some form of back-up to the normal escape route lighting (emergency escape lighting) is likely to be required.

In simple premises, such as a single storey crèche where the escape routes are straightforward, borrowed lighting, e.g. from street lamps where they illuminate escape routes, may be acceptable. Where borrowed lighting is not available, suitably placed torches may be acceptable for the use of trained staff only.

In more complex premises which are used out of normal hours (e.g. rooms for evening classes, drama spaces for public performances, gymnasia, etc.) it is likely that a more comprehensive system of electrical automatic emergency escape lighting will be needed to illuminate all the escape routes.

Where people have difficulty seeing conventional signs, a 'way-guidance' system may need to be considered.

CHECKLIST

- Are your premises used during periods of darkness?
- Will there always be sufficient lighting to safely use escape routes?
- Do you have back-up power supplies for your emergency lighting?

3.4.5 Signs and notices

Signs

Signs must be used, where necessary, to help people identify escape routes, find firefighting equipment and emergency fire telephones. These signs are required under the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and must comply with the provisions of those Regulations.

A fire risk assessment that determines that no escape signs are required (because, for example, trained staff will always be available to help persons to escape routes), is unlikely to be acceptable to an enforcing authority other than in the smallest and simplest of premises where the exits are in regular use and familiar to all (e.g. in a small village school).

For a sign to comply with these Regulations it must be in pictogram form. The pictogram can be supplemented by text if this is considered necessary to make the sign more easily understood, but you must not have a safety sign that uses only text.

Where the locations of escape routes and firefighting equipment are readily apparent and the firefighting equipment is visible at all times, then signs are not necessary. In all other situations it is likely that the fire risk assessment will indicate that signs will be necessary.

Appropriate signs should also take into account the age and ability of pupils or students.

Notices

Notices must be used, where necessary, to provide the following:

- instructions on how to use any fire safety equipment;

- the actions to be taken in the event of fire; and
- help for the fire and rescue service (e.g. location of sprinkler valves or electrical cut-off switches).

All signs and notices should be positioned so that they can be easily seen and understood.

CHECKLIST

- Where necessary, are escape routes and exits, the locations of firefighting equipment and emergency telephones indicated by appropriate signs?
- Have you provided notices such as those giving information on how to operate security devices on exit doors, those indicating doors enclosing hazards that must be kept shut and fire action notices for staff and other people?
- Are you maintaining all the necessary signs and notices so that they continue to be correct, legible and understood?
- Are you maintaining signs that you have provided for the information of the fire and rescue service, such as those indicating the location of water suppression stop valves and the storage of hazardous substances?

3.4.6 Installation, testing and maintenance

New fire precautions should be installed by a competent person.

You must keep any existing equipment, devices or facilities that are provided in your premises for the safety of people, such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, lighting, signs, fire exits and fire doors, in effective working order and maintain separating elements designed to prevent fire and smoke entering escape routes.

You must ensure regular checks, periodic servicing and maintenance are carried out whatever the size of your premises and any defects are put right as quickly as possible.

You, or a person you have nominated, can carry out certain checks and routine maintenance work. Further maintenance may need to be carried out by a competent service engineer. Where contractors are used, third party certification is one method where a reasonable assurance of quality of work and competence can be achieved.

If you allow your premises to be hired (e.g. a sports hall) you retain overall responsibility. However, some of the checking responsibilities should be passed to the hirer under their hiring agreement to carry out these checks on the day(s) they use the premises.

The following are examples of checks and tests that should be carried out. You should determine the appropriate period for these checks from your risk assessment. The examples of testing and maintenance given are not intended to be prescriptive and other testing regimes may be appropriate.

Daily checks

Remove bolts, padlocks and security devices from fire exits, ensure that doors on escape routes swing freely and close fully, and check escape routes to ensure they are clear from obstructions and combustible materials, and in a good state of repair. Open all final exit doors to the full extent and walk exterior escape routes. Check the fire alarm panel to ensure the system is active and fully operational. Where practicable, visually check that emergency lighting units are in good repair and apparently working. Check that all safety signs and notices are legible.

Weekly tests and checks

Test fire detection and warning systems and manually-operated warning devices weekly following the manufacturer's or installer's instructions. Check the batteries of safety torches and that fire extinguishers and hose reels are correctly located and in apparent working order.

Monthly tests and checks

Test all emergency lighting systems and safety torches to make sure they have enough charge and illumination according to the manufacturer's or supplier's instructions. This should be at an appropriate time when, following the test, they will not be immediately required.

Check that all fire doors are in good working order and closing correctly and that the frames and seals are intact.

Six-monthly tests and checks

A competent person should test and maintain the fire-detection and warning system.

Annual tests and checks

The emergency lighting and all firefighting equipment, fire alarms and other installed sprinkler and smoke control systems should be tested and maintained by a competent person.

