

Keeping your business safe from fire

A practical guide for employers



Whether you work in an office block, a shop, a warehouse or a building site, the risk of fire is always there.



Some businesses owners may take the approach of thinking it will never happen to them. Some may put a basic plan in place to stay compliant but go no further. Some may not even be aware of their responsibilities.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, there was 6,665 reported workplace fires in the UK. It is believed that at least half of these are avoidable.

In this short guide we delve a bit deeper into who is responsible for fire safety, what to do – and not do, the risks of avoiding it and practical steps for you to put in place.

Yes, there is things you can do to remain compliant. This is about more than that. This is about ensuring you have safe workplace, with the best possible protections for you, your team and your business.

Who is responsible?

In line with legislation, you should have a designated Responsible Person. This person is legally accountable for ensuring fire safety: identifying, managing and reducing the risks of fire.

As the business leader, this is likely to be yourself or a designated member of your leadership team. However, it may also be the owner or landlord of the property you are working in. It is important to note that if you share a premises – for example an office block – each business should have a Responsible Person.

Your responsibilities

Regardless of whether you are the Responsible Person or not, you have a number of responsibilities as the business owner.

- You should carry out and regularly review your fire risk assessment.
 - A fire risk assessment reviews any potential dangers within the workplace and decides what measures are required
- Ensure safety measures are maintained
 - This includes alarms, signage and clear escape routes
- Provide fire safety training for staff
 - This could either be in person or via bitesized online eLearning courses
- Put in place a clear plan for emergency.
 - A General Emergency Evacuation Plan (GEEP) should be in place, covering all occupants. There may also be a requirement for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for an individual who may have difficulty evacuating without support
- Ensure you are keeping clear and accurate records of the above.
 - Not only does this demonstrate compliance, but it also ensures these details are accessible and can help to reduce liability should anything occur.

Fire risk assessments

Here's what you should – and should not – do when carrying out a fire risk assessment...

Do this	Don't do this
Be site specific and reflect the conditions at hand	Use a one size all template from online
Identify hazards and the people at risk	Tick boxes to ensure basic compliance
Provide clear, prioritised actions	Create recommendations, but not action them
Review regularly	Create an assessment and leave it

What are the risks of ignoring fire safety?

The answer to this is pretty self-explanatory, however there is further trepidation beyond the risk of a fire actually happening.

If you fail to take certain steps and are investigated, you could receive a legal notice requiring you take action. If your failure to comply continues, this could lead to fines. Clearly, there is significant business and operational impact in this.

It is also important to ensure you are creating a safe environment for your team which will improve retention and productivity rates in your business.

Of course, if you continue to ignore the risks, and have not put suitable provisions in place, you could be liable for significantly more.



Six practical steps you can take to secure your business

- 1 Assign a competent Responsible Person – someone who understands the role and its responsibilities
- 2 Conduct a full and detailed fire risk assessment, implement the outcomes and repeat annually
- 3 Create an method of accurate record keeping - this should be both physical and digital
- 4 Provide annual training to your staff - speak to us about our cost-effective and easy to use eLearning offering
- 5 Conduction regular inspections of the workplace, identifying and rectifying any potential hazards or fire risks
- 6 Partner with health and safety specialists who do all of this for you, taking the load of your plate.

Need support?

The H&S Dept is here to help. Our helpful advisors are experts in supporting businesses to put the correct fire safety precautions in place - from conducting risk assessments to carrying our GEEPs and PEEPs - we can also become your responsible person.

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