



Fire Risk Assessment

Our Guide

This guide has been produced to help you carry out a Fire Risk Assessment and record the main findings. This is a suggested method for use in HMO's that are not large or complex. You do not have to use this format and there are other methods of risk assessment that may be just as valid.

A Risk Assessment must be undertaken by someone who can demonstrate competence, they must have 'sufficient training and experience' or, alternatively, they must possess 'knowledge and other qualities' which will enable the assessment to be completed properly. This does not necessarily mean that they have undergone a recognised training course, but this will be easier to demonstrate if they have. Furthermore, if you are instructing or commissioning fire risk assessments, you also have an obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure that the person undertaking the risk assessment is competent. We would recommend that, in these circumstances, you ask the contractor to show evidence for any training and/or experience they may have, as well as any relevant certification.

A Fire Risk Assessment is a way to identify potential fire hazards and enable actions to be taken in order to remove or reduce the hazards to as low a level as practically possible. Then a decision should be made as to what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure people's safety.

Please note that the completion of a fire risk assessment does not demonstrate compliance with the requirement to undertake ongoing routine management of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) as prescribed by The Management of House in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006. For more information on this. Please visit our website:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/housing/private-housing/private-landlords/hmo-licences>

What is a Fire Risk Assessment?

A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at a premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises. In most properties it will be straightforward to carry out a fire risk assessment, but in large or mixed use properties specialist advice may be required.

The aims of the Fire Risk Assessment are:

To **identify** the fire hazards

To **reduce** the risk to as low as reasonably practicable

To **decide** what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the premises if a fire were to start.

A "hazard" is anything that has the potential to cause harm. The "risk" is the chance of that harm occurring.

This is a suggested method for carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment, (although the following gives an overview of how to undertake a risk assessment, any method that achieves the above aims will be acceptable).

The fire risk assessment should be carried out in a practical and systematic way and enough time must be allocated to the exercise. It may be useful to subdivide larger and mixed use premises into rooms or a series of assessment areas using natural boundaries (for example kitchens, offices and stores; and corridors stairways and external routes).

The process can be broken down into five steps:

1. Identify fire hazards
2. Identify people at risk
3. Evaluate, remove or reduce risk and protect against remaining risk
4. Record, plan and inform or train
5. Review

Step 1: Identify the Hazards within the Premises

For a fire to start, three things are required: a source of ignition, fuel and oxygen. If any one of these is absent, a fire cannot start. Taking measures to avoid the three coming together will therefore reduce the chances of a fire occurring.

Step 2: Identify people at Risk

In general this will be the occupiers, their visitors and anybody working in the premises such as a caretaker or cleaner and any visiting contractors. Other people are likely to be considered in buildings with mixed residential and commercial use.

Step 3: Evaluate, Remove or Reduce Risk and Protect against Remaining Risk

Hazards should be removed where it is practicable to do so, and where they cannot be removed they should be reduced as much as possible. What is considered reasonable in a particular case will depend on an evaluation of the potential to cause harm and the likelihood of that harm occurring.

Step 4: Record, Plan, Inform, Instruct and Train

Your HMO Licence places a requirement that, having undertaken the risk assessment, you must make a written record of the "significant findings". The significant findings are the actions to be taken as a result of the assessment and details of anyone at particular risk.

Step 5: Review

We recommend the Fire Risk Assessment to be reviewed every 12 months, if you suspect it is no longer valid or there are any significant changes in your premises for example; structural alterations or new occupiers.

The general fire precautions in the premises should be reviewed regularly. We recommend an inspection every month and where problems are identified they should be dealt with as soon as possible and any actions recorded.

These checks should be incorporated into your routine management checks, where you are checking for compliance with the HMO Management Regulations, things to include;

- Checking the hot water and heating is working correctly
- Gas and electrical safety
- Disrepair in bedrooms and common parts; including windows, carpets, hand rails, walls, ceilings.
- Cleanliness of the common parts
- Damp and mould
- Fire precautions; disrepair to fire doors, fire alarm system
- Untidy and unsafe gardens
- Waste
- Managers details still visible in a common part

Annual Checks

An annual inspection for the fire alarm system and emergency lighting should also be carried out by a qualified person and then certified. Whilst there is a prescribed form for Grade A systems and testing of emergency lighting, there is no prescribed form Grade D systems.

Example Fire Risk Assessment Form

This example is not exhaustive and is intended to give the responsible person an idea of what a fire risk assessment could look like.

Risk Assessment – Record of Significant Findings		
Risk Assessment For Building: Location:	Assessment undertaken by Date: Completed by: Signature:	
Sheet number Floor/area:	Use:	
Step 1: Identify Fire Hazards		
Sources of Ignition	Sources of Fuel	Sources of Oxygen
Step 2: Assessment of the People at Risk		
Step 3: Evaluate, Remove, Reduce and Protect from Risk		
Evaluate the risk of the fire occurring		
Evaluate the risk to people from a fire starting in the premises		
Remove and reduce the hazards that may cause a fire		
Remove and reduce the risks to people from a fire		

Step 4: Record, Plan, Inform, Instruct and Train

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Step 5: 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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