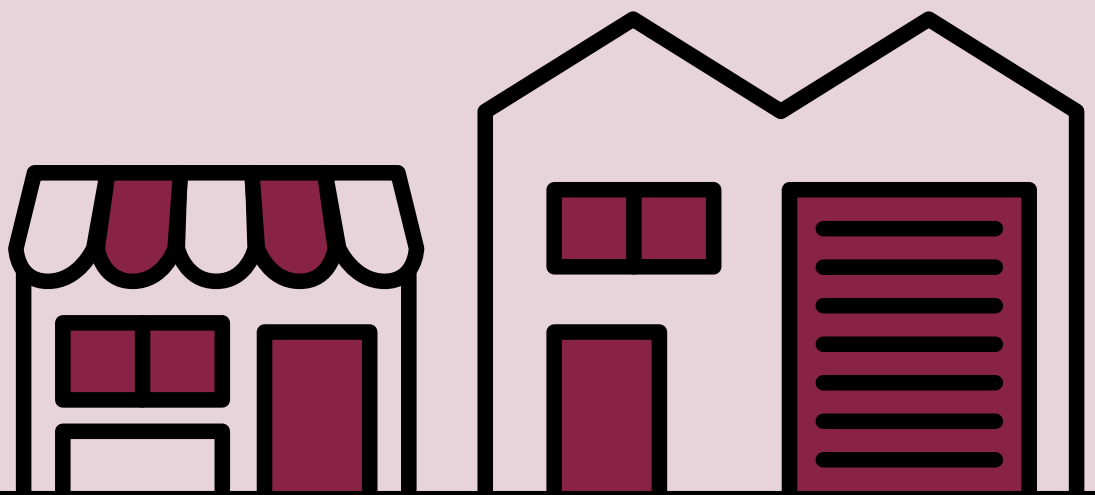




Home Office

A Guide to making your small non-domestic premises safe from fire

A Guide to compliance with Fire Safety Law for those responsible for safety in small non-domestic premises



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

Expanded explanation of the status of the guide

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

Added usage of modal verbs in relation to Article 50

Minor

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

November 2024

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Foreword

Information about this Guide

This Guide is published by the Home Office and drafted 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 for larger premises, listed at the end of this Guide, which should be used if your premises do not fall within the scope of this current Guide.

Status of this Guide

The 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 under fire safety legislation 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 practice 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.

1. Introduction

This Guide has been published to provide simple and practical advice to assist persons responsible for fire safety in small non-domestic premises to comply with fire safety legislation and make their premises safe from fire.¹

Fire safety legislation imposes a general duty of fire safety care on employers and persons who have control of premises to ensure the safety of employees and the safety of people visiting your premises, including members of the public, contractors, etc. This includes taking steps to reduce the likelihood of a fire starting, providing appropriate fire alarm systems, and making sure that, in the event of a fire, people can evacuate to a place of safety.

The legislation requires that you undertake a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment to identify the risk of fire to people in your premises, and to enable you to take reasonable measures to protect them from fire.

The fire and rescue service in 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.

You are required by law to co-operate and co-ordinate your actions with other occupiers, as well as other persons such as managing agents and landlords, who may be responsible for common parts and/or common facilities in the building. This will generally involve co-ordinating your fire safety measures with others, taking part in organised fire drills and following evacuation procedures.

This short Guide is not intended to provide a detailed interpretation of fire safety legislation. 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 should be taken to satisfy the legislation.

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

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 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.

Scope of this Guide

This Guide is intended for use in small non-domestic premises that have simple layouts, low fire risk, with limited fire hazards and a small number of employees, customers, and visitors.

This guidance is limited to premises consisting of not more than a basement, ground and first floor, in which:

- you have sole control of the premises
- the area on any floor does not exceed 280m²
- the maximum distance that anyone will need to walk from any point in the building to an exit to open air is not more than 25m
- on each floor, there is relatively clear vision across the floor area
- there are no hazardous processes, particularly those involving cutting, welding and similar processes, and no storage or use of dangerous substances, such as highly flammable liquids, other than in quantities of no more than 50 litres
- cooking processes are remote from exits, such that there would be no potential for them to prevent escape in the event of fire
- no one sleeps on the premises

This Guide is not appropriate if:

- your premises fall outside the scope described above
- your premises are part of a larger complex, such as a shopping centre
- the design of fire precautions in your premises differs materially from those recommended at Section 5 of this Guide

Under any of the three circumstances described above, you should base the fire precautions in your premises, and your fire risk assessment, on the Home Office guides detailed at Section 6 of this Guide.

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.

