

# Fire safety risk assessment

## Introduction

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‘An organised and methodical look at the premises, the activities taking place there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises’.

## Aims of a fire safety risk assessment

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- To identify the fire hazards
- To reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low a level as reasonably practicable; and
- To decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the premises if a fire does start.

## Meaning of ‘hazard’ and ‘risk’

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- **hazard:** anything that has potential to cause harm
- **risk:** the chance of that harm occurring

## The five steps to risk assessment

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1. Identify fire hazards
2. Identify people at risk
3. Evaluate, remove or reduce risk and protect against remaining risk
4. Record, plan and inform or train
5. Review.

### 1. Identify fire hazards

#### Sources of ignition

- Smokers’ materials
- Naked flames, eg candles and night lights
- Electric, gas or oil-fired heaters
- Boilers
- Cookers, toasters and other kitchen equipment (especially when shared)
- Faulty or misused electrical equipment
- Electric blankets, computers, TVs, washing machines and dryers
- Lighting equipment (fixed and movable), for example halogen lamps and table lamps
- The electrical installation itself note 3
- The gas installation arson attack
- In larger and mixed use properties, any plant rooms, lift motor rooms and so on.

## Sources of fuel

- Furniture, furnishings, textiles, bedding, clothing and curtains
- Laundry
- Accumulations of unwanted mail, waste paper, cardboard, newspapers and magazines (including that awaiting recycling collection)
- Waste storage and refuse containers
- Flammable liquid-based products such as paint, varnish, thinners, adhesives, white spirit, methylated spirit and cooking oils
  - Liquefied gas (LPG), paraffin, heating oils and petrol
  - Paper products, packaging materials, stationery, advertising material and books
  - Decorations for seasonal and religious occasions
  - Plastics and rubber such as videotapes, polyurethane foam-filled furniture and polystyrene-based display materials
  - Wall, floor and ceiling coverings and surface finishes.

## 2. Identify people at risk

- People asleep
- People who are unfamiliar with the premises (guests and visitors)
- People with disabilities (including mobility impairment and hearing and vision impairment)
- People who may have some other reason for not being able to leave the premises quickly (such as parents with young children)
- People who have sensory impairment due to alcohol, drugs or medication
- Unaccompanied children and young people
- Anyone working in enclosed, isolated parts of the building
- Anyone who has difficulty understanding English.

## 3. Evaluate, remove or reduce risk

- Replace portable heating appliances with fixed convector heaters or a central heating system
- Ensure electrical sockets are adequate in number and sited appropriately to avoid overloading and trailing leads
- Ensure electrical, mechanical and gas equipment is installed, used, maintained and protected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- Ensure all furniture complies with the *Furniture and Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Regulations 1988*
- Ensure combustible items such as furniture, laundry, decorations are stored properly and are kept away from potential ignition sources such as cookers, heaters and boilers
- Ensure refuse is properly stored and disposed of

- In crowded accommodation, provide adequate shelving and cupboard space so that everyday items are not in proximity to cookers, heaters and so on.

**Protect against remaining risk**

- Passive protection eg fire doors, compartmentation etc
- Active protection eg smoke detection
- Management and maintenance.

Guidance on this part of the fire safety risk assessment is available from the publication 'Housing-Fire Safety' available from LACORS ([www.lacors.gov.uk](http://www.lacors.gov.uk))

**4. Record, plan and inform or train**

A suggested template for landlords to record their risk assessments is attached to these notes. Please refer to: Appendix 1.

**5. Review**

**Contact details**

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Contact Wiltshire Council Customer Services on **0300 456 0100** and ask for Private Sector Housing.