



Abberley Hall

SCHOOL

Fire Precautions - Workplace Safety for Staff, Pupils and Visitors including Testing of Alarms and Evacuation Procedures

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order requires that precautions to prevent injury in case of fire are based on the results of risk assessment¹. The risk assessments must be fully documented as must an emergency plan.

The following are essential elements of an emergency plan:

- how people will be warned if there is a fire
- what staff, pupils and visitors should do if they discover a fire
- how the evacuation of the premises should be carried out - staff and pupils will be provided with appropriate information about the procedure on their first day
- 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 fire
- the duties and identity of staff and pupils who have specific responsibilities if there is a fire
- arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as young children and babies (e.g. in a crèche), those with disabilities, contractors, members of the public and visitors
- 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 such as where significant volumes of flammable or hazardous substances are used or stored (e.g. in science or for petrol storage for grounds)

¹There is considerable guidance, on how to fulfil the assessment duties, contained in Fire Safety Risk Assessment – “Educational Premises” plus “Sleeping Accommodation” both available on the web. Further assessments are needed when there is change of use of premises e.g. for open days, school plays and concerts and for sports days.

The most convenient and effective method of routinely reassessing and monitoring structural and fitted fire precautions is by use of records on accurately scaled floor plans. The plans should show the structural and fitted fire precautions and high risk areas such as theatres, flammable liquid stores, LPG storage, kitchens, kiln rooms and boiler houses.

- arrangements for an emergency plan to be used by a non-employed worker in or hirer 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
- how the fire and rescue 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).

Structural precautions must be as far as practicable in accordance with HM Government guidance.

Suitable fire alarms, automatic fire detectors and fire-fighting equipment must be provided to the extent that these are appropriate.

Non automatic fire-fighting equipment must be easily accessible, simple to use and their locations indicated with signs. Relevant employees must be trained to use the equipment.

Emergency routes and exits must lead as safely and directly as possible to a designated assembly point and must be adequate in number and dimensions to enable satisfactory evacuations. Emergency routes and exits must be indicated by signs and must be provided with emergency lights. Emergency routes and exits must be kept clear of obstructions and readily combustible materials.

Advice on the display of materials on fire exit routes must be given on the risk assessment.

Fire exit doors must be hung conventionally and where necessary open in the direction of escape. Fire doors must be properly maintained, signed and must not to be propped open. If fire doors need to be regularly kept open for any reason, their location should be notified to the Fire Officer. It may be possible to fit magnetic catches releasable by the activation of the fire alarm. Fire exit doors must always be open or be easily opened without a key during times when the premises are occupied. Final fire exit doors must be fitted, wherever practicable, with appropriate emergency exit door furniture.

Fire evacuation instructions must be clearly displayed in key areas. Employees and pupils must receive fire procedures training including training for emergency evacuation, for calling the emergency services, use of fire extinguishers and similar. Fire training records must be maintained.

There must be a practice evacuation at least once a term of all school buildings and where separate an annual practice in offices. These must be recorded.

Fire alarm systems (including fire alarm call points and automatic detection etc), emergency lights and firefighting equipment must be inspected, tested and maintained. Records of periodic testing of fire alarm call points, periodic testing of emergency lights, periodic

inspection of firefighting equipment, periodic testing of fire alarm systems and all 'fire' maintenance and periodic inspection of fire exit routes must be kept in writing. The record may be a database.

Requirement – standalone fire risk (prevention) arrangements. The document in the Appendices – see **Error! Reference source not found.** - should help to identify how to draw this up.