2. Your responsibilities

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

- carry out a fire risk assessment of your premises
- ensure that adequate fire safety measures are provided
- maintain those fire safety measures
- have adequate fire procedures to ensure employees and visitors are aware of what to do in the event of fire, and that they understand the fire safety measures within the building
- 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 information to any subsequent person with responsibilities in the instance you are no longer a responsible person for the premises²
- keep your fire risk assessment and fire safety measures under regular review, and take action where necessary to address new or increased risks
- keep a record of your completed fire risk assessment (including the name of the person and/or authorised organisation that did this) and fire safety arrangements

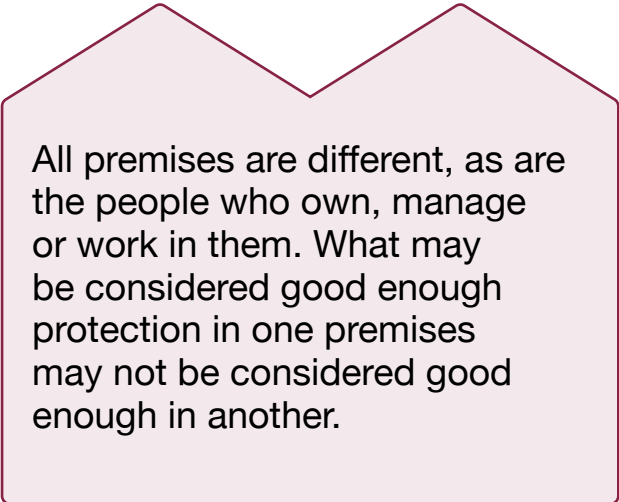
You have a responsibility to make sure your employees and customers are safe from fire.

² 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.

3. 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.

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



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

In the case of small premises of the kind outlined at the start of this Guide, preparation of a fire risk assessment can often be completed, without specialist knowledge, by following the simple steps set out in this Guide. However, if you do not feel able to do so, you should engage the services of a competent fire risk assessor.³ 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.

The findings of your fire risk assessment must be recorded and kept available for inspection by the enforcing authority (normally the fire and rescue authority). The record should include actions to be taken to mitigate the risk. This should be recorded in an ‘action plan’ incorporated within the fire risk assessment.

A fire risk assessment template for undertaking and recording the findings of your fire risk assessment is given in Section 7 of this Guide. 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.

³ A Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor – Fire Sector Federation.

Available to download at:

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

(firesectorfederation.co.uk)

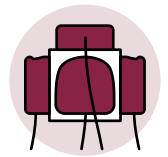
4. Fire hazards

A fire hazard is anything that has the potential to start a fire, or to contribute to a fire, such as ignition sources or an unnecessary build-up of combustible materials (any liquid or solid that can ignite and burn). If you identify any fire hazards, you should 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 in small premises and provide examples of control measures that can be used to reduce the risk.

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

Electrical installations and equipment



Electrical equipment and wiring are common causes of fire.

The electrical installation in your premises must be subject to inspection and test by a competent person at least every five years.⁴ Any work on the electrical installation should be carried out only by a competent person.

Portable electrical appliances should be subject to periodic in-house inspection and testing (previously known as portable appliance testing or PAT) in accordance with the IET Code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment.⁵

The use of extension cables, trailing leads and adaptors to power portable appliances should be avoided wherever possible.

Smoking



Smoking in non-domestic premises is prohibited by law. You must therefore ensure that employees, visitors and anyone working in the premises are aware of this.

⁴ An example of a competent person would be an electrical contractor certificated by the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting or a member of the Electrical Contractors Association.

⁵ IET Code of Practice for In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment – fifth edition.

Persons who wish to smoke should do so clear of the premises, and suitable provisions, such as fire safe bins, should be provided for the safe disposal of smokers' materials.

At least one 'No smoking' sign must be displayed.

In carrying out regular inspections of your premises, you should look for any signs of illicit smoking in storerooms, ancillary rooms, and other 'hidden' areas.

Arson

Good physical security and vigilance by both management and employees is important to reduce the risk of arson.

You should make sure that combustible materials, refuse and recycling bins are kept clear of the premises (in particular, any windows or openings) and/or kept in a secure store or compound. Bins close to the building and accessible to outsiders should be lockable.

External stores and plant rooms should be kept locked to prevent unauthorised access.

Heating

Heating systems should be subject to annual maintenance by a competent person.



The use of portable heaters should be avoided as far as possible. If used, follow the manufacturer's guidance on their safe use and only use heaters fitted with automatic cut-off switches. Do not place heaters close to combustible materials or place them on exit routes. Where possible, you should avoid the use of more hazardous types of heaters, such as radiant bar fires or LPG heaters.

Cooking

Suitable measures should be taken to prevent fires as a result of cooking or re-heating food.

You should never leave cooking unattended, ensure appliances are kept clean, maintained in good condition, and operated in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Any filters or ducts, over cooking appliances, should be cleaned on a regular basis to avoid the build-up of flammable deposits.

Gas cooking appliances should be subject to regular maintenance by a competent person.

Where possible, bulk quantities of cooking oil should be stored externally.

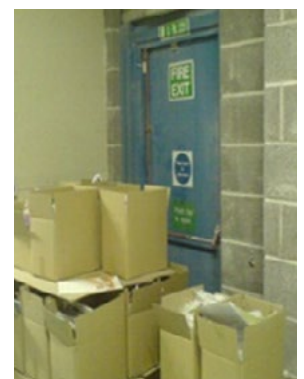
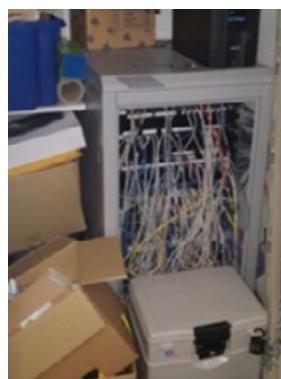
Housekeeping

Good, day-to-day housekeeping is fundamental to reducing the risk from fire.

