

Fire Safety Emergency Plans

You must have a recorded emergency plan for dealing with any fire situation.

The purpose of an emergency plan is to ensure that the people in your premises know what to do if there is a fire and that the premises can be safely evacuated.

Your emergency plan should be based on the outcome of your fire risk assessment and be available for your employees, their representatives (where appointed) and the enforcing authority.

In some premises with simple layouts, the emergency plan may be no more than a fire action notice.

In multi-occupied and more complex premises, the emergency plan will need to be more detailed and compiled only after consultation with other occupiers and other responsible people, e.g. owners, who have control over the building. In most cases this means that an emergency plan covering the whole building will be necessary. It will help if you can agree on one person to co-ordinate this task.

Please note the following list is for example purposes only and your emergency plan should be appropriate and specific to your particular premises or venue:

- How people will be warned if there is a fire;
- What staff should do if they discover a fire;
- How the evacuation of the premises should be carried out;
- Where people should assemble after they have left the premises and procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated;
- Identification of key escape routes, how people can gain access to them and escape from them to a place of total safety;
- Arrangements for fighting the fire;
- The duties and identity of staff who have specific responsibilities if there is a fire;
- Arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as those with disabilities, lone workers and young persons / children;
- Any machines/appliances/processes/power supplies that need to be stopped or isolated if there is a fire;

- Specific arrangements, if necessary, for high-fire-risk areas;
- Arrangements for an emergency plan to be used by a hirer of part of the premises;
- Contingency plans for when life safety systems such as evacuation lifts, fire-detection and warning systems, sprinklers or smoke control systems are out of order and when there are restrictions on the use of the building;
- How the fire and rescue service and any other necessary services will be called and who will be responsible for doing this;
- Procedures for meeting the fire and rescue service on their arrival and notifying them of any special risks, e.g. the location of highly flammable materials;
- What training employees need and the arrangements for ensuring that this training is given;
- Phased evacuation plans (where some areas are evacuated while others are alerted but not evacuated until later);
- Plans to deal with people once they have left the premises.

As part of your emergency plan it is good practice to prepare post-incident plans for dealing with situations that might arise such as those involving:

- Unaccompanied children;
- People with personal belongings (especially valuables) still in the building;
- People in a state of undress (e.g. indoor sportswear);
- People wishing to rejoin friends;
- Getting people away from the building (e.g. to transport);
- Inclement weather.

You should also assess the risk of any incident occurring, which might prejudice public safety or disrupt normal operations, for example, power cuts, bomb threats or crowd disorder. Such incidents often arise with little or no warning and may not be capable of being dealt with by the management operating under normal circumstances.

You should therefore prepare contingency plans to determine specific actions and/or the mobilisation of specialist resources.