



Ashdown Safety

Fire Precautions

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The principle legislation regarding fire precautions in England and Wales is The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Similar requirements apply in Scotland under The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

- The Order has been in force since October 2006. The key points to note are:
 - The emphasis is on assessing and reducing risks and producing a risk assessment and there is no requirement to have a fire certificate.
 - Duties are placed on others (such as Facilities Management Contractors or fire alarm servicing companies) who have responsibility under a contract or tenancy for maintaining equipment or ensuring the safety of others..
 - There are duties placed on the responsible person. The 'Responsible Person' is the employer if the workplace is to any extent under his control and is therefore normally a corporate body.
- The responsible person must:
 - carry out a sufficient and suitable risk assessment
 - ensure that there is allocated responsibility for fire matters and adequate training of staff and an effective fire policy
 - ensure fire drills are undertaken
 - take general fire precautions to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the premises are safe for employees and non-employee
 - ensure correct alarm systems are provided as well as firefighting equipment and fire detection.

Fire Precautions

- ensure appropriate signage is provided
- arrange any necessary contacts with external emergency services
- ensure emergency routes lead directly to a place of safety and emergency routes/exits are provided and protected, adequately signed, illuminated with emergency lighting where required and kept clear at all times
- ensure fire safety systems and equipment are adequately maintained including facilities provided for use by the fire brigade such as fire hydrants, smoke ventilation systems and firefighting lifts
- nominate one or more competent persons to implement the measures.

“The ‘Responsible Person’ is the employer if the workplace is to any extent under his control”

Fire Protection and Precautions

- **Recommendations for employers:**
- all groups at risk, the maximum number of employees and other persons present at one time, carry out weekly tests on your fire alarm and detection system using different call points in rotation
- ensure there is an effective system of maintenance and inspection of fire safety related systems and equipment and that there is control of building alterations which could prejudice fire safety for example by services passing through fire walls or floors without adequate fire stopping
- ensure a fire risk assessment is carried out by a competent person having regard to the size of the building, the nature of the activities, any substances or flammable materials including any combustible external cladding system
- make sure the correct firefighting equipment (and staff trained in its use) is provided and arrange for fire extinguishers and associated equipment to be serviced annually by a competent person
- conduct six monthly evacuation drills, ensuring people can exit the building safely and quickly, going to the assembly points

Fire Precautions

- ensure fire safety training is provided for employees
- make sure that there is a clear fire procedure and arrangements for calling the Fire Brigade.
- ensure that fire doors are kept closed unless on automatic release devices

Control methods or risk reduction techniques must be used to:

- provide information on policy and implementation
- ensure all workers are aware of the risks of fire in the work place and the likely effects
- provide a clear statement to workers that fire prevention/precautions and protection is taken seriously at all levels of the organisation
- allocate clear management responsibilities for fire prevention and fire precautions
- properly understand what is involved in all areas of operation in order to implement appropriate and effective controls
- Keep track of and review the fire risk assessment and control measures to ensure ongoing effectiveness
- provide information on the legal framework surrounding fire precautions and prevention and the employer/employees duties under them

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Legal Duties

The main areas of health and safety law relevant to Fire Precautions are:

- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)
- Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, as amended, and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Please contact us using our contact form if you have any queries regarding our Health and Safety services, or if you would like to order.

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References:

1. Barbour (barbour.info)
2. www.hse.gov.uk