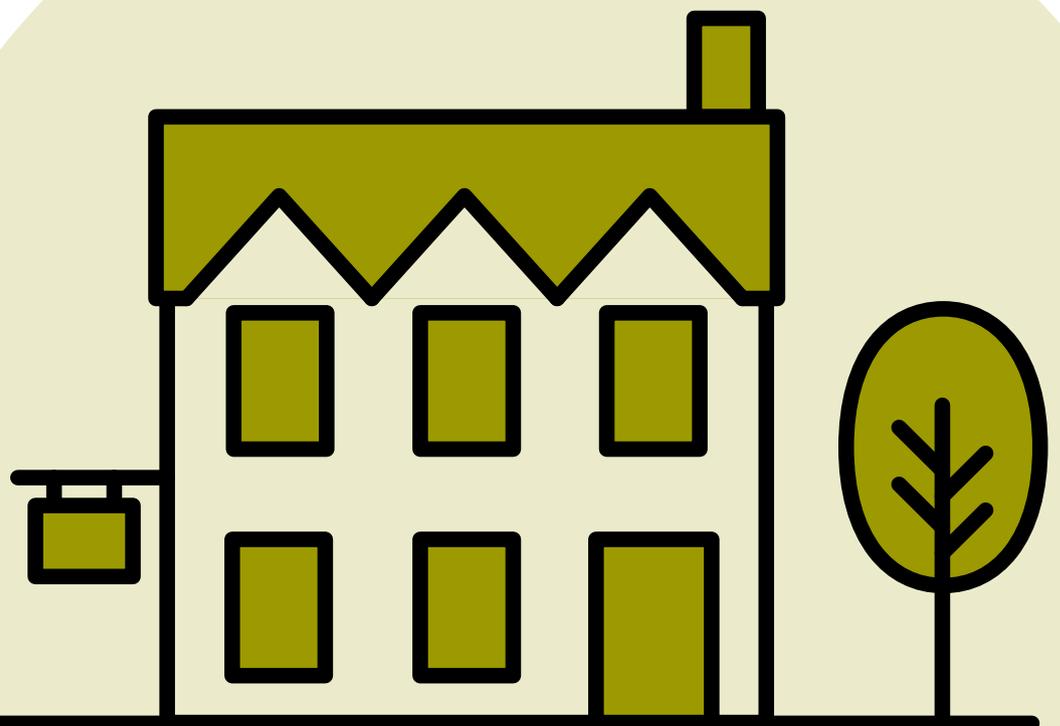




Home Office

A Guide to making your small paying-guest-accommodation safe from fire

A Guide to compliance with Fire Safety Law for those responsible for safety in small paying-guest-accommodation



This guidance is issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with Article 50 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO)

2024 Updates

The following changes have been made in this version:

Major

Added new legal requirements introduced through Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022

Expanded explanation of the status of the guide

Revised introduction to provide more detail on application of the Fire Safety Order to short term lets

Revised scope to provide more detail on the applicability of the guide to smaller types of guest accommodation such as holiday caravans, camping and glamping pods, bothies, lodges, shepherds' huts, tents, tree houses and yurts

Updated guidance in relation to the use and provision of fire extinguishers

Added usage of modal verbs in relation to Article 50 guidance

Minor

Added link to 5 step checklist

Updated link to guidance on choosing a competent fire risk assessor



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at FireSafetyGuidance@homeoffice.gov.uk

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Foreword

Information about this Guide

This Guide is published by the Home Office. It was drafted for the Home Office by C.S. Todd & Associates Ltd and has been published after engagement with key stakeholders in the fire, business, and housing sectors. The Guide is an 'entry level' companion to Government guidance on premises in which people sleep, such as hotels and larger boarding houses, which should be used if your premises do not fall within the scope of this current Guide.

Status of this Guide

This Guide is intended to support the application of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended). It has been produced to satisfy the obligation of the Secretary of State to make available guidance to assist responsible persons to satisfy their duties under fire safety legislation. As such, it is endorsed by the Minister responsible for the legislation.

Article 50 (1A) of the Fire Safety Order makes it clear that in court proceedings for alleged breaches of the Fire Safety Order or regulations made under it, proof of compliance with or proof of deviation from guidance issued under Article 50 may be relied upon as tending to establish whether or not there was such a breach of the Fire Safety Order or regulations.

This does not though mean that the technical aspects of this guide should be prescriptively applied in all of the premises it covers. A vast array of different designs, construction techniques and manufacturing standards exist throughout the built environment and within the specific premises type covered by this guide. This is particularly so when it comes to refurbished and/or modernised properties and heritage buildings.

The guide therefore provides recommendations on best practise and practical examples of potential precautions that may be appropriate for your property to assist you in satisfying the requirements of the Fire Safety Order and regulations made under it, but the mandatory requirement to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, which will inform the exact precautions that need to be taken in each premises, must be individual and case specific.

Some premises will have features that mean they require precautions which are not covered by this guide. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are compliant with the requirements set out in the legislation and to seek independent professional advice if necessary.

Language usage in Article 50 guidance

In Article 50 guidance, modal verbs such as “must”, “should” and “may” are used to convey notions of obligation, recommendation or permission. The choice of modal verb will reflect the level of obligation needed to be compliant.

The following describes the implications and use of these modal verbs in Article 50 guidance (readers should note that these meanings may differ from those of industry standards and legal documents):

- “Must” is used when indicating compliance with the law.
- “Should” is used to indicate a recommendation (not mandatory/obligatory), i.e. among several possibilities or methods, one is recommended as being particularly suitable – without excluding other possibilities or methods.
- “May” is used for permission, i.e. to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the guidance.

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- Ansell Electrical Products Limited

However you advertise your property for paying guests, you have a responsibility to make sure your guests are safe from fire.

1. Introduction

This Guide has been published to provide simple and practical advice to assist persons who provide paying guest accommodation in small premises to comply with fire safety legislation¹ and make their premises safe from fire.²

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (“the Fire Safety Order”) is the main legislation that controls fire safety in all premises in England that provide accommodation for paying guests.

This guidance applies to you if you are charging someone to stay in your property as a guest and it is not being occupied as a private dwelling. Factors which will make it more likely that the Fire and Rescue Authority (the enforcing body) will consider that your premises are ‘occupied as a private dwelling’ include, but are not limited to:

- The length of time your guests stay for: premises with short-term, temporary paying guests staying are unlikely to be occupied as a private dwelling.
- Your relationship with your guests: if they are not friends or family members, and you do not share social activities with them, then it is unlikely that your premises are occupied as a private dwelling.

The Fire Safety Order introduces a general duty of fire safety care to ensure that anyone staying in your premises is safe from fire. This includes taking steps to reduce the likelihood of fire starting and making sure that, in the event of a fire, people can evacuate to a place of safety.

1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended).

2 www.gov.uk/guidance/check-your-fire-safety-responsibilities-under-the-fire-safety-order

The term 'Responsible Person' is used in the Fire Safety Order to define the person or persons responsible for complying with legislation. This is likely to be the owner, letting agents, or other persons who have control of the premises as defined under the Fire Safety Order.

The Fire Safety Order requires that you undertake a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment within your premises, to identify fire risks and take reasonable measures to ensure that people are safe from fire.

The fire and rescue service within your local area are normally responsible for the enforcement of fire safety legislation. Although fire and rescue services cannot undertake a fire risk assessment for you, many services do provide advice and support for small businesses. Additional information can be found online at your local fire and rescue service website.