Combustible materials should be kept clear of ignition and/or heat sources.

Particular attention should be paid to areas such as storerooms and cupboards that contain ignition sources and sources of heat.

Escape routes must be kept clear at all times where necessary for safety of persons on and around the premises.



Contractors

Fire safety controls and conditions should be imposed on contractors carrying out works on the premises to reduce the risk of fire during maintenance and/or building works. This may, in some cases, include the issue of work permits and/or hot work permits to control higher risk activities, such as those involving application of heat.

Dangerous substances



If you use or store dangerous substances, such as flammable liquids or materials, you must ensure they are used and stored safely to reduce the risk of fire. Further guidance and a full list of duties can be found in the HSE publication: A brief guide to the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations.⁶

⁶ Controlling fire and explosion risks in the workplace. A brief guide to the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations – published by the Health and Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg370.htm

5. Fire protection measures

Having identified any potential fire hazards and assessed whether or not there are adequate measures to stop fires from happening, the next step is to consider what would happen if a fire did start.

The fire risk, as identified in your fire risk assessment, determines the level of fire protection measures required in your premises to ensure the safety of people. Factors to consider include:

- use and occupancy of the premises
- the number and location of fire exits
- the need for any fire exit signs
- the need for emergency escape lighting
- whether a fire alarm system is needed
- whether any fire alarm system should incorporate any fire detection
- the need for fire extinguishers

Generally, the higher the risk, the more fire protection measures you will need to make your premises safe from fire. Equally, you may find as a result of your fire risk assessment that you need no additional measures over and above those already present.

The assessment of risk is therefore fundamental to the way in which the law governing fire safety in premises operates. It has been recognised, particularly in small premises, that the people best placed to assess risk are the people who operate and have control of the premises.

Guidance and recommendations on fire protection measures should not 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.

Means of escape

The two main factors that determine if people can safely evacuate your premises in the event of a fire are:

- the number and location of exits that lead to a place of safety clear of the premises
- how far people need to travel to reach an exit ('travel distance')

The maximum number of persons on any storey in which there is only one exit route should be limited to 60 people.

Ideally, escape routes for the public should not pass through rooms such as kitchens, stores or plant rooms.

The shorter the distance of travel and the more exits there are the better. The distances of travel specified below should not be viewed as prescriptive distances that need to be met in each of the premises described below. In estimating travel distance, account must be taken of travel around obstructions, such as racks, tables, etc, rather than the straight-line distance from any point to an exit.

Typical maximum travel distance

- a. Premises consisting of a ground floor, a ground and first floor or a ground floor and basement:

25m measured from any part of the premises to a final exit door that leads directly to a place of safety, clear of the premises (see Figures 1 and 2 below). There is no requirement for the stairway serving first or basement floors to be enclosed in fire-resisting construction (see Figures 3 and 4 below).

Figure 1 – Ground floor, single exit

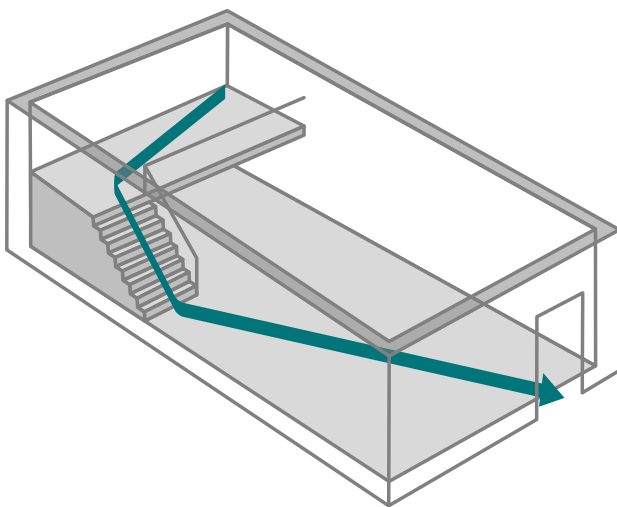
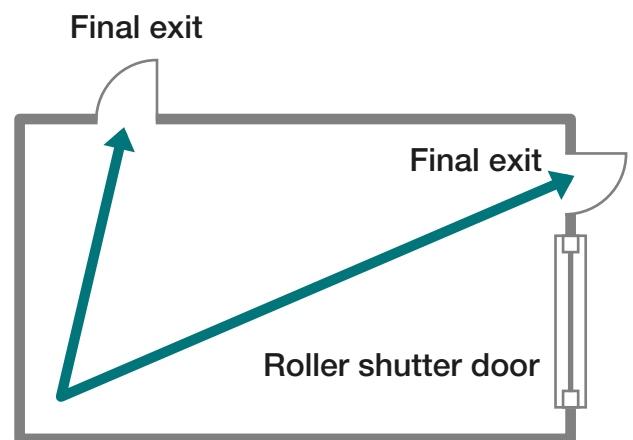


