

Fire Safety:

Everyone's Responsibility

Fire risk assessments, evacuation procedures, extinguisher types, the role of the responsible person and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.



Last reviewed: August 2026



HSE · RR(FS)O 2005



England, Scotland and Wales

ukworkrights.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, similar duties come from Northern Ireland's own health and safety law. Contact HSENI (Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland), not the HSE.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

- The **Responsible Person** (employer, owner or occupier) must carry out a **fire risk assessment** and act on it
- Must put in place **appropriate fire safety measures** — detection, warning, escape routes, firefighting equipment
- Must ensure all employees receive **fire safety information and training**
- Must review the fire risk assessment **regularly** and after any significant change
- Fire risk assessments for premises with 5+ employees must be **recorded in writing**
- In 2023/24, there were **22,000+ fires in non-domestic premises** in England (NFRS data)

▲ NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with the RRO can result in prosecution, unlimited fines and imprisonment of the Responsible Person.

Fire extinguisher types — use the right one

TYPE (COLOUR)	USE ON	NEVER USE ON
Water (red)	Wood, paper, textiles	Electrical, flammable liquids
Foam (cream)	Flammable liquids, solids	Electrical equipment
CO ₂ (black)	Electrical, flammable liquids	Cooking oil
Powder (blue)	Most fires — multi-purpose	Enclosed spaces (hazardous)
Wet chemical (yellow)	Cooking oils (Class F)	Electrical (unless rated)

▲ KEY RULE

Never fight a fire if it means putting yourself at risk. Sound the alarm, evacuate, call 999. Extinguishers are for small, contained fires in the escape path only.

What to do if a fire breaks out

1

Raise the alarm immediately

Use the nearest break-glass call point or shout "FIRE". Do not assume someone else has done it.

2

Evacuate — do not use lifts

Leave by the nearest safe exit. Close doors behind you — this limits fire spread. Do not stop to collect belongings.

3

Go to the assembly point

Do not re-enter the building for any reason. Report to the fire warden so they can account for everyone.

4

Call 999

If not already called. Give your location, the building name and what is on fire. Stay on the line.

Frequently asked questions

Q How often should fire drills take place?

At least once a year — more frequently in higher-risk premises or where staff turnover is high. The results must be recorded. A drill that goes badly is valuable — it shows what needs to improve.

Q What if I have mobility difficulties and cannot use the stairs?

Your employer must have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for you. This should identify the evacuation route, any assistance needed and refuge points. Ask your employer if you don't have one.

Q Can I be fined for propping fire doors open?

Fire doors must never be propped open as they are designed to contain fire and smoke. Doing so could constitute a breach of the RRO — with serious consequences for the Responsible Person and potential criminal liability.

Q Do all premises need a fire risk assessment?

Yes — the RRO applies to virtually all non-domestic premises including offices, shops, warehouses, schools, care homes and communal areas of residential buildings. Domestic homes are not covered.

Delivery notes & attendance record

Before you start

Walk the route if you can. Ask who the fire marshals are — if nobody can name them, that is your finding for the day.

Questions to ask the team

1. Where is your nearest fire exit, and your second nearest if that one is blocked?
2. Who are our fire marshals and how would you recognise them?
3. Where is the assembly point, and who checks everyone is out?
4. Is anything currently blocking an exit route or a fire door?

The law behind this talk

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (arts. 8–22); Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2(2)(c)

Employers must give workers comprehensible information, instruction and training on the risks they face — Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2(2)(c) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg. 10. Keep the record below as evidence that you did.

Attendance record

Topic

Fire Safety: Everyone's Responsibility

Date

Site / location

Delivered by

Actions agreed

Next talk due

Attendees

Name	Signature

Use the Print handout button to print this record. General guidance only, not legal advice. This toolbox talk is generic material and is not a substitute for a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent person. Employers remain responsible for their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

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Fire Safety *free guidance*

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HSE ADVISORY TEAM

0300 003 1747

hse.gov.uk

ACAS

0300 123 1100

acas.org.uk

CITIZENS ADVICE

0800 144 8848

citizensadvice.org.uk

UK WORK RIGHTS

Fire Safety

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-firesafety.html

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