This Guide is not intended to provide a detailed interpretation of fire safety legislation or the Housing Act 2004. For the exact requirements imposed by the legislation, legal terminology and its definitions, reference should be made to the legislation itself. This Guide largely avoids the use of legal terminology, but provides practical guidance on actions that must be taken to comply with the legislation and recommendations assisting with compliance.

Various measures that might be identified as necessary by application of this Guide might need the services of third parties, such as contractors who can carry out work on, for example, fire detection and alarm systems, fire-resisting doors, and other fire protection systems. It is important that you ensure that such contractors are competent to carry out the work for which they are engaged, as the ultimate responsibility for compliance of their work with fire safety legislation rests with you. Use of contractors that are certificated under relevant industry approval or certification schemes assists in verification of competence.

The law (FSO) applies to you if you are charging someone to stay in your property as a guest and it is not being occupied as a private dwelling, even if it is just for one night.

2. Scope of this Guide

This Guide is intended for use in small premises that have simple layouts, limited fire risks and a small number of bedrooms designated as guest sleeping accommodation for short-term lets, such as small bed and breakfast, guest houses and self-catering accommodation.

The guidance is limited to:

- single premises of ground floor, or ground and first floor, providing sleeping accommodation for a maximum of 10 persons, with no more than four bedrooms on the first floor, such as houses, cottages, and chalets
- individual flats (whether within a purpose-built block of flats or a house that has been converted into flats), other than unusually large flats (e.g. as often found in mansion blocks in London)

The Fire Safety Order also applies to other types of guest accommodation such as holiday caravans, camping and glamping pods, bothies, lodges, shepherds' huts, tents, tree houses and yurts. This guide should provide a helpful overview of the legal requirements in relation to fire safety, possible fire safety hazards and general fire safety principles in these types of accommodation. However, many of the fire protection measures outlined in sections six and seven are unlikely to be appropriate or necessary, not least because of the manufacturing standards that apply (for example, fire doors would not of course be appropriate in caravans or tents).

For this reason, when completing a fire risk assessment in these types of accommodation, instead of using the template provided in section eight, we recommend following the Home Office 5-step fire safety risk assessment checklist. This provides a step-by-step process for undertaking a fire risk assessment, and the key things to consider when doing so, in very basic premises.³

The fire risks associated with these types of guest accommodation are generally low and the fire risk assessment and fire safety precautions that are needed are, in most cases, likely to be basic. Fire safety risks do still remain, and appropriate, proportionate, consideration of fire safety issues is essential even in the most basic of premises.

This Guide is not appropriate if:

- your premises fall outside the scope described above; or
- the design of fire safety measures in your premises differs materially from those discussed and recommended in this Guide. (e.g. a 2 storey property with an open plan ground floor or a flat with a bedroom accessed only through another room)

In either of the above circumstances, you should base the fire safety measures in properties that are used to accommodate paying guests, and the associated fire risk assessment, on other Government guidance that applies to premises in which there is paying guest sleeping accommodation.⁴

If you are intending to convert, or make changes to, existing premises to make them suitable for short-term lets, you may need to contact your local authority planning and building control departments. Further advice is available at: www.gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales.

This Guide sets out:

- your responsibilities under fire safety legislation
- practical advice on fire safety measures that may be appropriate to make your premises safe
- how to undertake a fire risk assessment; and
- where you can go for further information

This Guide applies only to England. Separate guidance is applicable in Wales. The Guide is not intended for use in Scotland or Northern Ireland, where different (albeit similar) fire safety legislation applies.

3 Fire Safety Risk Assessment: 5-step Checklist. Available to download from [Fire safety risk assessment: 5-step checklist](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422192/9281_Sleeping_Accommodation_v2.pdf) – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422192/9281_Sleeping_Accommodation_v2.pdf

3. Your responsibilities

If you are a person with responsibility for the premises, under fire safety legislation, you must:

- carry out a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment of your premises and to record your findings
 - ensure that adequate fire safety measures, such as escape routes and fire alarm systems, are provided; and that steps are taken to prevent fire from occurring
 - maintain those fire safety measures in good condition and in effective working order
 - have adequate fire procedures to ensure employees, guests and visitors are aware of what to do in the event of fire, and that they understand the fire safety measures within the premises
 - give suitable instruction about fire procedures and fire safety measures to any staff you employ
 - identify and co-operate with any other person who has duties under fire safety legislation to co-ordinate the fire safety measures for which each of you is responsible as well as provide relevant fire safety information⁵ to any subsequent person with responsibility in the instance you are no longer a Responsible Person for the premises
- keep your fire risk assessment and fire safety measures under regular review
 - keep a record of your completed fire risk assessment and fire safety. Your assessment should ideally include the name and organisation that did this⁶

The Fire Safety Order requires that you must review the fire risk assessment regularly and make sure that the fire safety measures in place are maintained in good working order. The requirements will vary from premises to premises and should be proportionate to their specific risks. An annual review is usually appropriate, but you must also conduct a review following any significant change to the premises, or an incident such as a fire.

What you need will depend on your business and premises, and whether you or other staff will be present when guests stay. The Fire Safety Order does not prescribe the specific fire safety measures required. What it does require is that you must identify and manage the overall risk and provide fire safety measures that are appropriate for the risk.

5 Such information includes the fire risk assessment, the identity of the person who completed it, your name and UK address and any information given to you under regulation 38 of the Building Regulations 2010.

6 It is a legal requirement to provide a new Responsible Person for the premises with this information.

There is a range of fire safety measures possible in individual premises. As the person responsible for fire safety in your premises, you will need to use your judgement to decide what needs to be done to minimise risk.

You need to consider:

- the hazards you have found
- the risks to, and the needs of, everyone on the premises, particularly those staying there
- the character of the building; for example, what may be appropriate in a single room let as short-term accommodation in a home is unlikely to be the same as the requirements in a 300-year-old building with self-catering accommodation for 10 guests

4. Fire risk assessment

‘Fire Risk’ is commonly defined as the combination of the likelihood that a fire will start and the consequences a fire will have on the safety of people in the premises.

The assessment of fire risk is fundamental to fire safety law. Those who operate and have control of the premises are responsible for complying with the law. It may be possible for you to assess the risk yourself, if you feel able to do so.

The fire risk assessment is crucial in determining the appropriate measures for your premises and must be specific to it. There are stricter requirements for a short-term lets because those staying will be unfamiliar with the accommodation.

The fire risk assessment involves an inspection of the premises to identify potential fire hazards, to ensure that there are adequate measures to prevent fires starting and that there are adequate fire protection measures to keep employees, guests, contractors, and others, who are lawfully on the premises, safe from fire.

All premises are different, as are the people who own, manage or stay in them. What may be considered good enough protection in one premises may not be considered good enough in another.

You should consider the people who are likely to use the premises, including older people, very young children and disabled people and how they will escape in the event of a fire.

