

EVALUATION ADEQUACY OF EXISTING FIRE SAFETY MEASURES

The chances of fire starting will be low if there are few ignition sources and if combustible materials are kept away from them. In general fire is likely to start in one of three ways:

- Accidentally, such as when smoking materials are not properly extinguished.
- By act or omission, such as when electrical equipment is not properly maintained or when refuse is allowed to accumulate near to a heat source.
- Deliberately, such as intentional setting fire to external storage or rubbish bins.

Premises should be critically examined to identify any potential accidents, any acts or omissions that might allow a fire to start and to evaluate risk. This should include situations that may present an opportunity for deliberate ignition. Having also considered the people likely to be at risk and the likelihood of fire occurring, it is important to make an assessment of the adequacy of existing fire safety measures and the need for additional measures.

The following questions may be helpful in evaluating risk in your premises but it should be noted that the list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Evaluation of risk	Yes	No	Ref
Could combustible material be knocked or fall over or be pushed against an ignition source.			3b
Could a fire be started deliberately in rubbish lying against an external wall or in a waste skip placed too close to any building?			3.6
Could a fire on a lower floor affect people on upper floors?			4.2.
Could any vehicle on fire, parked too close to buildings, cause a fire to spread to the building?			4.2.
Could fires develop in unoccupied areas?			4.2.
Could fire and smoke spread into escape routes due to poor building design or construction?			4.2.
Could fire and smoke spread due to a lack of self-closing devices on doors or by self-closing doors being wedged open?			4.2.

Could fire/smoke generally spread easily through holes, ventilators, service ducts, vertical shafts or other openings in the building as a whole?			4.2.
Could fire/smoke spread into escape routes such as enclosed fire escape staircases via doors not fitted with self-closing devices, damaged doors, self-closing fire doors wedged in the open position or sticking on floor coverings etc?			4.2
Are persons within the premises expected to tackle a small fire if it is safe to do so? If so, have they still to be trained?			4/13
Could persons be unaware of the outbreak of any fire?			8
Could a fire develop unnoticed in any part of the premises with the possibility that any category of person sleeping, working or visiting the premises would be unaware of such a fire?			8
Could a fire on a lower floor affect the escape routes for people on upper floors especially where only one escape route is provided?			9.1
Are there any doors across escape routes that cannot be easily opened without the use of a key or similar device?			9.2
Do any exits lead to an enclosed yard with no means of exit from the yard?			9.2.
Are fire exit routes used for or blocked by storage materials?			9.2.
Are any fire exit doors kept locked?			9.2.
Does any room or storey capable of holding 60 persons or more have only one fire exit?			9.2.
Do any doors from a room or storey capable of holding 60 persons or more open inwards against the direction of escape?			9.2.
Are some persons unable to reach a safe place in the open air outside the building or a door to a protected route, such as an enclosed fire escape staircase, within their travel distance limits?			9.2.
Do any escape routes require illumination if mains power to normal lighting failed and insufficient borrowed light from other sources (such as streetlights) is unavailable?			9.2.

Is there a need to provide escape route signs, including some with directional arrows, to clearly identify escape routes and final exit doors?			9.2.
Have evacuation procedures for 'out of hour' workers or those in isolated areas e.g. cleaners and external contractors, still to be considered?			11.2.
Could a fire start because of a failure to extinguish smoking materials?			11.2.
Could a fire start due to lack of maintenance of electrical equipment, or because poor housekeeping allows a build up of waste near to an ignition/heat source?			12
Have you still to arrange tests of fire safety related equipment/systems such as fire alarm, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, fire drills, and staff training at suitable intervals?			12/13
Could employees or others cause a fire due to a lack of fire safety knowledge?			13
In a multi-occupied or multi-owned building could the actions of other occupants or owners jeopardise the fire safety of persons?			14
Is the building within which the premises are located multi-occupied or multi-owned?			14
Have you still to prepare an emergency fire action plan to ensure the safe evacuation of persons from the premises?			17

If you have answered yes to any of the above, decide what measures are necessary to reduce or eliminate a fire risk and record your findings in detail for use when completing your FRA report.