All structural fire protection and elements of fire compartmentation should be inspected and any remedial action carried out. You will find it useful to keep a log book of all maintenance and testing.

STEP 3 CHECKLIST

- Do you regularly check all fire doors and escape routes and associated lighting and signs?
- Do you regularly check all your firefighting equipment?
- Do you regularly check your fire detection and alarm equipment?
- Are those who test and maintain the equipment competent to do so?
- Do you keep a log book to record tests and maintenance?

Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risks by:

- Evaluating the risk to people in your building if a fire starts.
- Removing or reducing the hazards that might cause a fire.

Have you:

- Removed or reduced sources of ignition?
- Removed or reduced sources of fuel?

–Removed or reduced sources of air or oxygen?

Have you removed or reduced the risks to people if a fire occurs by:

- Considering the need for fire detection and for warning?
- Considering the need for firefighting equipment?
- Determining whether your escape routes are adequate?
- Determining whether your lighting and emergency lighting are adequate?
- Checking that you have adequate signs and notices?
- Regularly testing and maintaining safety equipment?
- Considering whether you need any other equipment or facilities?

STEP 4 RECORD, PLAN, INFORM, INSTRUCT AND TRAIN

In Step 4 there are four further elements of the risk assessment you should focus on to address the management of fire safety in your premises. In some premises with simple layouts this could be done as part of the day-to-day management; however, as the premises or the organisation get larger it may be necessary for a formal structure and written policy to be developed.

4.1 Record the significant findings and action taken

If you or your organisation employ five or more people, your premises are licensed, or an alterations notice requiring you to do so is in force, you must record the significant findings of your fire risk assessment and the actions you have taken.

Significant findings should include details of:

- the fire hazards you have identified (you don't need to include trivial things like a small tin of solvent based glue in an art department);
- the actions you have taken or will take to remove or reduce the chance of a fire occurring (preventive measures);
- persons who may be at risk, particularly those especially at risk;
- the actions you have taken or will take to reduce the risk to people from the spread of fire and smoke (protective measures);

- the actions people need to take in case of fire including details of any persons nominated to carry out a particular function (your emergency plan); and
- the information, instruction and training you have identified that people need and how it will be given.

You may also wish to record discussions you have had with staff or staff representatives (including trade unions).

Even where you are not required to record the significant findings, it is good practice to do so.

In some simple premises, record keeping may be no more than a few sheets of paper (possibly forming part of a health and safety folder), containing details of significant findings, any action taken and a copy of the emergency plan.

The record could take the form of a simple list which may be supported by a simple plan of the premises.

In more complex premises, it is best to keep a dedicated record including details of significant findings, any action taken, a copy of the emergency plan, maintenance of fire-protection equipment and training. There is no one 'correct' format specified for this.

You must be able to satisfy the enforcing authority, if called upon to do so, that you have carried out a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment. Keeping records will help you do this and will also form the basis of your subsequent reviews. If you keep records, you do not need to record all the details, only those that are significant and the action you have taken.

It might be helpful to include a simple line drawing. This can also help you check your fire precautions as part of your ongoing review.

The findings of your fire risk assessment will help you to develop your emergency plan, the instruction, information and training you need to provide, the co-operation and co-ordination arrangements you may need to have with other responsible people and the arrangements for maintenance and testing of the fire precautions. If you are required to record the significant findings of your fire risk assessment then these arrangements must also be recorded.

CHECKLIST

- Have you recorded the significant findings of your assessment?
- Have you recorded what you have done to remove or reduce the risk?
- Are your records available for inspection by the enforcing authority?

4.2 Emergency plans

You need to have an emergency plan for dealing with any fire situation.

The purpose of an emergency plan is to ensure that the people in your premises know what to do if there is a fire and that the premises can be safely evacuated.

If you or your organisation employ five or more people, or your premises are licensed or an alterations notice requiring it is in force, then details of your emergency plan must be recorded. Even if it is not required, it is good practice to keep a record.

Your emergency plan should be based on the outcome of your fire risk assessment and be available for your employees, their representatives (where appointed) and the enforcing authority.

In simple premises the emergency plan may be no more than a fire action notice.

In multi-occupied and more complex premises, the emergency plan will need to be more detailed and compiled only after consultation with other occupiers and other responsible people, e.g. owners, who have control over the building. In most cases this means that an emergency plan covering the whole building will be necessary. It will help if you can agree on one person to co-ordinate this task.

CHECKLIST

- Do you have an emergency plan and, where necessary, have you recorded the details?

-
- Does your plan take account of other responsible people in the building?
 - Is the plan readily available for staff to read?
 - Is the emergency plan available to the enforcing authority?