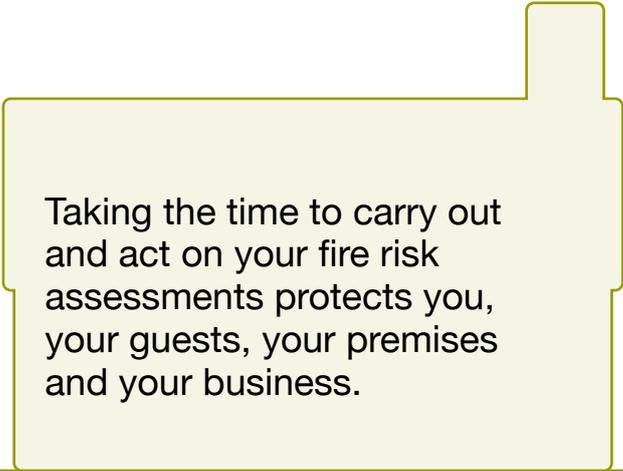
Your fire risk assessment should consider the hazards, risk and fire protection measures detailed below. To assist you with this, a fire risk assessment template for undertaking and recording the findings of your risk assessment is given in Section 8. You must keep a record of the completed fire risk assessment, including the findings and any group of persons you identify as being particularly at risk from fire.

For small premises, preparation of a fire risk assessment can be completed, in most cases, without specialist knowledge, by following the simple steps set out in this “entry level” Guide. The Guide is intended, in part, to assist you with carrying out the fire risk assessment required by law and to keep your guests safe from fire.

If you choose to carry out the fire risk assessment, it is important that you feel able to interpret and apply the guidance and recommendations to your property. However, if you do not feel confident to do so, you should engage the services of a competent fire risk assessor.⁷

If you choose to employ someone to do this on your behalf, you should record their identity because if fire safety responsibility passes to someone else then you will be required to give this information to them.

Please note that, if you get help from someone else to complete your fire risk assessment, you remain legally responsible and should act on the outcome of the assessment. Always carry out reasonable checks that the fire risk assessor employed is suitably competent.



Taking the time to carry out and act on your fire risk assessments protects you, your guests, your premises and your business.

7 A Guide to choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor. Version 3. 01/10/20. Fire Sector Federation. Available for download from: https://www.firesectorfederation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FSF_Guide_V2.pdf – (firesectorfederation.co.uk)

5. Fire hazards

A fire hazard is anything that has the potential to start a fire, or to contribute to a fire, such as ignition sources or unnecessary build-up of combustible materials. If you identify any fire hazards, you must either remove the hazard or, if this is not feasible, take measures to reduce the risk to people.

The following sub-sections discuss fire hazards that are commonly found within paying guest accommodation and provide examples of control measures that can be used to reduce the risk.

Electrical installations and equipment

Electrical equipment and wiring are common causes of fire. Therefore, you should take suitable measures to reduce the risk.

You must make sure that your electrical wiring has been checked by a qualified contractor. You must also look out for any signs of damage to cables, cracked or loose sockets.

The electrical installation in your premises should be subject to inspection and test at least every five years. Any work on the electrical installation should be carried out only by a competent electrical contractor.⁸ The fuse board and circuit breakers should be in good condition and correctly labelled.

Electrical appliances should be subject to regular checks to ensure that appliances remain in safe working condition in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. Check plugs to make sure that they are not damaged, are not overloaded and have properly rated fuses, and that cables are not frayed. Washing machines, tumble dryers and other white goods should be kept clean and in good working order. Any lint filters should be cleaned regularly. Appliances should be registered with the manufacturer and checked against current recall lists. You should carry out a visual

⁸ For example, an electrical contractor certificated by the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) or a member of the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA).

check that all appliances appear to be in good condition between lets.

In bed and breakfast and similar accommodation, electrical appliances should be subject to periodic in-house service and testing in accordance with the IET Code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment.⁹

The use of extension cables, trailing leads and adaptors should be avoided wherever practicable.

Guidance on electrical safety, including FAQs on maintaining electrical appliances, is available at www.hse.gov.uk/electricity.

Smoking

Smoking is a common cause of fire in domestic premises and results in more fatalities than any other cause.



There should be a defined policy on smoking. Your smoking policy should also address the use of vaping materials and e-cigarettes.

Smoking in public spaces, such as communal rooms and corridors, within bed and breakfast accommodation is prohibited by law; you must, therefore, ensure that employees and guests are aware of this. If you do not want to permit smoking in bedrooms, signs must be displayed.

In self-catering accommodation and self-contained flats, the best and safest option is to encourage people not to smoke.

Persons who wish to smoke should ideally smoke outside the premises.

If you allow people to smoke in your premises, suitable provisions, such as safety ashtrays and bins, should be provided for the safe disposal of cigarettes and other smokers' materials.

Arson

You need to consider the risk of arson. Good physical security and vigilance is important.

Where appropriate, entrance and exit doors should be adequately secured to prevent unauthorised access, while still allowing easy escape.

You should make sure that combustible materials, refuse, and recycling bins are kept clear of the premises (particularly any windows) to reduce the risk that an external fire will spread into the premises through windows and other openings.

Heating

Consider any risks associated with the use of heating in your property and take appropriate fire prevention measures.

Heating and hot water systems should be subject to annual maintenance by a qualified contractor to ensure they are maintained in good condition.

The use of portable heaters should be avoided as far as possible. If used, follow the manufacturer's guidance on their safe use and, ideally, only use heaters fitted with automatic cutoff switches, such as electric oil-filled radiators.

You should avoid the more hazardous types of heaters, such as radiant bar fires or LPG heaters.

You should never place heaters close to combustible materials or within exit routes.

9 IET Code of Practice for In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment. Fifth Edition.

Carbon monoxide detectors should be provided where living accommodation contains a gas or solid fuel-burning appliance.

If you have open fires or log burners in your property you should consider the following measures:

- A fire/spark guard should be provided
- The chimney should be swept at least annually
- Where necessary, spark arrestors or bird guards should be provided (e.g. properties with a thatched roof)
- The size of the hearth should be adequate to prevent rugs and fabrics touching hot surfaces
- Any dry wood, kindling and firelighters should be stored a safe distance from heat and hot surfaces
- Metal ashbins should be provided
- Appropriate instructions should be given to all users and suitable procedures put in place

Cooking



- You should ensure cooking appliances are kept clean and maintained in good condition
- Instructions for the safe use of appliances should be made available for guests
- Any extract filters should be cleaned on a regular basis to avoid the build-up of grease and flammable deposits
- Gas appliances must be checked and serviced annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer
- It is recommended that deep fat fryers should only be permitted if they are thermostatically controlled
- An LPG cooker should have cut-off devices installed on pipework from external source to internal cooking appliance

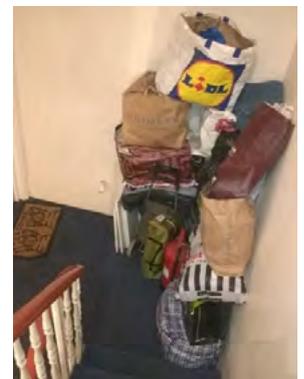
Candles



- Candles and tea lights are a common cause of fires and, sometimes, fatalities
- You should not provide candles, tea lights or ethanol burners for use by guests, and there should be a policy in place prohibiting their use

Housekeeping

- Good housekeeping is fundamental to reducing the risk from fire
- Domestic waste should be removed from the property regularly, and clear instructions should be provided to guests on the safe disposal of waste
- Combustible materials, such as linen and towels, should be kept clear of ignition and/or heat sources. Particular attention should be paid to areas such as cupboards or storerooms that contain ignition sources or electrical equipment
- The common escape routes, including halls and staircases, must be kept clear of combustible materials or storage



Furniture and furnishings



- Furniture and furnishings provided in your premises should comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended)

