



## **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

### **Background**

The Government are committed to reducing death, bodily injury and damage caused by fire. To implement this initiative the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) which takes effect from 1 October 2006 will repeal and replace over 100 pieces of previous fire safety law.

### **Application**

The RRO will apply to all businesses, places of worship and the voluntary sector. It does not apply to private dwellings in single occupation. A Responsible Person will have to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment in order to:

- Identify any possible dangers and risks including sources of ignition.
- Identify people who may be at risk, especially those working alone or in isolated areas, children or parents with babies, the elderly or infirm and people with disabilities.
- Evaluate the level of risk, and remove or reduce any fire hazards where possible.
- Protect people by providing fire precautions such as fire extinguishers, emergency escape routes and exits.
- Record any major findings and the action taken, prepare an emergency plan, inform and instruct relevant people such as stewards and provide any necessary training.
- Review the fire risk assessment regularly and make changes where necessary.

Where 5 or more persons are employed a formal record of any significant findings and remedial measures which have or may need to be taken must be made. We would advise that irrespective of the number of employees, or even if you have none, that you make a record of your risk assessment and record the measures you have put in place.

### **Responsible Person**

The responsible person will be one of the following:

- Employers with control of the workplace.
- Person with overall management control of a building.
- Occupier of the premises.
- Owner of premises if an empty building.
- Landlord where the building is in multi occupancy.

## **Competent Person**

The Responsible Person must appoint one or more Competent Persons to carry out the fire risk assessment, although this may be one and the same person.

A person is regarded as competent where they have sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them to properly assist in undertaking the preventive and protective measures.

## **Government Guidance Documents**

The Government has issued a range of detailed guidance notes. These include Offices and Shops, Small and Medium Sized Places of Assembly (up to 300 persons) which includes churches and church halls and Large Places of Assembly (over 300 persons) which includes large churches and cathedrals.

An entry level guide “A short guide to making your premises safe from fire” and a fire risk assessment form are also available.

This and all of the other guides can be downloaded from:

[www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk](http://www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk)

## **Conclusion**

In practice there is very little change from the current situation. The need to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment has not changed although this now applies to all premises and open air events and there is no longer the need for there to be at least one employee for it to be a legal requirement. The assessment now also requires the Responsible person to think about the effect of a fire on their neighbours.

Although the Guidance Notes are very detailed they are designed to be used by lay people. The introduction to the guidance says that it is not prescriptive and that there is no obligation to adopt any particular solution in the guide if fire safety can be met in some other way. However, if you are unable to apply the guidance then you should seek expert advice from a competent person.

For example, churches do not necessarily have to have fire alarm systems, fire exit signs, emergency lighting or outward opening doors if the risk assessment shows that these are not necessary. However, arrangements must be in place to ensure that a fire can be detected and that persons can evacuate the buildings safely. For example, stewards should have torches and be positioned to open exit doors.

## **Enforcement**

The Order will be enforced by the Fire Authorities who can enter premises at any reasonable time without force and issue Improvement and Prohibition notices.

## Further Assistance

The organisations noted below are able to undertake fire risk assessments or provide details of competent persons.

BRE (The Building Research Establishment Limited)  
Bucknalls Lane  
Watford  
WD25 9XX

Tel: 01923 664883  
Email: [FRAquote@bre.co.uk](mailto:FRAquote@bre.co.uk)

The Institution of Fire Engineers  
London Road  
Moreton-in-Marsh  
Gloucester  
GL56 0RH

Tel: 01608 812 580  
Email: [info@ife.org.uk](mailto:info@ife.org.uk)

The Fire Protection Association  
London Road  
Moreton-in-Marsh  
Gloucester  
GL56 0RH

Tel: 01608 812 500  
Email: [fpa@thefpa.co.uk](mailto:fpa@thefpa.co.uk)

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