4.3 Inform, instruct, co-operate and co-ordinate

You must give clear and relevant information and appropriate instructions to your staff and the employers of other people working in your premises, such as contractors, about how to prevent fires and what they should do if there is a fire.

If you intend to employ a child, you must inform the parents of the significant risks you have identified and the precautions you have taken. You must also co-operate and co-ordinate with other responsible people who use any part of the premises. It is unlikely that your emergency plan will work without this.

Information and instruction

All staff should be given information and instruction as soon as possible after they are appointed and regularly after that. Make sure you include staff who work outside normal working hours, such as cleaners or maintenance staff. It is also good practice to provide appropriate information to students.

The information and instructions you give must be in a form that can be used and understood. They should take account of those with disabilities such as hearing or sight impairment, those with learning difficulties and those who do not use English as their first language.

The information and instruction you give should be based on your emergency plan and must include:

- the significant findings from your fire risk assessment;
- the measures that you have put in place to reduce the risk;
- what staff should do if there is a fire;

- the identity of people you have nominated with responsibilities for fire safety; and
- any special arrangements for serious and imminent danger to persons from fire.

In simple premises, where no significant risks have been identified and there are limited numbers of pupils/students, information and instruction to staff may simply involve an explanation of the fire procedures and how they are to be applied. This should include showing staff the fire-protection arrangements, including the designated escape routes, the location and operation of the fire-warning system and any other fire-safety equipment provided, such as fire extinguishers. Fire action notices can complement this information and, where used, should be posted in prominent locations.

In complex premises, particularly those in multi-occupied buildings, you should ensure that written instructions are given to people who have been nominated to carry out a designated safety task, such as calling the fire and rescue service or checking that exit doors are available for use at the start of each working day.

Co-operation and co-ordination

In premises that are not multi-occupied you are likely to be solely responsible. However, in buildings owned by someone else, or where there is more than one occupier, and others are responsible for different parts of the building, it is important that you liaise with them and inform them of any significant risks that you have identified. By liaising you can co-ordinate your resources to ensure that your actions and working practices do not place others at risk if there is a fire, and a co-ordinated emergency plan operates effectively.

Where two or more responsible persons share premises in which an explosive atmosphere may occur, the responsible person with overall responsibility for the premises must co-ordinate any measures necessary to protect everyone from any risk that may arise. Employees also have a responsibility to co-operate with their employer so far as it is necessary to help the employer comply with any legal duty.

CHECKLIST

- Have you told your staff about the emergency plan?
- Have you informed pupils, students and visitors about what to do in an emergency?
- Have you identified people nominated to do a particular task?
- Have you given staff information about any dangerous substances?
- Do you have arrangements for informing temporary or agency staff?
- Do you have arrangements for informing other employers whose staff are guest workers in your premises, such as maintenance contractors and cleaners?
- Have you co-ordinated your fire safety arrangements with other responsible people in the building?
- Have you recorded details of any information or instructions you have given and the details of any arrangements for co-operation and co-ordination with others?

4.4 Fire safety training

You must provide adequate fire safety training for your staff. The type of training should be based on the particular features of your premises and should:

- take account of the findings of the fire risk assessment;
- explain your emergency procedures;
- take account of the work activity and explain the duties and responsibilities of staff;
- take place during normal working hours and be repeated periodically where appropriate;

-
- be easily understandable by your staff and other people who may be present; and
 - be tested by fire drills.

You should also involve pupils/students in some aspects of fire safety training, particularly with respect to fire drills, etc.

In simple premises this may be no more than showing new staff, pupils and students the fire exits and giving basic training on what to do if there is a fire. In complex premises, such as a university, the organisation of fire safety training will need to be more formal.

Your training should include the following:

- what to do on discovering a fire;
- how to raise the alarm and what happens then;
- what to do upon hearing the fire alarm;
- the procedures for alerting students, pupils, members of the public and visitors including, where appropriate, directing them to exits;
- the arrangements for calling the fire and rescue service;
- the evacuation procedures for everyone in your premises (including young children or mobility impaired persons) to reach an assembly point at a place of total safety;
- the location and, when appropriate, the use of firefighting equipment;
- the location of escape routes, especially those not in regular use;
- how to open all emergency exit doors;
- the importance of keeping fire doors closed to prevent the spread of fire, heat and smoke;
- where appropriate, how to stop machines and processes and isolate power supplies in the event of a fire;

- the reason for not using lifts (except those specifically installed or nominated, following a suitable fire risk assessment, for the evacuation of people with a disability);
- the safe use of and risks from storing or working with highly flammable and explosive substances;
- the importance of general fire safety, which includes good housekeeping; and
- the use of premises by outside bodies, e.g. IT training, music, yoga, etc.

All staff identified in your emergency plan who have a supervisory role if there is a fire (e.g. heads of department, fire marshals or wardens and, in complex premises, fire parties or teams), should be given details of your fire risk assessment and receive additional training.