Contractors

- Contractors commonly cause fires, particularly while carrying out “hot work” involving use of blow lamps, work on flat roofs, etc. It should be ensured that contractors are competent and qualified in the particular specialism for which they are employed

Dangerous substances



- If you use or store dangerous substances, such as flammable liquids or materials (e.g. petrol for lawnmowers), you must ensure that they are used and stored safely (ideally, outside the building in locked, metal bins) to reduce the risk of fire. Guests must be instructed as to the hazards likely to arise if an incident or emergency occurs.
- In blocks of flats, barbecues and patio heaters should not be used on external balconies
- If barbecues, patio heaters or fire pits are used in gardens, they should be sited at a safe distance from the property
- If you have liquid propane gas (LPG) barbecues and heaters, they must only be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions in order to reduce risk. Guests must be provided with instructions for the safe use of all equipment

6. Fire protection measures

Having identified any potential fire hazards and assessed whether or not the existing control measures are adequate to stop fires from happening, the next step is to consider what would happen if a fire did start. Fire safety measures that are designed to keep people safe when a fire occurs are usually described as “fire protection measures”.

The fire risk, as determined by your fire risk assessment, will determine the level of general fire protection measures required in your premises to ensure the safety of people. Factors to consider include:

- the number and location of fire exits
- whether a fire alarm system is needed
- the need for any fire exit signs
- the need for emergency escape lighting
- the need for fire extinguishers

Generally, the higher the risk, the more fire protection measures you will need to take to make your premises safe from fire. Equally, the lower the risk, the fewer the measures that will need to be taken.

Guidance and recommendations on fire protection measures, as provided in this section and the sections that follow, are, therefore, not to be regarded as being prescriptive standards that must be followed regardless of the actual risks identified in your fire risk assessment. The recommendations made are just indicative standards that may commonly be needed in small premises to comply with fire safety legislation and make your premises safe from fire.

The recommendations made are generally applicable to typical situations in premises where the fire risk is low. Example drawings of some common layouts and typical fire protection measures can be found in Section 7 to this Guide.

Means of escape

You are required under law to ensure that it is possible for guests and staff to evacuate the premises as quickly and as safely as possible in the event of a fire. Emergency routes and exits must lead as directly as possible to a place of safety.



You must make sure that any escape routes can be used safely. An escape route includes any rooms, corridors, and stairs that people must go through to escape from a building. Escape routes must be kept clear of obstructions that may hinder use of the escape route, where needed to ensure fire safety of persons on and around the premises. You should consider whether visibility in the escape route may be affected by smoke.

You should consider the people who are likely to stay in your premises, including older people, very young children and disabled people, and how they will escape if fire occurs. It must be possible for people to evacuate the premises quickly and safely during a dangerous event.

Exit routes should be suitable for use by disabled people, other vulnerable people, or children. If this is not achievable, the premises should be clearly advertised and marketed as having certain features that may make it more difficult for some people, for example people with specific disabilities, vulnerable people, or children, as appropriate.

Keeping doors closed, especially at night, can help prevent the spread of fire and smoke, giving people plenty of time to escape. This is of particular importance in the case of doors to lounges, kitchens or utility rooms provided for the use of guests.

Doors and walls protecting your escape routes should be constructed of materials that will hold back smoke and fire for long enough to give guests sufficient time to escape. Doors and walls of such materials should still be maintained in good condition with no holes or damaged areas that would allow fire and smoke to spread into escape routes, such as corridors and staircases.

In the type of low-risk premises covered by this Guide, it will generally be possible to accept escape routes enclosed with sound conventional materials, such as masonry, or timber stud and plasterboard walls and plasterboard ceilings. It may be possible to accept walls and ceilings of lath and plaster construction that is in good condition; in case of doubt, the advice of a competent fire safety specialist should be obtained.

In most instances, it should be possible to accept solid, conventional doors that are a good fit in their frames. This will typically comprise a 44mm thick door of solid timber or with a core comprising flaxboard or chipboard. However, hollow core and thin panel doors, and any plain (non-fire resisting) glazing within doors or frames, provide little fire resistance and will normally need to be replaced with new 30-minute fire-resisting doors. Fitting intumescent strips and smoke seals to existing fire doors is not considered essential in properties covered by this Guide; in case of doubt, the advice of a competent fire safety specialist should be obtained.

Exit doors, such as the front or back door, should always be easy to unlock and must not need a key to unlock them from the inside. A simple latch or thumb turn is usually good enough. However, you may need to consider whether all guests are able to open these doors. A simple single action turn handle or lever may be more appropriate.

The shorter the distance of travel to exit the premises, and the more exits there are, the better. Fire exit doors should lead directly to a place of safety, clear of the premises, without restrictions such as fences or gates that cannot be easily unlocked.

A room where the only escape route is through another room is termed an 'inner room'. The occupants of an inner room could be at risk if a fire starts in the outer room (often referred to as an 'access room'). Although this arrangement should be avoided wherever possible, it is acceptable where the inner room is a kitchen, laundry or utility room, bathroom, WC or shower room and where steps have been taken to mitigate the risk

Inner rooms should not be used for any form of sleeping accommodation unless the rooms are on the ground floor and the rooms have direct access to a door or "escape window" that can be used by the occupants to reach a place of safety clear of the accommodation.

Escape windows on the ground floor should only be considered acceptable if they are easily accessed and provide a clear opening of sufficient size to allow able-bodied persons to escape in the event of a fire in the access room. Mobility impaired people should not be accommodated in rooms where the means of escape is reliant on escape windows.

The use of escape windows for rooms on the first floor is not considered a safe means of escape for paying guests, as they are likely to be unfamiliar with the layout of the property. If your property has inner rooms on the first floor, used by paying guests, and you cannot reasonably change the use of these rooms, you should seek further advice and guidance from a competent fire safety professional to consider a range of additional fire safety measures that might provide an alternative way of keeping people safe.

Emergency escape lighting



Normal light switches should be easy to find. You should think about whether, if a fire interrupts the electrical supply, any 'borrowed lighting' (e.g. from nearby street lighting) would be adequate to allow people to find their way out.

If not, you can replace or enhance existing light fittings with emergency escape lights, which have



internal batteries that power the light in the event of a mains failure, at a reasonably low cost. You must provide this type of lighting in hallways, staircases and other escape routes which guests would be required to navigate in darkness should the mains power fail where necessary to ensure their safety.

However, in the smallest premises, it may be acceptable to rely on rechargeable torches that illuminate automatically if the electrical supply fails. In that case, you should have one in each bedroom, with a sign that explains their function.

It is also possible to obtain "night lights" that remain plugged into sockets and provide lighting when the normal lighting is switched off or fails. (The sockets can still be used normally, by plugging electrical appliances into the night light.) If electrical sockets are located on escape routes, these can provide illumination of the escape route, but can also be removed from the socket for use as a torch.



You may need to consider external lighting to ensure outside areas and escape routes are well lit.

Fire escape signs

In simple premises, the escape routes and exits are likely to be obvious and in daily use and, as such, there will normally be no requirement to provide fire exit signs.

However, you may need to provide some fire exit signage if exit routes are not obvious and exit doors are not commonly used. You must provide this if it is needed to ensure the safety of persons on and around the premises.

You should include details of the escape route and location of exit doors in the information pack you give to guests.

Firefighting equipment

In the event of a fire, evacuating the premises is the safest thing to do and guests should not be expected to use firefighting equipment.



