

10. FIRE SAFETY

Arson is one of the main causes of fire damage in school premises. In order to reduce the likelihood and occurrence of arson attacks, consideration should also be given to chapter 8. Of this Handbook regarding Premises Health & Safety and Security.

Regulatory Requirements

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require schools to:

- Carry out a fire risk assessment
- Monitor and review the risk assessment and revise as appropriate
- Inform staff or their representatives of the risks
- Plan for an emergency
- Provide staff information and training
- Nominate persons to assist

You will need to:

- ensure procedures are in place to reduce the likelihood of fire
- maintain fire detection and alarm systems
- ensure staff and pupils are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures

It is important that:

- fire risk assessments are kept up to date
- fire precautions remain current and adequate (they should be reviewed in detail when significant alterations are made to a school's premises)

Responsible Person

Typically, the responsible person who would complete the fire risk assessment and other tasks would be the Headteacher, although extensive guidance and assistance is available from the Councils' Health & Safety advisors.

Headteachers, in their duty as the responsible person are also required to provide and maintain: (to the extent that it is appropriate as determined by the fire risk assessment)

- Means For Detecting & Giving Warning in case of fire
- Emergency Lighting
- Means of Escape
- Fire Safety Signs
- Fire fighting Equipment



Ensuring procedures are in place to reduce the likelihood of fire, familiarisation of staff and pupils with emergency evacuation procedures and maintenance of fire fighting equipment on site are essential to managing fire safety in schools.

Training

The importance of raising awareness about fire safety through staff training is widely acknowledged. In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require schools to ensure that staff receives information and training to ensure competency.

Fire Alarms and Remote Monitoring

Remotely monitored intruder alarms are an insurance requirement for all school sites and alarm panels need to have telephone links installed for remote monitoring by a call station. It is also recommended to include a line integrity monitoring service such as Redcare, which can alert if the telephone link is cut or accidentally damaged.

Considerations when Undertaking Building Works

Building work at all schools must comply with the building regulations enforced by local building-control bodies. [Building Bulletin 100: design for fire safety in schools](#) is the normal means of compliance with building regulations for fire safety design in new school buildings.

Where major building refurbishment or new building is proposed, serious consideration should be given to the installation of sprinkler protection. Insurers strongly recommend the use of sprinkler protection in schools, where practical.

The use of automatic door holders linked to the fire alarm enables staff and pupils to move easily around within the building and removes the potential for propping open new fire doors.

Further Guidance

HM Government Fire Safety Risk Assessment in Educational Premises 2006

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14887/fsra-educational-premises.pdf

Health & Safety Executive (HSE Fire Safety)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm>

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