CHECKLIST

- Have your staff received any fire safety training?
- Have you carried out a fire drill recently?
- Are employees aware of specific tasks if there is a fire?
- Are you maintaining a record of training sessions?
- Do you carry out joint training and fire drills in multi-occupied buildings?
- If you use or store hazardous or explosive substances have your staff received appropriate training?

STEP 5 REVIEW

You should constantly monitor what you are doing to implement the fire risk assessment, to assess how effectively the risk is being controlled.

If you have any reason to suspect that your fire risk assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in your premises that has affected your fire precautions, you will need to review your assessment and if necessary revise it. Reasons for review could include:

- changes to work activities or the way that you organise them, including the introduction of new equipment (e.g. installation of computer equipment in a classroom);
- a change of use to part of your premises (e.g. a school hall for public performances);
- alterations to the building, including the internal layout;
- substantial changes to furniture and fixings;
- the introduction, change of use or increase in the storage of hazardous substances;
- the failure of fire precautions, e.g. fire-detection systems and alarm systems, life safety sprinklers or ventilation systems;
- significant changes to display material;
- a significant increase in the number of people present; and
- the presence of people with some form of disability.

You should consider the potential risk of any significant change before it is introduced. It is usually more effective to minimise a risk by, for example, ensuring adequate, appropriate storage space for an item before introducing it to your premises.

Do not amend your assessment for every trivial change, but if a change introduces new hazards you should consider them and, if significant, do whatever you need to do to keep the risks under control. In any case you should keep your assessment under review to make sure that the precautions are still working effectively. You may want to re-examine the fire prevention and protection measures at the same time as your health and safety assessment.

If a fire or 'near miss' occurs, this could indicate that your existing assessment may be inadequate and you should carry out a re-assessment. It is good practice to identify the cause of any incident and then review and, if necessary, revise your fire risk assessment in the light of this.

Records of testing, maintenance and training etc. are useful aids in a review process.

Alterations notices

If you have been served with an 'alterations notice' check it to see whether you need to notify the enforcing authority about any changes you propose to make as a result of your review. If these changes include building work, you should also consult a building control body.

GUIDANCE ON SIGNS AND NOTICES

Escape signs

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

Many people with poor vision retain some sight and are able to recognise changing or contrasting colour to provide them with visual clues when moving around a building (the Royal National Institute of the Blind estimates that only about 4% of visually impaired people are totally blind). It may be sufficient to paint any columns and walls in a contrasting colour and to highlight changes in level by, for example, making the nosing to step and stair treads a contrasting colour (see BS 830014 for further guidance).

For people with no sight, a well-managed 'buddy system', continuous handrails, a sound localisation system (which helps people to move towards an alert sound) or the installation of more tactile aids may be appropriate.

Maintained internally illuminated exit signs will be required where the lighting may be dimmed or extinguished (e.g. lecture rooms).

Exit signs should be clearly visible whenever the pupils/students, staff, the public and contractors are present.

Positioning of escape signs

The presence of other signs in educational premises (such as staff notices and student information) can distract attention from, or obscure the visibility of, escape signs. This could affect people's ability to see and understand escape signs, particularly if there is a fire evacuation. Always ensure that escape signs are not overwhelmed.

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.
- Signs mounted above doors should be at a height of between 2.0m and 2.5m above the floor.
- Signs on walls should be mounted between 1.7m and 2.0m above the floor.
- Mounting heights greater than 2.5m may be used for hanging signs, e.g. in large open spaces or for operational reasons, but care should be taken to ensure that such signs are both conspicuous and legible. In such case larger signs may be necessary.
- Signs should be sited at the same height throughout the escape route, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Escape sign design

For a sign to comply with signs and signals regulations it must be pictographic (see Figures 55 and 56). The pictogram can be supplemented by text if this is considered necessary to make the sign easily understood (BS-type sign), but you must not have a fire 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.

The legibility of escape signs is determined by the size of the sign, its level of illumination and the distance over which it is viewed. The use of signs within the same premises should follow a consistent design pattern or scheme. You should not rely on a few outsized signs which may encourage people to travel

to a particular escape route when other more appropriate routes should be used.

In multi-occupied premises, co-operation between the respective responsible persons should be sought to ensure that, as far as possible, all signs in the building conform to a single pattern or scheme.

Other safety signs and notices

A number of other mandatory signs such as 'Fire action' notices may also be necessary.

Fire doors that have been fitted with self-closing devices should be labelled 'Fire door – keep shut' on both sides. Fire-resisting doors to cupboards, stores and service ducts that are not self-closing because they are routinely kept locked should be labelled 'Fire door – keep locked' on the outside. Signs should indicate non-automatic fire safety equipment if there is any doubt about its location, e.g. fire extinguishers that are kept in cabinets or in recesses.