Figure 2 – Ground floor, alternative exits in different directions



→ Travel direction

Figure 3 – Ground and basement

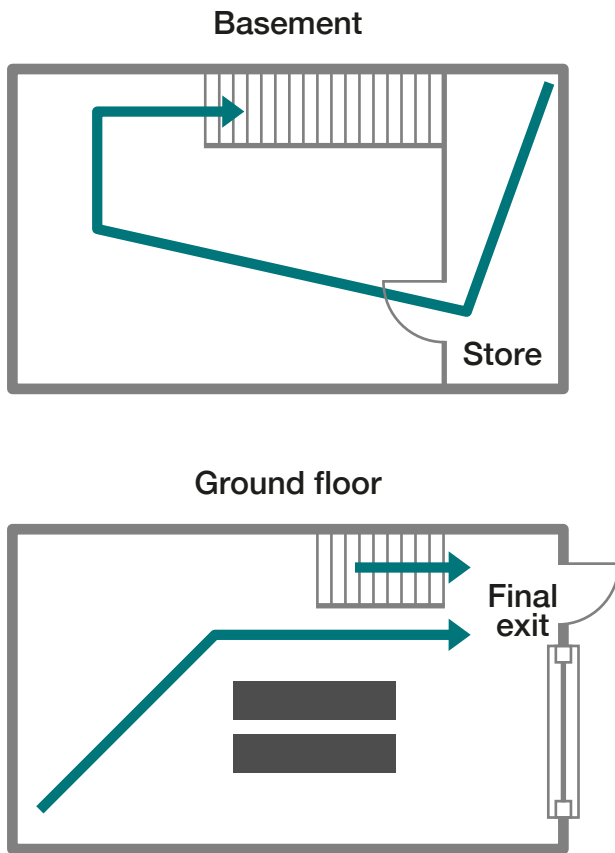
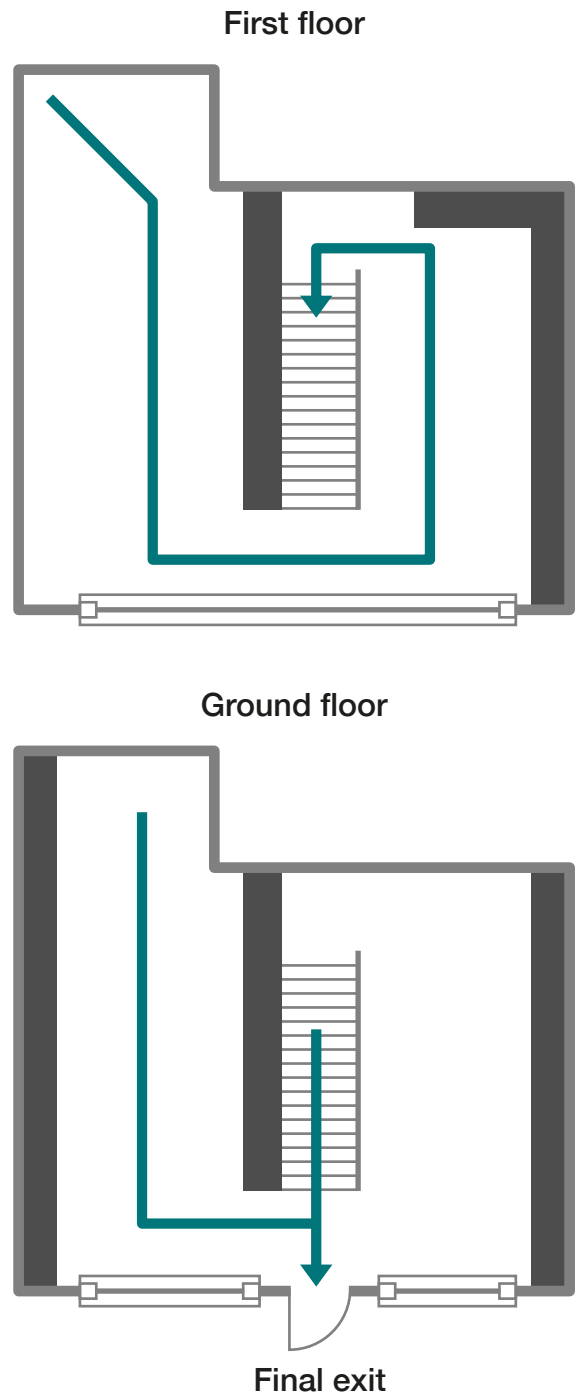


Figure 4 – Ground and first floor



➡ Travel direction

b. Premises consisting of ground, basement and first floor:

25m measured from any part of the premises to a final exit door that leads directly to a place of safety, clear of the premises. Where there are separate stairways leading to the basement and the first floor, either the stairway from the basement to ground floor level, or the stairway from first floor to ground floor, should be enclosed in fire-resisting construction. The stairway that is enclosed should incorporate, within the enclosure, a door leading directly to open air (see Figure 5). Where there is a single, continuous stairway serving the three floors, the entire stairway should be enclosed in fire-resisting construction; within the stairway enclosure, there should be an exit direct to open air (see Figure 6).