If you have staff on the premises, or if they regularly visit the premises, firefighting equipment should be provided, and staff should be trained on how to use the equipment.

You should make sure that the instructions on how to use any firefighting equipment are clear, that there is a warning that evacuation is preferable, and that staff should not put themselves at risk or tackle anything other than a very small fire.

In self-catering accommodation, although guests are not expected to use fire-fighting equipment, you may wish to provide a small fire extinguisher and/or fire blanket in the kitchen area.

You can buy suitable extinguishers, guaranteed for five years, from a range of larger DIY outlets. You should check the gauge regularly to make sure the 'stored pressure' has not leaked. Low maintenance 10-year extinguishers are also available.

Fire detection and alarm system



In the small premises to which this Guide applies, it is unlikely to be necessary to provide a fire detection and alarm system, comprising control and indicating equipment, fire detectors and fire alarm sounders, as would be found in hotels and other commercial premises.

Nevertheless, some premises may already be provided with this type of system. This might be a stand-alone system, or might form part of a shared common system serving several accommodation units in one building, such as sometimes found in some properties converted from houses into blocks of flats with a simultaneous evacuation policy, in which, if a fire occurs in one flat, all flats are evacuated simultaneously.

However, if, as will normally be the case, no such system is provided, interlinked domestic smoke alarms and heat alarms (of the type normally found in houses and flats) should be provided in all areas where a fire might start. Smoke alarms should be installed in hallways, corridors, staircases, lounges, dining rooms and bedrooms.

Heat alarms should be installed in every kitchen, and in any other rooms (such as laundry or utility rooms), in which false alarms might occur from smoke alarms, due to cooking fumes, steam, dust, etc. If roof voids contain any combustible materials or sources of ignition, detection should also be present there. It is not normally necessary to install smoke or heat alarms in bathrooms or toilets.

All smoke and heat alarms in the premises should be interlinked, so that, when any alarm device detects fire, all smoke and heat alarms give an audible alarm simultaneously. Interlinking may be by means of wiring or radio signalling.

All smoke and heat alarms should be mains powered with a tamper-proof standby power supply consisting of a battery. These are technically known as Grade D1 alarms. If a D1 system not in place at the time of the fire risk assessment, long-life, sealed battery alarms (known as Grade F1 alarms) may be acceptable as a short-term measure (e.g., for around 2-3 years) until a D1 system is installed.

Additional equipment is available to provide a warning to Deaf or hard of hearing people in the event of fire. This comprises vibrating devices (for installation under pillows or mattresses) and/or flashing beacons.



Further guidance on the provision of fire detection and alarm systems for premises providing sleeping accommodation can be found in BS 5839-6.¹⁰

Fire procedures – escape plan

Suitable fire procedures must be developed to ensure that staff, guests and visitors are made aware of what action they need to take in the event of a fire.

Someone staying in your short-term accommodation is unlikely to be familiar with the premises. If an alarm goes off during the night when people are asleep, they will be able to evacuate more quickly if you have told them what they need to do at the beginning of their stay.

A simple plan drawing may be useful for guests. This could include instructions on the back of the bedroom door and information in a welcome pack, including advice on how to call the emergency services and location details, especially if the postcode might not identify the location accurately.

Guests should be told to leave the building by the nearest available exit route if a fire breaks out. The fire and rescue service should be contacted, ideally from outside the premises.

Escape plans should be appropriate for the whole range of potential guests, taking account of age, mobility and language. This means that allowing for escape through a window, for someone with limited mobility, is unlikely to be suitable. It is not acceptable to rely on the intervention of the fire and rescue service to evacuate guests or staff.

The Guide 'Means of Escape for Disabled People' will help you consider the needs of disabled people.¹¹

10 BS 5839-6: 2019+A1:2020. Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings – Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm systems in domestic premises.

11 9446 DCLG Fire Risk Means of Escape Insides.indd (publishing.service.gov.uk) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886446/9446_Means_of_Escape_v2_.pdf

In some blocks of flats and/or premises converted into flats, in addition to smoke and heat alarms provided in individual flats, the block may also have a common fire detection and alarm system, designed and installed to initiate an evacuation of all the flats in the event of a fire. In these circumstances, the fire procedures should cover the action to take on discovering a fire, action on hearing a smoke or heat alarm in people's own flat and the action to take on hearing the common fire alarm system.

Maintenance and testing

It is important that the fire protection measures provided in your premises are maintained in good condition and in effective working order. Regular testing and maintenance procedures should be put in place, some of which you may be able to carry out yourself, while others may need to be carried out by a competent contractor with sufficient training, experience or knowledge.

A suitable record of testing and maintenance should be kept in the form of a log book or, alternatively, records can be held electronically. A simple maintenance and testing checklist can be used to make sure items and equipment are checked and tested in accordance with current best practice guidance.

It is important to note that smoke and heat alarms will need to be replaced periodically. The lifespan will depend on the model but, for smoke alarms, it is typically regarded as around 10 years.

The following checks and tests should be carried out as specified below.



Daily checks (for premises in which staff or the owners are present)

- Make sure that exit routes are not obstructed and are kept clear of storage

Weekly checks (for premises in which staff or owners are present)

- If the premises are fitted with a fire detection and alarm system (rather than domestic smoke alarms), the system should be tested, using a different manual alarm call point each week, to make sure that the system is operating
- Check that any fire-resisting doors fitted to stairways and escape routes close effectively under the action of the self-closing devices fitted

Monthly checks

- Make sure all exit doors that are not in regular use can be easily opened
- Carry out a functional test of rechargeable torches and/or all emergency escape lighting units to make sure that they operate correctly
- Domestic smoke/heat alarms should be tested to check they work and are loud enough to wake anyone who is sleeping. Manufacturers also provide recommendations on other necessary maintenance, so check their guidance

Six-monthly checks

- Any BS 5389-1 fire detection and alarm systems should be serviced by a competent contractor
- Fire doors should be checked to make sure they remain in good condition, are not damaged, and remain a good fit in their frames

Annual checks

- Emergency escape lighting should be serviced by a competent contractor
- Any fire extinguishers should be serviced by a competent contractor

On each change of occupancy of premises in which staff or owners are not present (e.g. self-catering premises)

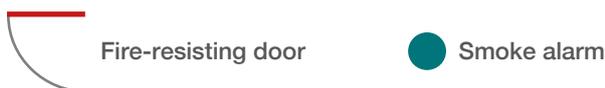
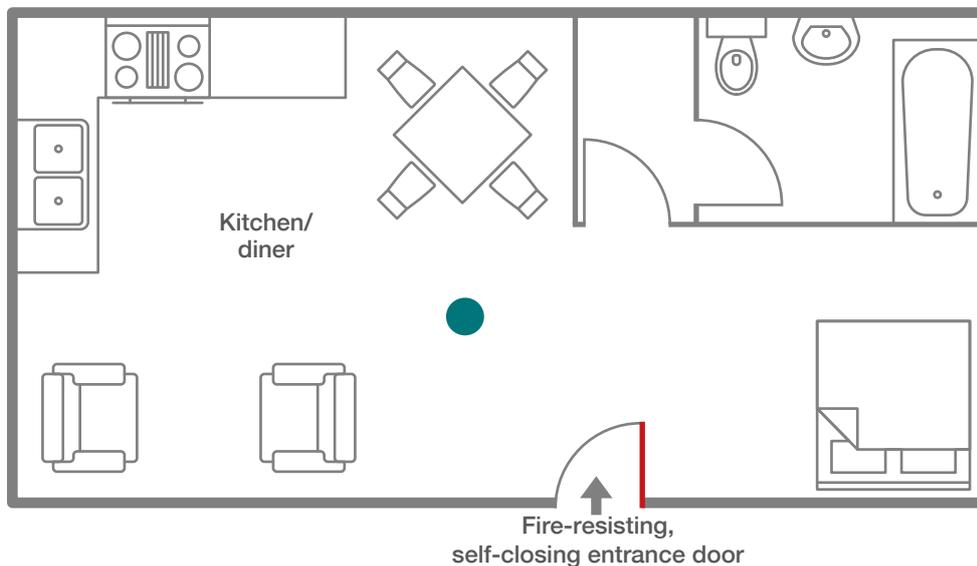
- The above weekly and monthly tests should be carried out

It is important that your fire safety systems are regularly tested and undergo suitable maintenance to ensure they are in good working order.