A notice with the words 'Push bar to open' should be permanently displayed immediately above the push-bar on all doors fitted with a panic bolt or panic latch.

A notice with the words 'Fire escape – keep clear' should be permanently displayed at about eye level on the external face of all doors which are provided as a means of escape in case of fire and which, because they are not normally used, may become obstructed.

Staff notices

In simple premises where there are a limited number of escape routes, it may be reasonable to provide staff with verbal reminders of what they need to do if there is a fire. In some premises you could consider providing this in a short written statement that could, for example, be delivered with staff pay slips every six months.

In multi-occupied, larger and more complex premises or where there is a high turnover of staff, a more considered approach for staff notices and instructions will be necessary. As well as positioning the fire instructions

notice on escape routes adjacent to fire break-glass call points, put them where staff frequently assemble in the premises, e.g. the staff room.

If your premises are routinely expected to accommodate people whose first language is not English you may need to consider providing instruction in more than one language. The interpretation should always convey an identical message.

Illumination

All signs and notices will need illumination to ensure they are conspicuous and legible. There are a number of options available to achieve this, such as:

- external illumination; and
- internal illumination.

The supplier or other competent person can give you further advice. i.e. where the active material making up the luminous parts of such signs or notices needs a period of exposure to light before they become visible in darkness (but get fainter with time), are not a substitute for appropriate emergency lighting and should only be used where other forms of illumination are present.

Further guidance

Detailed guidance on fire safety signs can be found in BS 5499-4 and BS 5499-5. Published guidance on compliance with health and safety legislation on signs is also available. Guidance on the use of photo-luminescent fire safety signs and notices can be found in BS 5266-6.

Recording, Planning, Informing, Instructing and Training

FIRE SAFETY RECORDS

Keeping up-to-date records of your fire risk assessment can help you effectively manage the fire strategy for your premises and demonstrate how you are complying with fire safety law.

Even if you do not have to record the fire risk assessment, it can be helpful to keep a record of any co-operation and exchange of information made between employers and other responsible people for future reference.

In larger and more complex premises, it is best to keep a dedicated record of all maintenance of fire-protection equipment and training. There is no one 'correct' format specified for this. Suitable record books are available from trade associations and may also be available from your local enforcing authority.

In all cases the quality of these records may also be regarded as a good indicator of the overall quality of the safety management structure.

Your records should be kept in a specified place on the premises (for example, in the management's office), and should include:

- details of any significant findings from the fire risk assessment and any action taken
- testing and checking of escape routes, including final exit locking mechanisms, such as panic devices, emergency exit devices and any electromagnetic devices;
- testing of fire-warning systems, including weekly alarm tests and periodic maintenance by a competent person;
- recording of false alarms;
- testing and maintenance of emergency lighting systems;
- testing and maintenance of fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets etc.;
- if appropriate, testing and maintenance of other fire safety equipment such as fire-suppression and smoke control systems;
- recording and training of relevant people and fire evacuation drills;
- planning, organising, policy and implementation, monitoring, audit and review;

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- maintenance and audit of any systems that are provided to help the fire and rescue service;
 - the arrangements in a large multi-occupied building for a co-ordinated emergency plan or overall control of the actions you or your staff should take if there is a fire; and
 - all alterations, tests, repairs and maintenance of fire safety systems, including passive systems such as fire doors.

Other issues that you may wish to record include:

- the competence, qualifications and status of the persons responsible for carrying out inspections and tests;
- the results of periodic safety audits, reviews, inspections and tests, and any remedial action taken;
- all incidents and circumstances which had the potential to cause accidents and monitor subsequent remedial action; and
- a record of the building use, the fire prevention and protection measures in place and high-risk areas.

You should ensure that no other management decisions or policies compromise safety.

Your documentation should be available for inspection by representatives of the enforcing authority.

Fire safety engineering

In premises with 'engineered fire safety strategies', a fire policy manual should be provided in addition to any other records.

Fire safety audit

A fire safety audit can be used alongside your fire risk assessment to identify what fire safety provisions exist in your premises. When carrying out a review of your fire safety risk assessment, a pre-planned audit can quickly

identify if there have been any significant changes which may affect the fire safety systems and highlight whether a full fire risk assessment is necessary.