Figure 5 – Separate staircases

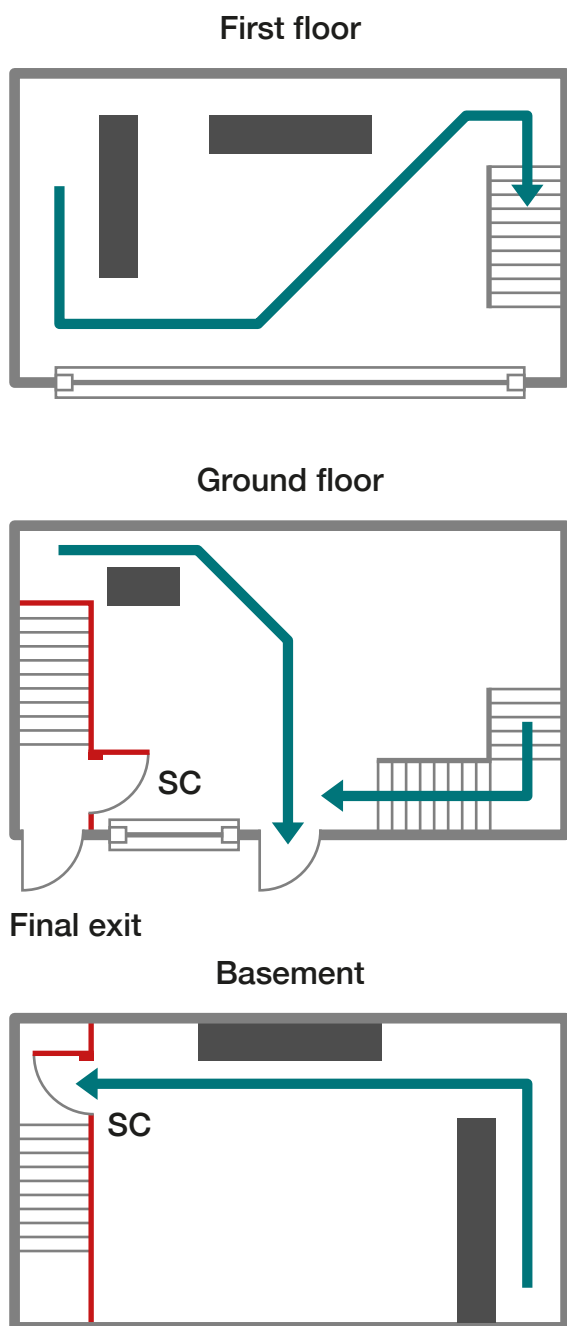
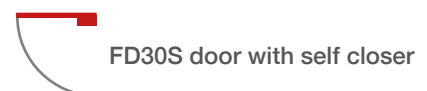
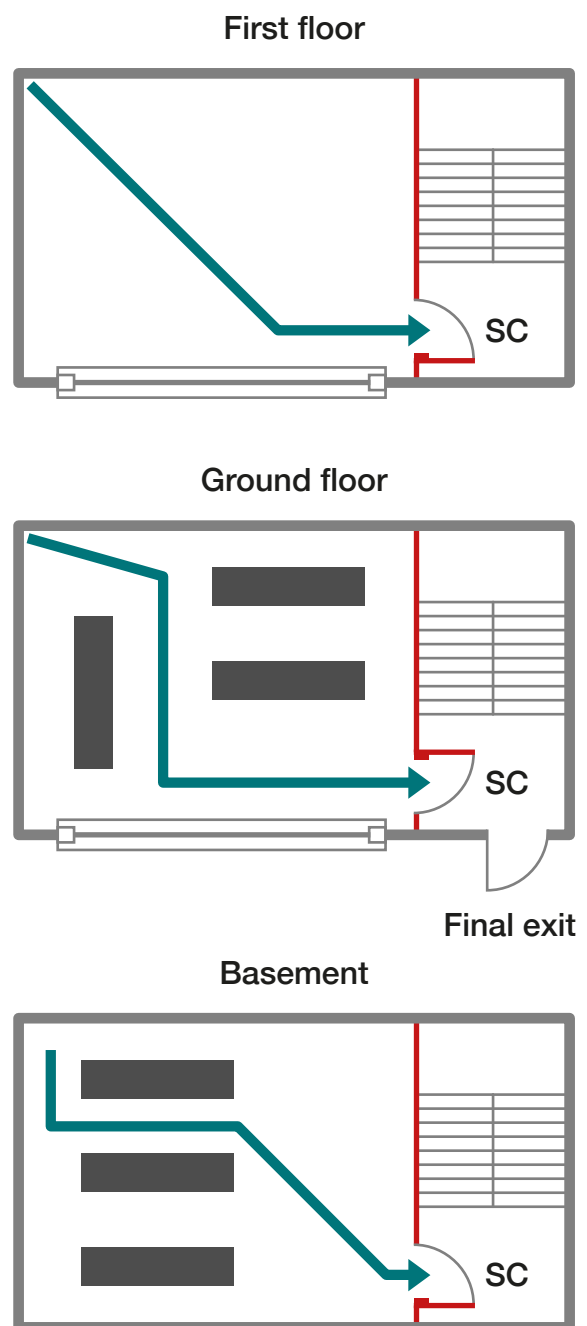


Figure 6 – Single staircase



Protection of escape routes

In most small premises of not more than two floors that meet the maximum travel distance, it is unlikely that there will be need for additional fire protection beyond those outlined above, such as fire-resisting partitions or doors, to safeguard escape routes. In case of doubt, you should seek the advice of a competent fire safety specialist.

