

Fire safety risk assessment – the five key steps

Follow the Five Key Steps

Assess your fire risk and work out how to keep people and your premises safe.

Make a plan for how to improve fire safety measures in your premises.

Keep a record of your assessment and use it to carry out regular reviews.

The checklist overleaf may help you record all the important information.

Step 1 What is a fire hazard?

Think about how a fire could start on your premises.

You need to go around your premises, inside and out, and look for hazards.

Fire starts when heat comes into contact with fuel (anything that burns) and oxygen in the air. You need to keep heat and fuel apart.

- > For example, look for:
 - naked flames;
 - heaters;
 - electrical equipment;
 - signs of smoking;
 - matches; and
 - anything else that gets very hot or causes sparks.

Look carefully at kitchens where people work near naked flames, laundry rooms, and guest bedrooms where people may bring matches and candles or areas where they may smoke.

Think about what could burn and how quickly a fire could spread.

- > For example, laundry, curtains, furniture and cooking oil could all burn, just like the more obvious fuels such as petrol, paint, varnish and white spirit.

> Check outside for fuel too. For example, rubbish can burn. If this happens, could a fire spread to inside the property or affect the escape route?

- > Think about how your property is built – for example, are walls made of brick, hardboard or chipboard? Are there polystyrene tiles on the ceiling?

Step 2 Who is at risk?

Everyone is at risk if there is a fire.

You need to think about your tenants, your staff (if you have any) and anyone else who visits the premises. Some people are likely to be at more risk than others.

- > For example, young children, the elderly or those with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable, as well as those who are not familiar with the layout of the building.

Step 3 What is your plan to keep people safe?

Using what you have found in steps 1 and 2 you should be able to remove or reduce the hazards you have found.

- > For example, think about whether a heat source, such as a hair dryer, could fall, be knocked or pushed into something that would burn. Is your electrical equipment modern and working properly?

Now think about what you need to do if there is a fire on your premises. How will it be detected and how will you alert people on the premises?

- > For example, do you have an automatic fire detection system?

Are the detectors in the right place?

Is the system tested regularly?

Can you hear the alarm in each bedroom?

Is the alarm loud enough to wake someone who is sleeping?

What action will you take to protect people on your premises and make sure everyone can find their way out in an emergency?

- > You need to make sure your tenants (and any staff) know what to do if there is a fire. Will everyone on the premises be able to find their way out in an emergency? Have you practiced a fire drill? Do you have equipment to allow someone to put a small fire out? Is it simple to use or would people need training?

Step 4 Record, plan and train

It is a good idea to keep a written record of the significant findings from your risk assessment.

This should include:

- > any fire hazards you have found and what you have done to reduce or remove them; and
- > any more action you plan to take to improve fire safety arrangements and when you plan to do it.

A form for you to record your findings and the improvements you have or plan to make is available.

Step 5 Maintain your fire risk Assessment

Your written record should be seen as a helpful, living document. It's not something that should be completed and then forgotten.

- > You should review the assessment regularly and, if necessary, update it.
- > Over time, the risks may change, particularly if you make any changes in the way you use your premises, or if you change the layout.
- > If your review shows new or different risks, you must make a plan to deal with these to make sure everyone stays as safe as possible.
- > It makes sense to keep a written record of the findings of your risk assessment and any new plan that you make.

This information form has been adapted from DCLG guidance www.communities.gov.uk/fire

Checklist

Use this checklist to help you carry out your risk assessment.

1. What is a fire hazard?

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

2. Who is at risk?

- Make a note of who could be at risk, particularly anyone likely to be vulnerable.

3. What is your plan to keep people safe?

- Have you kept fuel and heat apart?
- Have you assessed the risk to tenants and other visitors and to staff (if you have any)?
- If someone wanted to start a fire deliberately, is there anything around they could use?
- Do you regularly maintain and service household appliances?
- Will you know if there is a fire?
- How will you make sure everyone gets out?
- Who will phone the Fire Service?
- Could a small fire be put out quickly to stop it spreading?

- Have you planned escape routes?

- Have you made sure people will be able to find their way out safely, even at night?
- Does all your safety equipment work and is it maintained?
- Will people know what to do and how to use any equipment?

4. Record, plan and train

- Have you removed or reduced any risks you have found?
- Have you made a note of what you have done to remove or reduce these risks?
- Have you made a record of what you plan to do to deal with any risks which you cannot remove?
- Have you got a timeframe for carrying out any necessary improvements?
- Have you told your tenants, what to do in any emergency?
- Do you know how to use any fire extinguishers that are available?
- Have you made information on the emergency plan and escape routes available to tenants?
- Have you told your tenants what to do if they discover a fire?

5. Maintain your plan

- Have you made any changes to the building inside or out?
- Has there been, or almost been, a fire?
- Have you changed the way you work?

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Risk Assessment Form

Risk Assessment – Record of significant findings

Risk assessment for Address:	Assessment carried out by Date: Completed by: Signature:
Property description:	Use:

Step 1 – Identify fire hazards

Sources of ignition	Sources of fuel	Sources of oxygen

Step 2 – People at risk

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Step 3 – Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

<p>Evaluate the risk of the fire occurring</p> <p>Evaluate the risk to people from a fire starting in the premises</p> <p>Action taken to remove and reduce the hazards that may cause a fire</p> <p>Action taken to remove and reduce the risks to people from a fire</p>	
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Assessment review

Assessment/review date	Completed by	Signature

Review outcome (where substantial changes have occurred a new record sheet should be used)

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Notes:

(1) The risk assessment record of significant findings should refer to other plans, records or other documents as necessary.

(2) The information in this record should assist you to develop an emergency plan; co-ordinate measures with other 'responsible persons' in the building; and to inform and train staff and inform other relevant

Example Risk Assessment form

Risk Assessment – Record of significant findings

Risk assessment for

Address: **32 Any Road**
Any Town
AA11 2ZZ

Assessment carried out by

Date: **7 January 2009**
Completed by: **A Smith**
Signature: **A Smith**

Property description:

A two storey dwelling with 4 bedrooms.

Use:

Student Accomodation

Step 1 – Identify fire hazards

Sources of ignition

Heat from cooking
Smoking materials
Tumble dryer

Sources of fuel

Cooking oils
Furniture & bedding
Clothes in laundry area

Sources of oxygen

Step 2 – People at risk

Any occupier or visitor to the dwelling

Step 3 – Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Evaluate the risk of the fire occurring

The cooker is quite old and has not been checked for a number of years
Chip pan in regular use

Evaluate the risk to people from a fire starting in the premises

If a fire started in the kitchen, smoke can spread into the hallway and means of escape
Everyone at risk during the night when asleep as there is no means of warning

Action taken to remove and reduce the hazards that may cause a fire

Chip pan replaced with deep fat fryer with thermostat
Interlinked mains wired smoke alarms fitted to hallway and landing with a heat detector in the kitchen
PAT test carried out on electrical appliances provided by landlord

Action taken to remove and reduce the risks to people from a fire

All tenants know the quickest route out of the house and how to use the kitchen fire extinguisher
30 minute fire door installed to kitchen/livingroom
Tenants informed to ensure that all doors are closed at night

Assessment review

Assessment/review date

Completed by

Signature

Review outcome (where substantial changes have occurred a new record sheet should be used)

Notes:

(1) The risk assessment record of significant findings should refer to other plans, records or other documents as necessary.

(2) The information in this record should assist you to develop an emergency plan; co-ordinate measures with other 'responsible persons' in the building; and to inform and train staff and inform other relevant