Plans and specifications

Plans and specifications can be used to assist understanding of a fire risk assessment or emergency plan. Even where not needed for this purpose they can help you and your staff keep your fire risk assessment and emergency plan under review and help the fire and rescue service in the event of fire. Any symbols used should be shown on a key. Plans and specifications could include the following:

- essential structural features such as the layout of rooms, escape doors, wall partitions, corridors, stairways, etc. (including any fire-resisting structure and self-closing fire doors provided to protect the escape routes);
- location of refuges and lifts that have been designated suitable for use by disabled people and others who may need assistance to escape in case of fire;
- methods for fighting fire (details of the number, type and location of the firefighting equipment);
- location of manually-operated fire alarm call points and control equipment for fire alarms;
- location of any control rooms;
- location of any emergency lighting equipment and the exit route signs;
- location of any high-risk areas, equipment or process that must be immediately shut down by staff on hearing the fire alarm;
- location of any automatic firefighting systems, risers and sprinkler control valves;
- location of the main electrical supply switch, the main water shut-off valve and, where appropriate, the main gas or oil shut-off valves; and
- plans and specifications relating to all recent constructions.

This information should be passed on to any later users or owners of the premises.

EMERGENCY PLANS

Emergency plan and contingency plans

Your emergency plan should be appropriate to your premises and could include:

- how people will be warned if there is a fire;
- what staff, students or pupils should do if they discover a fire;
- how the evacuation of the premises should be carried out;
- where people should assemble after they have left the premises and procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated;
- identification of key escape routes, how people can gain access to them and escape from them to a place of total safety;
- arrangements for fighting fire;
- the duties and identity of staff and students who have specific responsibilities if there is a fire;
- arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as young children and babies (e.g. in a crèche), those with disabilities, contractors, members of the public and visitors;
- any machines/appliances/processes/power supplies that need to be stopped or isolated if there is a fire;
- specific arrangements, if necessary, for high-fire-risk areas;
- arrangements for an emergency plan to be used by a hirer of part of the premises;

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- contingency plans for when life safety systems, such as evacuation lifts, fire-detection and warning systems, sprinklers or smoke control systems are out of order;
 - how the fire and rescue service and any other necessary services will be called and who will be responsible for doing this;
 - procedures for meeting the fire and rescue service on their arrival and notifying them of any special risks, e.g. the location of highly flammable materials;
 - what training employees need and the arrangements for ensuring that this training is given; and
 - phased evacuation plans (where some areas are evacuated while others are alerted but not evacuated until later).

As part of your emergency plan it is good practice to prepare post-incident plans for dealing with situations that might arise, such as those involving:

- young persons;
- people with personal belongings (especially valuables) still in the building;
- getting pupils/students away from the building (e.g. to transport); and
- inclement weather.

You should also prepare contingency plans to determine specific actions and/or the mobilisation of specialist resources.

Guidance on developing health and safety management policy has been published by the HSE.

Responsibilities for short-term hiring or leasing and for shared use

It is crucial that you ensure that the temporary responsible person understands their duties for the duration of the event or function.

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION, CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION

Supplying information

You must provide easily understandable information to employees, the parents of children you may employ, and to employers of other persons working in your premises about the measures in place to ensure a safe escape from the building and how they will operate, for example:

- any significant risks to staff and other relevant persons that have been identified in your fire risk assessment or any similar assessment carried out by another user and responsible person in the building;
- the fire prevention and protection measures and procedures in your premises and where they impact on staff and other relevant persons in the building;
- the procedures for fighting a fire in the premises; and
- the identity of people who have been nominated with specific responsibilities in the building.

You need to ensure that all staff and, where necessary, other relevant persons in the building (e.g. pupils, students and contractors), receive appropriate information in a way that can be easily understood. This might include any special instructions to particular people who have been allocated a specific task, such as shutting down equipment or guiding people to the nearest exit.

Duties of employees to give information

Employees also have a duty to take reasonable care for their own safety and that of other people who may be affected by their activities. This includes the need for them to inform their employer of any activity that they consider would present a serious and immediate danger to their own safety and that of others.

Dangerous substances

HSE publishes guidance about specific substances where appropriate information may need to be provided. If any of these, or any other substance

that is not included but nevertheless presents more than a slight risk, is present in your premises, then you must provide such information to staff and others, specifically you must:

- name the substance and the risks associated with it, e.g. how to safely use or store the product to avoid creating highly flammable vapours or explosive atmospheres;
- identify any legislative provisions that may be associated with the substance;
- allow employees access to the hazardous substances safety data sheet; and
- inform the local fire and rescue service where dangerous substances are present on the premises.

Information to the fire and rescue service

In addition to providing information to the fire and rescue service when dangerous substances are present in sufficient quantities to pose an enhanced risk, it will also be helpful to inform them of any short term changes that might have an impact on their firefighting activities; e.g. in the event of temporary alterations.

Procedures should also include meeting and briefing the fire and rescue service when they arrive.