In premises of three floors, the enclosed stairway described in b. above should be enclosed in construction providing a fire resistance of 30 minutes (e.g. a layer of 12mm plasterboard fixed to each side of timber studwork). The doors opening onto the stairway should similarly provide 30 minutes' fire resistance and be fitted with self-closing devices.

Modern fire doors have a fire resistance of at least 30 minutes when subjected to the current fire resistance test. In these doors, intumescent strips are fitted to the edges and top of the doors or frames. The strips swell when subjected to fire and seal the gaps around the doors. These are normally combined with smoke seals to prevent the passage of smoke through the gaps between the door and frame – these look like draught seals. Doors fitted with combined strips and smoke seals are known as FD30S doors; the number represents the period of fire resistance in minutes and the 'S' at the end indicates the presence of a smoke seal.

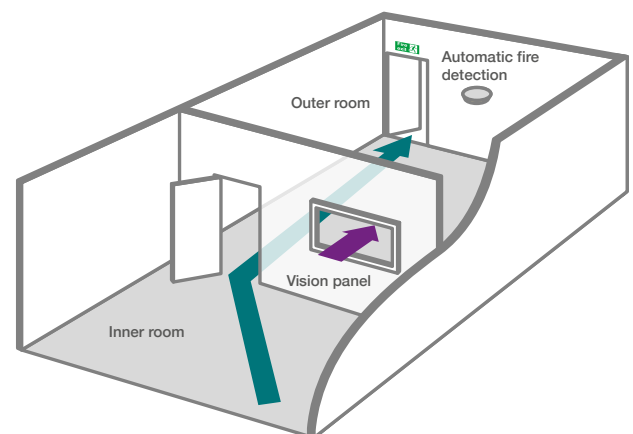
The term 'notional fire door' is often used to describe an older fire door that was tested to an earlier fire resistance test. Such doors are not usually fitted with intumescent strips and smoke seals. However, providing they are in good condition and a good fit in their frames, notional fire doors will, in most cases, provide an adequate level of fire protection in small premises and would not generally need to be changed.

Such doors would be of solid construction, approximately 44mm thick and they generally close onto 25mm rebates. Doors with thin panels do not generally offer adequate fire resistance.

Gaps between a door and frame allow smoke to spread. Gap size should never be more than 4mm, except at the bottom of the door, where the gap should be as small as practicable, while ensuring that the door is unlikely to snag on the floor even if the door drops slightly on the hinges.

If the existing doors are not fire resisting, they should be replaced with new FD30S self-closing doors.

Inner rooms



If you have a room(s) in your premises that is used by staff or visitors, where the only way out is through another room, a fire in the outer room may prevent people in the inner room from escaping. To avoid this, inner rooms should be provided with one of the following:

- a vision panel between the two rooms to allow people in the inner room to see if a fire starts in the outer room
- a smoke detector(s) fitted in the outer room that can be heard in the inner room to give people an early warning of a fire in the outer room – see 'Means of giving warning in the event of a fire' below

This does not apply if the inner room is used solely as a storeroom or plant room, or to any similar rooms where people are present for only short periods of time.

The outer room should not be one in which the risk from fire is high (e.g. a kitchen, boiler room, etc.).

Fire exit doors

In most small premises with limited numbers of people (under 60), the normal entrance and exit doors in everyday use by staff or members of the public will be sufficient for use in an emergency.

A standard exit door, nominally 850mm wide, would be adequate for the safe evacuation of 100 people. However, if an exit door will be used by more than 60 people, the door should open outwards, unless it can be kept open at all times.

No additional measures (beyond the maintenance requirements set out later in this Guide) would normally be required over and above the need to ensure that:

- the doors are not locked so that they can be easily opened in an emergency without the use of a key or code – where a locked door will need to be opened by members of the public, the means of unlocking the door should comprise a push-bar or push-pad
- the doors remain unobstructed
- the doors lead to a place of safety, clear of the premises

Means of escape for people who require assistance

Adequate arrangements should be made for the safe evacuation of all persons on

the premises without the intervention of the fire and rescue service. This not only includes disabled employees and members of the public, but also those that may have other physical or mental reasons why they may need assistance to evacuate in the event of an emergency.

Ideally, any arrangements and/or adaptations made to the premises should allow all persons that need some form of assistance to escape unaided in the event of a fire.

Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) should be discussed and agreed with each permanently or temporarily disabled employee who may have some reason why they require physical assistance.

Generic evacuation plans should also be considered for the safe evacuation of visitors and members of the public who may require assistance.

More detailed information on means of escape for disabled people can be found in the government's 'Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people'.⁷

Fire exit signs

In most small premises covered by this Guide, the fire exits and escape routes are likely to be obvious and in everyday use. It should not normally be necessary to provide any fire exit signage for exits in ordinary use, such as, in premises with a single exit.