7. Examples of common layouts and recommendations on fire protection measures

1. Open plan studio flat

Self-contained studio flat with an open plan layout, located in a purpose-built block of flats. Cooking appliances are sited away from the flat front entrance door.



Means of escape:

- The flat front entrance door is a fire door fitted with a self-closing device
- Any cooking facilities should be located remote from (and not immediately adjacent to) the entrance door so as not to prejudice the escape from sleeping areas in the event of a fire

Fire detection and alarm system:

- Mains powered optical smoke alarm/s (with tamper-proof batteries) or multi-sensor smoke alarm, fitted in sleeping/circulation area

Lighting on escape routes:

- No requirement for emergency escape lighting within studio flat

Fire fighting equipment (optional):

- A fire extinguisher and fire blanket located in kitchen

Fire safety signs/notices:

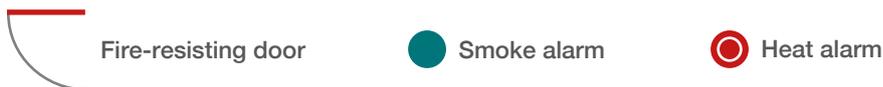
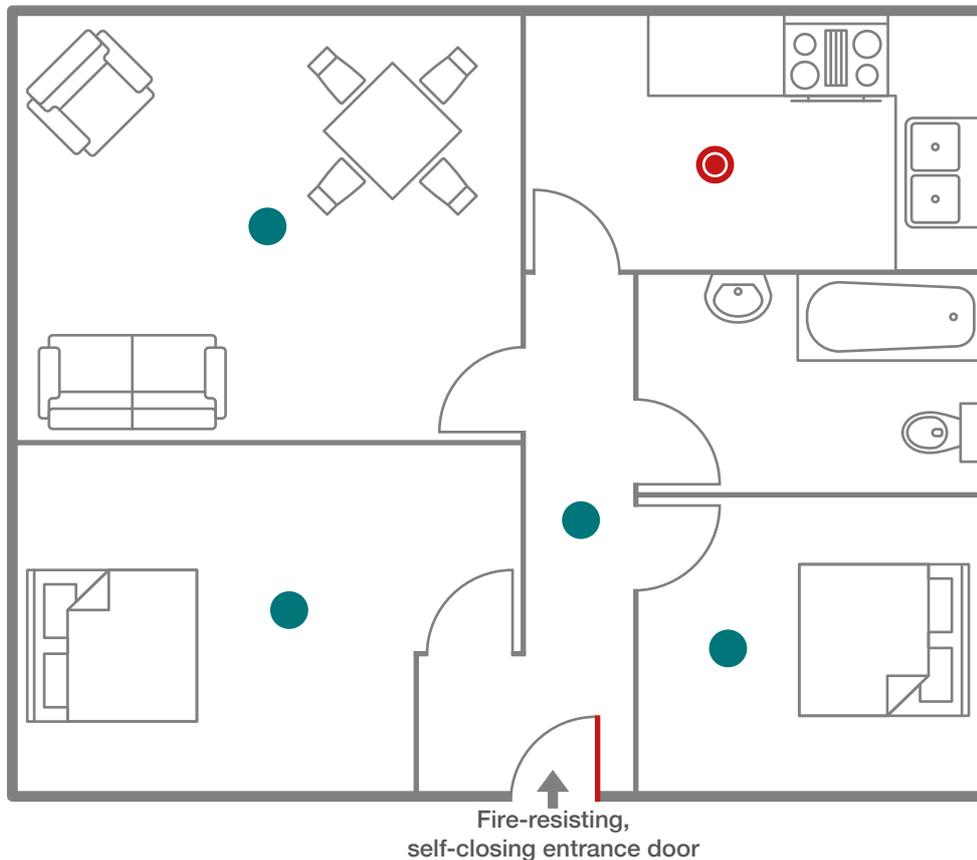
- Fire Action notice to provide information on the action to take in the event of a fire within the flat and on the action to take if a fire occurs elsewhere in the block. **Note:** some guests may not be familiar with the concept of a 'stay put' policy typical in purpose-built blocks of flats and the instructions not to use any lifts in the event of a fire. This should be clearly explained
- Instructions on how to contact the emergency services and the correct premises address, including the post code
- Barbecues or heaters should not be permitted on any balconies
- There should be a smoking policy with instructions to guests. If smoking is permitted, a means to properly dispose of smoking materials is required. Careless disposal of smoking materials can lead to fires

Furniture:

- Furniture must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended). This is usually indicated by a label attached to the item

2. Two bedroom flat with entrance hall

Two bedroom self-contained flat with an entrance hall, located in a purpose-built block of flats.



Means of escape

- Notional¹² 30-minute fire protected entrance hall within the flat
- Doors within the flat should be notional fire doors, but with no requirement for them to be self-closing
- Doors to bathrooms, toilets or cupboards are not required to be fire doors
- Guests should be instructed to close the doors when sleeping
- The flat front entrance door is a self-closing fire door

Fire detection and alarm system:

- Mains powered (with tamper-proof batteries)
- Interlinked smoke alarms installed in the entrance hall, lounge and bedrooms, with an additional heat alarm installed in the kitchen

Lighting on escape routes:

- No requirement for emergency escape lighting within flat

12 A definition of “notional fire door” is provided in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-in-purpose-built-blocks-of-flats>

Fire fighting equipment (optional):

- A fire extinguisher and fire blanket located in kitchen

Fire safety signs/notices:

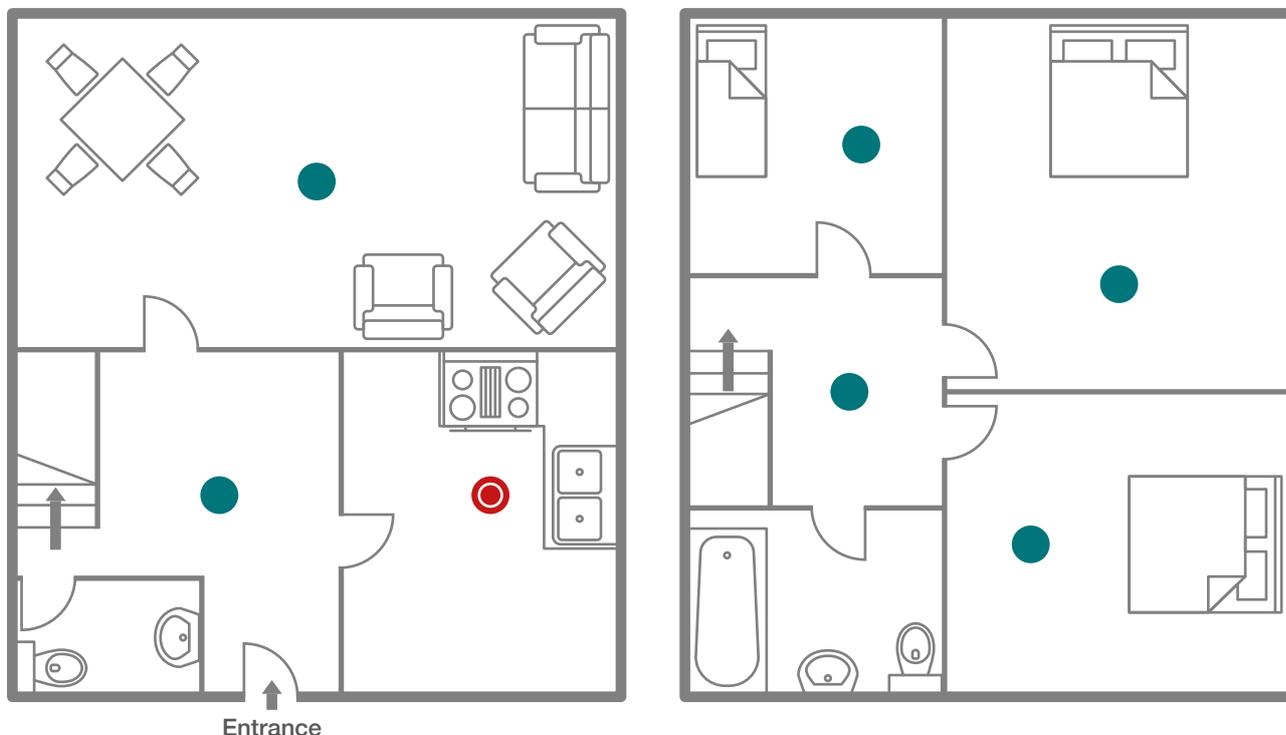
- Fire Action notice to provide information on the action to take in the event of a fire within the flat and on the action to take if a fire occurs elsewhere in the block. **Note:** some guests may not be familiar with the concept of a 'stay put' policy typical in purpose-built blocks of flats and the instructions not to use any lifts in the event of a fire. This should be clearly explained
- Instructions on how to contact the emergency services and the correct premises address, including the post code
- Barbecues or heaters should not be permitted on any balconies
- There should be a smoking policy with instructions to guests. If smoking is permitted, a means to properly dispose of smoking materials is required. Careless disposal of smoking materials can lead to fires

Furniture:

- Furniture should comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended). This is usually indicated by a label attached to the item

3. Two storey house

Three bedroom, two storey house with a lounge and kitchen on the ground floor.



Means of escape:

- The entrance hall and stairs should be a notional 30-minute fire protected escape route
- Doors opening onto the protected route should be notional fire doors but do not need to be self-closing. However, doors to bathrooms, toilets or cupboards are not required to be fire doors

Fire detection and alarm system:

- Mains powered (with tamper-proof batteries)
- Interlinked smoke alarms installed in the entrance hall, landing, living room and bedrooms and a heat alarm installed in the kitchen

Lighting on escape routes:

- No requirement for emergency escape lighting within cottage/house, provided that there are torches in each bedroom, or plug-in night lights within the stairs and entrance hall
- Torches or plug-in night lights provided to the stairs and entrance hall

Fire fighting equipment (optional):

- A fire extinguisher and fire blanket located in kitchen

Fire safety signs/notices:

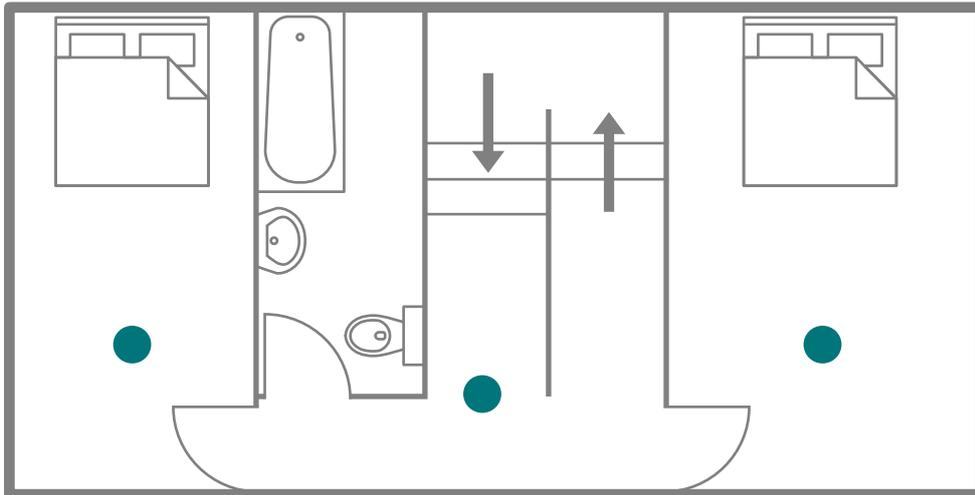
- No requirement for fire exit signs or door signage
- Fire action notice to provide information on the action to take in the event of a fire
- Instructions on how to contact the emergency services and the correct premises address, including the post code
- There should be a smoking policy with instructions to guests. If smoking is permitted, a means to properly dispose of smoking materials is required. Careless disposal of smoking materials can lead to fires

Furniture:

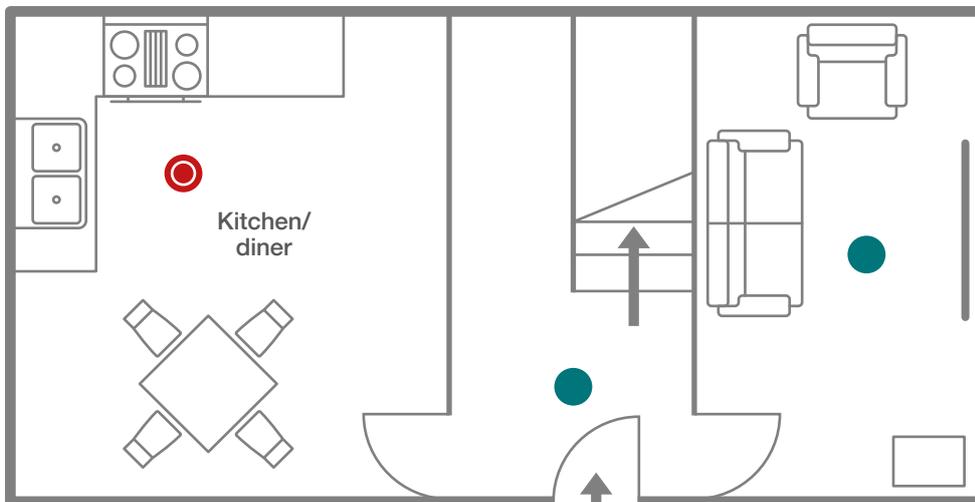
- Furniture should comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended). This is usually indicated by a label attached to the item

4. Two storey cottage

Two storey, Grade II listed cottage converted to holiday let, with two upstairs bedrooms and a bathroom, and a ground floor lounge and kitchen/dining room. The lounge has a log burner, and the kitchen cooker is LPG (liquefied petroleum gas, e.g. propane) powered with cylinders stored outside.