Instruction

You will need to carefully consider the type of instructions to staff and other people in your premises (e.g. pupils, students and contractors). Written instructions must be concise, comprehensible and relevant and therefore must be reviewed and updated as new working practices and hazardous substances are introduced. Where young children or people with learning difficulties may be present, your fire risk assessment should consider whether further instruction or guidance is necessary to ensure that your evacuation strategy is appropriate and understood by everyone. Instructions will need to be given to people delegated to carry out particular tasks, for example:

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- removing additional security, bolts, bars or chains on final exit doors before the start of the day to ensure that escape routes are accessible;
 - daily, weekly, quarterly and yearly checks on the range of fire safety measures (in larger premises some of the work may be contracted out to a specialist company);
 - safety considerations when closing down the premises at the end of the day, e.g. removing rubbish, ensuring enough exits are available for people that remain and closing fire doors and shutters;
 - leaving hazardous substances in a safe condition when evacuating the building;
 - the safe storage of hazardous substances at the end of the working day; and
 - ensuring that everyone in large educational establishments with many buildings within a site knows how to use internal emergency telephones.

Specific instructions may be needed about:

- how staff will help pupils, students and members of the public/visitors to leave the building;
- 'sweeping' of the premises by staff to guide people to the nearest exit when the fire alarm sounds;
- designating particular areas of your educational premises for supervisors to check that no one remains inside;
- calling the emergency services;
- carrying out evacuation roll calls;
- taking charge at the assembly area;
- meeting and directing fire engines; and
- cover arrangements when nominated people are on leave.

Co-operation and co-ordination

Where you share premises with others (this includes people who are self-employed or in partnership), each responsible person, i.e. each employer, owner or other person who has control over any part of the premises, will need to co-operate and co-ordinate the findings of their separate fire risk assessments to ensure the fire precautions and protection measures are effective throughout the building. This could include:

- co-ordinating an emergency plan
- identifying the nature of any risks and how they may affect others in or about the premises;
- identifying any fire-prevention and protection measures;
- identifying any measures to mitigate the effects of a fire; and
- arranging any contacts with external emergency services and calling the fire and rescue service.

FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

Staff training

In the event of a fire, the actions of teachers/lecturers and other relevant persons (e.g. pupils/students) are likely to be crucial to their safety and that of other people in the premises. All teachers/lecturers should receive basic fire safety induction training and attend refresher sessions at pre-determined intervals.

Teaching staff will play a critical role in the evacuation of the premises with children relying on them for guidance. It is essential that they are fully conversant with all the aspects of the fire strategy for the premises, not only the evacuation procedure, but day-to-day fire prevention and protection measures.

You should ensure that all staff (including part time and temporary), pupils, students, visitors and contractors are told about the emergency plan and are shown the escape routes.

The training should take account of the findings of the fire risk assessment and be easily understood by all those attending. It should include the role that those members of staff will be expected to carry out if a fire occurs. This may vary in large premises, with some staff being appointed as fire marshals or being given some other particular role for which additional training will be required.

Pupils and students should also be given some form of fire safety training so that they are aware of the actions to be taken in the event of a fire and measures to mitigate the effects of fire.

In addition to the guidance given in Part 1 Step 4.4, as a minimum all staff should receive training about:

- the items listed in your emergency plan;
- the importance of fire doors and other basic fire-prevention measures;
- where relevant, the appropriate use of firefighting equipment;
- the importance of reporting to the assembly area;
- exit routes and the operation of exit devices, including physically walking these routes;
- general matters such as permitted smoking areas or restrictions on cooking other than in designated areas; and
- assisting disabled persons where necessary.

Training is necessary:

- when staff start employment or are transferred into the premises;
- when changes have been made to the emergency plan and the preventive and protective measures;
- where working practices and processes or people's responsibilities change;

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- to take account of any changed risks to the safety of staff, pupils, students or other relevant persons;
 - to ensure that staff know what they have to do to safeguard themselves and others on the premises; and
 - where staff are expected to assist disabled persons.

Training should be repeated as often as necessary and should take place during working hours.

Whatever training you decide is necessary to support your fire safety strategy and emergency plan, it should be verifiable and supported by management.

Enforcing authorities may want to examine records as evidence that adequate training has been given.

Training of pupils/students

It is good practice to provide pupils and students with some form of fire safety training so that they are aware of the actions to be taken in the event of a fire. This should include instruction on the:

- details of the emergency plan;
- importance of fire doors and other basic fire-prevention measures;
- importance of reporting to the assembly area; and
- exit routes and the operation of exit devices.

Fire marshals

Staff expected to undertake the role of fire marshals (often called fire wardens) would require more comprehensive training. Their role may include:

- helping those on the premises to leave;
- checking the premises to ensure everyone has left;

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- using firefighting equipment if safe to do so;
 - liaising with the fire and rescue service on arrival;
 - shutting down vital or dangerous equipment; and
 - performing a supervisory/managing role in any fire situation.

