

Fire Risk Assessment



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 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 Fire Safety 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.
- 1.2 Responsibility for complying with the Fire Safety 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 property), all must take reasonable steps to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other.
- 1.3 If you are the responsible person you must arrange for a fire risk assessment to be carried out by a 'competent person' 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 young persons 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 to decide the nature and extent of the general fire precautions you need to take.
- 1.4 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 Fire Safety 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;

- 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;
- 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;
- inform non-employees, such as 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;
- 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;
- provide the employer of any person from an outside organisation who is working in your premises (e.g. an 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;
- consider the presence of any dangerous substances and the risk this presents to relevant persons from fire;
- establish a suitable means of contacting the emergency services and provide them with any relevant information about dangerous substances;
- 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; and
- ensure that the premises and any equipment provided in connection with fire fighting, 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.

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 Fire Safety Order are complied with in those parts over which you have control.

2. Quantum Compliance's Approach

2.1 Quantum Compliance would carry out your fire risk assessments in accordance with the guidance and principles set out in PAS 79 Fire risk assessment – Guidance and a recommended methodology. The fundamental approach is based on the 5 steps of a risk assessment contained in the guides:

Step 1 – Identify fire hazards.

Step 2 – Identify people at risk.

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

Step 4 – Record, plan, inform, instruct and train.

Step 5 – Review

- 2.2 Your Quantum Compliance consultant would identify the fire hazards on your site as part of the fire risk assessment process. For all the identified hazards, Quantum Compliance has created control standards and during the fire risk assessment visit would make judgments as to how far you are complying (or not) with the control standards. These judgments are made by assessing your existing control measures in place and determining whether they are satisfactory or not.
- 2.3 Where your Quantum Compliance consultant considers your existing controls to be unsatisfactory i.e. you are not complying with the control standard, they would make recommendations in order to advise you how to either remove the hazard or reduce the risk through improving the level of control.

3. Report Format

- 3.1 The specific format of the Fire Risk Assessment Report would be bespoke to the client, however, it would include the following:

- Executive Summary – including a summary of the key findings and conclusions.
- Fire Safety Action Plan – containing a prioritised plan detailing any risk improvements.
- Fire Risk Assessment – containing a table of risk ratings by subject.
- Protocol – confirming the fire risk assessment methodology and risk rating and advice priority definitions.

- 3.2 With specific reference to the Fire Safety Action Plan, advice would be prioritised on the likelihood of enforcement action being taken, i.e. the failure would result in:

- Enforcement Notice being served.
- Warning letter being received.
- Advice being issued.

4. Residential Property Fire Risk Assessments

- 4.1 The guidance detailed in the Fire Safety In Purpose-Built Block of Flats Guide published by the Local Government Group will be used as the basis for determining the adequacy of fire safety standards in purpose built blocks of flats. The scope of this guide excludes buildings converted into blocks of flats. However, the guidance contained in this guide will largely be applicable to such buildings, provided that – at the time of conversion – the work was carried out in accordance with the then current Building Regulations. In particular the guidance is likely to be relevant to conversions in which, as a result of compartmentation, a ‘stay-put’ policy is appropriate. Furthermore, relevant British Standards will also be referred to together with Fire Safety: Approved Document B - Building Regulation in England covering fire safety matters within and around dwelling houses.

- 4.2 The scope of the fire risk assessment will be relevant to the nature of the premises and the amount known in respect of the structural protection. There are, in principle, four different types of fire risk assessment that can be carried out for blocks of flats. They differ in the extent to which the building is inspected. A Type 1 Fire Risk Assessment will be completed, and the scope of this type is detailed below:

Type 1 – Common parts only (non-destructive)

A Type 1 fire risk assessment is the basic fire risk assessment required for the purpose of satisfying the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in England and Wales. [The guide is also referred to for practical guidance to demonstrate compliance with the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 made under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005].

The inspection of the building is non-destructive. But, as well as considering the arrangements for means of escape etc., the fire risk assessment includes examination of at least a sample of flat entrance doors. It also considers, so far as reasonably practicable, the separating construction between the flats and the common parts without any opening up of construction. However, in this Type of fire risk assessment, entry to flats beyond the area of the flat entrance door, is not involved.

Where there are demountable false ceilings in the common parts, it may be appropriate to lift a sample of readily accessible false ceiling tiles. In addition, it will normally be appropriate to open a sample of service risers, provided access is practicable at the time of inspection.

Unless there is reason to expect serious deficiencies in structural fire protection – such as inadequate compartmentation, or poor fire stopping – a Type 1 inspection will normally be sufficient for most blocks of purpose-built flats. Where doubt exists in relation to these matters, the action plan of a Type 1 fire risk assessment may recommend that one of the other types of fire risk assessment be carried out or that further investigation be carried out by specialists. Refer to our Passive Fire Protection Service Specification.

5. Commercial Property Fire Risk Assessments

5.1 Various fire risk assessment guides have been published by the government.

These guides:

- tell businesses what they need to do to comply with fire safety law;
- help businesses carry out a fire risk assessment; and
- help businesses identify the general fire precautions they need to have in place.

5.2 There are currently 16 guides and the most appropriate guide will be referred to as the basis for determining the adequacy of fire safety standards in the particular type of premise being fire risk assessed. For example, the guide relating to offices and shops, gives advice about completing a fire safety risk assessment for all employers, managers, occupiers and owners of premises where the main use of the building (or part of the building) is an office or shop including:

- purpose-built or converted office blocks; and
- individual office or shop units which are part of other complexes (e.g. a shopping centre).

The guide does **not** apply for the overall management of multi-use shopping areas. Use the risk assessment guide for large places of assembly instead.

5.3 All the relevant guides are available on the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government website.



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