In premises with more than one escape route, if any route is not used on a regular basis, some fire exit signage may be necessary, particularly if the routes to alternative exits are not obvious.

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-means-of-escape-for-disabled-people

Emergency escape lighting

Emergency escape lighting is lighting that provides illumination on escape routes (powered from batteries) if the normal artificial lighting fails.

In general, if you need artificial lighting to see your way out of the premises, you must have emergency escape lighting.

However, in most small ground floor premises covered by this Guide, with adequate external borrowed lighting (e.g. from street lighting) that is expected to be available at all material times, there will generally be no requirement for emergency escape lighting.

In all other premises covered by this Guide, emergency escape lighting should be provided to illuminate exit routes when the normal artificial lighting fails.

Emergency escape lighting should be provided to clearly illuminate exit doors and exit routes, including staircases, corridors and areas without natural lighting, such as basements.

Means of giving warning in the event of a fire

In single storey premises with open plan layouts and small numbers of people, the alarm may be raised by shouting “fire”. Alternatively, the alarm could be raised manually, using a hand-operated bell or siren.

In premises of more than one storey, where the above method of giving warning would be unreliable, an electrical fire alarm system may be necessary. These systems should have ‘break glass’ call points and fire alarm sounders, connected to a control panel.

In premises of more than one storey, where a fire might start and be undetected in its early stages, the fire alarm system may need to incorporate automatic fire detectors (these will generally be smoke detectors or, in the case of kitchens or other rooms in which smoke detectors would cause false alarms, heat detectors).

In premises that do not have, and do not generally need, an electrical fire alarm system, but have inner rooms without adequate vision to the associated access room, interlinked, mains-powered domestic smoke alarms might be used to provide an early warning of a fire to people in an inner room.

Fire extinguishers



It is recommended that a means of ‘first aid’ firefighting is provided. Fire extinguishers are not only beneficial in tackling a fire in its early stages, to ensure the safety of people, but they also help to protect your premises from damage.

A water-based fire extinguisher should be provided to deal with fires in combustible materials. A carbon dioxide extinguisher should also be provided to deal with fires involving electrical equipment. Some fire extinguishers can deal with both types of fire.

In most premises covered by this Guide, a water-based extinguisher (possibly supplemented by a carbon dioxide extinguisher) on each floor level would be considered adequate.

If there is risk from cooking, involving fat fryers or similar equipment, a fire blanket and a Class F fire extinguisher (which is a type of extinguisher specifically intended for use on burning fats and oils) should be provided in the kitchen or cooking area.

You should make yourself and your staff aware of the type of fire extinguishers you have on your premises, which fires the extinguishers can be safely used on and how to use the extinguishers safely. It is important that employees are made aware of the circumstances in which they should not attempt to tackle a fire as part of their staff training.

Most modern fire extinguishers are simple to use and instructions on how to use it safely are written on the extinguisher itself. However, if in doubt, employees should not put themselves or anyone else at risk, but simply raise the alarm, leave the premises, and call the fire and rescue service.

Fire procedures – Fire action plan

A suitable set of fire procedures should be developed to make sure staff and visitors are aware of the action they need to take in the event of a fire.

In small premises covered by this Guide, a simple fire action plan for staff and visitors will be all that is required. A simple plan should set out the action that should be taken on discovering a fire, and what to do on hearing the fire alarm (if provided) to ensure that staff and visitors safely evacuate the premises without delay and call the fire and rescue service.

In premises of more than one storey, fire action notices should be provided in prominent areas to provide information on what action to take in the event of a fire and the location of the assembly point.

Staff training

It is important that all staff are made aware of the fire risks in the premises and the action to take in the event of a fire, not only for their own safety, but for the safety of customers, visitors, etc, as well.

All staff must receive adequate fire safety training when first employed and this should be refreshed periodically – typically every year – as well as when they are exposed to new or increased risks such as through the introduction of new equipment or a change in role. Training should be relevant to the use, size and risk of the premises.

In most small premises, this will simply consist of taking staff through the fire procedures, including making them aware of:

- any potential fire hazards and risks
- the location of exits and the action they need to take in the event of a fire to ensure staff, customers and visitors evacuate safely
- the safe use of fire extinguishers
- how to call the fire and rescue service

Fire drills

In many small premises with limited numbers of staff and simple layouts, it is not considered essential that you carry out a full fire evacuation drill each year.

As a minimum, you should periodically go through the fire procedures with your staff to make sure they are all familiar with their roles and the action they should take in the event of a fire.

However, carrying out periodic (e.g. annual) fire drills is a good way of testing the adequacy of your fire procedures and the understanding of staff. This will be particularly helpful in premises such as bars, restaurants

and shops where staff are required to assist with the evacuation of members of the public.

If your premises form part of a larger multi-occupied building, with a number of other tenants, you will be required to take part in fire drills organised by landlords or managing agents.

A suitable record of staff training and fire drills (if any) should be kept in the form of a logbook or an electronic record.