Training for this role may include:

- detailed knowledge of the fire safety strategy of the premises;
- awareness of human behaviour in fires;
- how to encourage others to use the most appropriate escape route;
- how to search safely and recognise areas that are unsafe to enter;
- the difficulties that some people, particularly if disabled, may have in escaping and any special evacuation arrangements that have been pre-planned;
- additional training in the use of firefighting equipment;
- an understanding of the purpose of any fixed firefighting equipment such as sprinklers or gas flooding systems; and
- reporting of faults, incidents and near misses.

Fire drills

Once the emergency plan has been developed and training given, you will need to evaluate its effectiveness. The best way to do this is to perform a fire drill. This should be carried out at least annually or as determined by your fire risk assessment. To account for the turnover of pupils/students, there should be a fire drill at least once a year and preferably one a term/semester.

A well-planned and executed fire drill will confirm understanding of the training and provide helpful information for future training. The responsible person should determine the possible objectives of the drill such as to:

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- identify any weaknesses in the evacuation strategy;
 - test the procedure following any recent alteration or changes to working practices;
 - familiarise new occupants with procedures; and
 - test the arrangements for disabled people.

Who should take part?

Within each building the evacuation should be for all occupants except those who may need to ensure the security of the premises, or people who, on a risk-assessed basis, are required to remain with particular equipment or processes that cannot be closed down.

Premises that consist of several buildings on the same site should be dealt with one building at a time over an appropriate period unless the emergency procedure dictates otherwise.

Where appropriate, you may find it helpful to include members of the public in your fire drill - ensuring that all necessary health and safety issues are addressed before you do so.

Carrying out the drill

For premises that have more than one escape route, the escape plan should be designed to evacuate all people on the assumption that one exit or stairway is unavailable because of the fire. This could be simulated by a designated person being located at a suitable point on an exit route. Applying this scenario to different escape routes at each fire drill will encourage individuals to use alternative escape routes which they may not normally use.

When carrying out the drill you might find it helpful to:

- circulate details concerning the drill and inform all people of their duty to participate. It may not be beneficial to have 'surprise drills' as the health and safety risks introduced may outweigh the benefits;
- ensure that equipment can be safely left;

- nominate observers;
- inform the alarm receiving centre if the fire-warning system is monitored (if the fire and rescue service is normally called directly from your premises, ensure that this does not happen);
- inform visitors and members of the public if they are present; and
- ask a member of staff at random to set off the alarm by operating the nearest alarm call point using the test key. This will indicate the level of knowledge regarding the location of the nearest call point.

More detailed information on fire drills and test evacuations are given in BS 5588-12.

The roll call/checking the premises have been evacuated

Where possible, you should ensure that a roll call is carried out as soon as possible at the designated assembly point(s), and/or receive reports from wardens designated to 'sweep' the premises. You should note any people who are unaccounted for. In a real evacuation this information will need to be passed to the fire and rescue service on arrival.

Once the roll call is complete or all reports have been received, allow people to return to the building. If the fire-warning system is monitored, inform the alarm receiving centre that the drill has now been completed and record the outcomes of the drill.

In many educational premises, a roll call is not a practical proposition, therefore it is important to have in place robust management procedures to ensure that the building has been effectively evacuated (e.g. sweeping of the premises by staff).

Monitoring and debrief

Throughout the drill the responsible person and nominated observers should pay particular attention to:

- communication difficulties with regard to the roll call and establishing that everyone is accounted for;

- the use of the nearest available escape routes as opposed to common circulation routes;
- difficulties with the opening of final exit doors;
- difficulties experienced by people with disabilities or young children;
- the roles of specified people, e.g. fire wardens;
- inappropriate actions, e.g. stopping to collect personal items, attempting to use lifts, etc.; and
- windows and doors not being closed as people leave.

On-the-spot debriefs are useful to discuss the fire drill, encouraging feedback from everybody. Later, reports from fire wardens and observations from people should be collated and reviewed. Any conclusions and remedial actions should be recorded and implemented.

Quality Assurance of Fire Protection Equipment and Installation

Fire protection products and related services should be fit for their purpose and properly installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or a relevant standard.

Third-party certification schemes for fire protection products and related services are an effective means of providing the fullest possible assurances, offering a level of quality, reliability and safety that non-certificated products may lack. This does not mean goods and services that are not third-party approved are less reliable, but there is no obvious way in which this can be demonstrated.

However, to ensure the level of assurance offered by third party schemes, you should always check whether the company you employ sub-contracts work to others. If they do, you will want to check that the sub-contractors are subject to the same level of checks of quality and competence as the company you are employing.

Third-party quality assurance can offer comfort, both as a means of satisfying you that goods and services you have purchased are fit for purpose, and as a means of demonstrating that you have complied with the law.

Your local fire and rescue service, fire trade associations or your own trade association may be able to provide further details about third-party quality assurance schemes and the various organisations that administer them.