First floor



Ground floor

● Smoke alarm ● Heat alarm

Means of escape:

- The entrance hall and stairs should be a notional 30-minute fire protected escape route
- Doors opening onto the protected route should be notional fire doors, but do not need to be self-closing. However, doors to bathrooms, toilets or cupboards are not required to be fire doors

Fire detection and alarm system:

- Mains powered (with tamper-proof batteries)
- Interlinked smoke alarms installed in the entrance hall, landing, living room and bedrooms and a heat alarm installed in the kitchen

Lighting on escape routes:

- No requirement for emergency escape lighting within cottage/house, provided that there are torches in each bedroom, or plug-in night lights within the stairs and entrance hall.

Fire fighting equipment (optional):

- A fire extinguisher and fire blanket located in kitchen

Fire safety signs/notices:

- No requirement for fire exit signs or door signage
- Fire action notice to provide information on the action to take in the event of a fire
- Instructions on how to contact the emergency services and the correct premises address, including the post code
- There should be a smoking policy with instructions to guests. If smoking is permitted, a means to properly dispose of smoking materials is required. Careless disposal of smoking materials can lead to fires

Furniture:

- Furniture should comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended). This is usually indicated by a label attached to the item

Additional precautions

- Carbon monoxide detection devices should be installed in the lounge and kitchen
- The LPG cooker should have cut-off devices installed on pipework from external source to internal cooking appliance

8. Fire risk assessment checklist – premises with paying guests

You must keep a copy of this completed fire risk assessment for your records

Address of premises:

Number of floors:

Number of rooms:

Construction:

Assessor:

Date of fire risk assessment:

Responsible person:

Fire hazards and controls

Are fixed electrical installations inspected and tested every 5 years?

Yes

No

Are electrical appliances periodically inspected and tested?

N/A

Yes

No

Is the use of trailing leads and adaptors avoided where possible?

N/A

Yes

No

Fire risk assessment checklist – premises with paying guests

Are gas appliances periodically inspected and tested every 12 months?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is smoking prohibited on the premises?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are suitable arrangements in place for those who wish to smoke?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are the premises adequately secured to prevent unauthorised access?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are combustible materials, waste and refuse bins stored safely clear of the premises or in purpose-built compounds/rooms?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are fixed heating systems subject to periodic maintenance?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are portable heaters subject to periodic inspection and used safely?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are there adequate fire precautions in the use of open fires and log burners?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are adequate measures taken to prevent fires from cooking?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are filters and ductwork subject to regular cleaning?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the standard of housekeeping adequate to avoid the accumulation of combustible materials and waste?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are combustible materials kept separate from ignition and heat sources?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Is it ensured that all contractors who undertake work on the premises are competent and qualified?

Yes No

Are suitable measures in place to address the fire hazards associated with the use and storage of dangerous substances?

N/A Yes No

Are there any other significant fire hazards in the premises?

Yes No

If the answer to the above question is yes, please list each hazard and any control measure to reduce the risk of fire, in the box below. If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action within the Action Plan.

Fire protection measures

Are all escape routes kept clear of obstructions to enable people to escape safely? Yes No

Are all fire exits easily and immediately openable? Yes No

Are distances of travel considered reasonable? Yes No

Do the walls and structures protecting the stairway and escape routes provide an adequate level of fire resistance? N/A Yes No

Is the fire resistance of doors to stairways and escape routes considered adequate? N/A Yes No

Where necessary, are doors fitted with suitable self-closing devices that close the doors effectively? N/A Yes No

Are there adequate levels of artificial lighting provided in the escape routes? Yes No

Where necessary, has a reasonable standard of emergency escape lighting been provided? N/A Yes No

Where necessary, is a reasonable standard of fire exit and fire safety signs provided? N/A Yes No

Are smoke and/or heat alarms/detectors provided and is the extent and coverage considered adequate? Yes No

Is there a reasonable provision of firefighting equipment (fire extinguishers, fire blanket)? Yes No

Record brief details of the above measures in the box below.

If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action within the Action Plan.

Management of fire safety

Are procedures in the event of fire appropriate and documented? Yes No

Is the information on fire safety and the action to take in the event of a fire given to guests? Yes No

Are any staff members given regular instruction and training on the action to take in the event of a fire? N/A Yes No

Are frequent checks carried out to ensure exit routes are kept clear and fire exits remain easily openable? Yes No

Are periodic checks carried out on fire doors to ensure they remain in good condition and close effectively? Yes No

Are domestic smoke and heat alarms tested monthly? Yes No

Where fitted, are weekly testing and six-monthly servicing routines in place for the fire detection and alarm system? N/A Yes No

In self-catering premises, are all smoke/heat alarms (or fire detection and alarm systems, where fitted) tested at every changeover? N/A Yes No

Where fitted, are monthly and annual testing routines in place for the emergency escape lighting? N/A Yes No

Where provided are fire extinguishers subject to annual maintenance? N/A Yes No

Are records of testing and maintenance maintained? Yes No

Record brief details of the above measures in the box below.

If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action within the Action Plan.

Action plan

If any of the above boxes are ticked with a 'No', the deficiencies should be described below, along with proposed action for rectification.

Item	Deficiency	Proposed action	Timescale	Person responsible
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

9. Further information

If you are responsible for the premises, you are legally responsible for making sure you comply with the law. However, guidance and people are available to help.



Fireengland.uk

You will find more questions and answers about fire safety law at: www.fireengland.uk/fire-safety/how-protect-your-business-fire

For detailed information about your premises providing sleeping accommodation, see the technical guide to fire safety risk assessments in sleeping accommodation. Download a copy for free at www.fireengland.uk/fire-safety-law-work-and-public-places/fire-risk-assessments

A supplementary guide providing information on accessibility and means of escape for people with mobility impairment is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-means-of-escape-for-disabled-people

Local fire and rescue service

Fire and rescue services have a legal responsibility to make sure you are complying with fire safety law and you are managing the risks of a fire adequately. Your local fire and rescue service may inspect your property to make sure you are complying with the law and are keeping guests safe.

They might also be able to give you advice if you are not sure your risk assessment's been carried out properly. However, they cannot carry out fire risk assessments for you.

You can find the details of your fire and rescue service here:

[www.fireengland.uk/
your-fire-and-rescue-service/
find-your-service](http://www.fireengland.uk/your-fire-and-rescue-service/find-your-service)

Competent risk assessor

If you do not have the time or are unsure on how to complete a fire risk assessment, you can get help from a competent fire risk assessor. The Fire Sector Federation publish guidance on choosing a competent fire risk assessor.

The guide also identifies the certification bodies who operate schemes for certification of fire risk assessment companies, as well as bodies that operate schemes for certification or registration of individuals who are competent to carry out fire risk assessments:

https://www.firesectorfederation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FSF_Guide_V2.pdf

Ultimately, as the responsible person, you must satisfy yourself that the measures you have put in place are adequate and justifiable. You should therefore ensure that any advice you receive is of sufficient quality.

VisitEngland

VisitEngland provides free guidance on all legislation relevant to tourist accommodation, including general fire safety and product safety, at www.visitengland.org/pinkbookonline

You can download the fire risk assessment template at www.visitengland.org/fire