Maintenance and testing

You must ensure 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 do yourself, while others may need to be carried out by a competent contractor, such as a contractor that has certification for the work in question by an independent certification body.

A suitable record of testing and maintenance should be kept in the form of a logbook or an electronic record.

A simple maintenance and testing check list, such as the example provided below, can be used to make sure items and equipment are checked and tested in accordance with current best practice guidance.

Daily checks

- Make sure all exit doors are unlocked at the start of each day and that exits can be easily opened
- Make sure exit routes are not obstructed and are kept clear of storage

Weekly checks

- Fire alarm systems should be tested using a different manual alarm call point each week, to make sure the system is operating, and that the alarm is audible throughout the premises

- Fire-resisting doors fitted to stairways should be checked to ensure that they close effectively under the action of the self-closing devices fitted

Monthly checks

- A functional test of all emergency escape lighting units should be carried out to make sure that they operate when test switches are activated
- A test of any domestic smoke alarms should be carried out to make sure they work
- Carry out a visual check of all fire extinguishers

Six-monthly checks

- Fire alarm systems should be inspected and tested 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 inspected and tested by a competent contractor
- Fire extinguishers should be inspected and tested by a competent contractor

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

6. Fire risk assessment checklist – small non-domestic premises

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

Responsible person
(employer or person having
control of premises):

Address of premises:

Name of person
recording assessment:

Date of assessment:

Use of premises:

Number of floors:

Construction:

Number of employees:

Maximum number
of visitors:

Electrical installations and equipment

Are fixed installations periodically inspected
and tested every 5 years?

Yes

No

Are portable electrical equipment and appliances
periodically inspected and tested?

N/A

Yes

No

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

N/A

Yes

No

Smoking

Are adequate measures in place to stop people from smoking on the premises?

Yes No

Are 'No smoking' signs provided?

Yes No

Are suitable arrangements in place for those who wish to smoke outside the premises?

N/A Yes No

Arson

Are the premises adequately secured to prevent unauthorised access?

Yes No

Are combustible materials, waste and refuse bins stored safely clear of the premises or in purpose-built compounds/rooms?

N/A Yes No

Heating systems and portable heaters

Are fixed heating systems subject to periodic maintenance?

N/A Yes No

Are portable heaters subject to periodic inspection and used safely?

N/A Yes No

Cooking

Are adequate measures taken to prevent cooking fires?

N/A Yes No

Are filters and ductwork subject to regular cleaning?

N/A Yes No

Housekeeping

Is the standard of housekeeping adequate to avoid the build-up of combustible materials and waste?

Yes No

Are combustible materials kept separate from ignition and heat sources?

Yes No

Contractors

Are suitable fire safety controls placed on contractors who undertake works on the premises?

Yes No

Dangerous substances

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

N/A Yes No

Other significant fire hazards

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.

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Means of escape

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

Are suitable precautions in place for all inner rooms? N/A Yes No

In three-storey premises, is adequate fire protection provided to stairways, including the provision of self-closing, fire-resisting doors? N/A Yes No

Are reasonable arrangements in place for the safe evacuation of disabled employees and other disabled persons on the premises? N/A Yes No

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

If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action in the action plan.

Emergency escape lighting

Is there a reasonable standard of emergency escape lighting to illuminate escape routes and areas without natural lighting? N/A Yes No

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

If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action in the action plan.

Fire safety signs and notices

Is there a reasonable standard of fire exit signage and fire safety signs?

N/A Yes No

Are fire action notices, detailing the action to take in the event of a fire, provided and sited in prominent locations?

N/A Yes No

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

If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action in the action plan.

Means of giving warning in case of a fire

Is there a suitable electrical fire alarm system?

N/A Yes No

Are automatic smoke/heat detectors provided and is the extent and coverage considered adequate?

N/A Yes No

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

If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action in the action plan.

Manual fire extinguishers

Is there a reasonable provision of fire extinguishers?

N/A Yes No

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

If the answer to any question is no, include suitable action in the action plan.

Management of fire safety

Has someone been appointed to manage fire safety? Yes No

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

Are all employees given regular instruction and training on the action to take in the event of a fire? Yes No

Are employees with additional responsibilities, such as fire wardens, given additional training to carry out their roles? N/A Yes No

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

Are monthly and annual testing routines in place for the emergency escape lighting? N/A Yes No

Are weekly testing and periodic maintenance and servicing routines in place for the fire alarm system and any automatic detectors? N/A Yes No

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 in the action plan.

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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				

7. References

- CLG Fire Safety Guide No 1 Offices and shops
[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/
fire-safety-risk-assessment-offices-and-shops](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-offices-and-shops)
- CLG Fire Safety Guide No 2 Factories and warehouses
[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/
fire-safety-risk-assessment-factories-and-warehouses](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-factories-and-warehouses)
- CLG Fire Safety Guide No 6 Small and medium places of assembly
[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/
fire-safety-risk-assessment-small-and-medium-places-of-assembly](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-small-and-medium-places-of-assembly)
- CLG Supplementary Guide – Means of escape for disabled people
[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/
fire-safety-risk-assessment-means-of-escape-for-disabled-people](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-means-of-escape-for-disabled-people)