

# Managing fire safety

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Good management of fire safety in your premises is essential to ensure that any fire safety matters that arise are always effectively addressed. In small premises this can be achieved by the manager or owner responsible for maintaining and planning fire safety in conjunction with general health and safety.

In larger premises, it is good practice for a senior manager to have overall responsibility for fire safety. It may be appropriate for this responsibility to be placed with the person designated with overall responsibility for health and safety.

An organisation's fire safety policy should be flexible enough to allow modification. It should be recognised that fire safety operates at all levels within an organisation and therefore those responsible for fire safety should be able to develop, where necessary, a local action plan for their premises.

The organisation's policy should be set out in writing and may cover such things as:

- Who will hold the responsibility for fire safety at board level;
- Who will be the responsible person for each of their premises (this will be the person who has overall control usually the manager);
- The arrangement whereby those responsible for fire safety will, where necessary, nominate in writing specific people to carry out particular tasks if there is a fire; and
- Arrangements to monitor and check that individual persons responsible for fire safety are meeting the requirements of the fire safety law.

You should have a plan of action to bring together all the features you have evaluated and noted from your fire risk assessment so that you can logically plan what needs to be done. It should not be confused with the emergency plan, which is a statement of what you will do if there is a fire.

The plan of action should include what you intend to do to reduce the hazards and risks you have identified and to implement the necessary protection measures.

You will need to prioritise these actions to ensure that any findings which identify people in immediate danger are dealt with straight away, e.g. unlocking fire exits. In other cases where people are not in immediate danger but action is still necessary, it may be acceptable to plan this over a period of time.

Before admitting the public to your premises you need to ensure that all of your fire safety provisions are in place and in working order, or, if not, that alternative arrangements are in place. Constant checks are needed while the public are present, and again after they have left.

**There is guidance for your type of premises which will;**

- Ensure good fire safety management by helping you establish your fire prevention measures, fire precautions and fire safety procedures (systems equipment and plans); and
- Assist you to carry out your fire safety risk assessment and identify any issues that need attention.

*Integral to good fire safety management is ensuring that fire protection measures are correctly serviced and checked. Management checks of these include routine testing of all these measures.*