Fire risk assessment
a guide for businesses

CORNWALL FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
A service of Cornwall Council

Working together to make **Cornwall safer**

Disclaimer

Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service provide this guide to assist businesses to improve fire safety in their premises, but stress the person completing or reviewing the fire risk assessment must be competent. If you choose to get advice or a specialist to complete your fire risk assessment, you are still legally responsible for the fire safety in your premises and the fire risk assessment.

This template will give you an example of a fire risk assessment and illustrate some of the areas you should consider. It must be stressed that it is only a guide, and you must ensure that your fire risk assessment is suitable and sufficient, and detailed enough to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The content of the fire risk assessment and the identification and addressing of any significant findings are the responsibility of the responsible person.

The use of this fire risk assessment template will not prejudice any enforcement action that may be taken by Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service as a result of any fire safety deficiencies found during an audit, and does not automatically demonstrate compliance with the law.

The Fire Service cannot carry out the risk assessment for you, but they can give you information and advice on appropriate measures to protect your premises from fire.

If after reading this guide you still feel you need more information about appropriate measures to take, you can contact your a fire safety officer from Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service for advice on:

Email
protection@fire.cornwall.gov.uk

St Austell Community Fire Station
Tel: 01726 223620 (office hours 9am to 5pm)

24 hr Fire Safety Advice
Tel: 0800 3581 999

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1. Introduction

The Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2005 came into force on 1 October 2006, and relates to all premises, with very few exceptions. It places responsibility on those who are best placed to address fire safety and ensure that risks which necessarily change over time are kept under review. Under the Fire Safety Order a 'responsible person' (usually the owner, landlord, employer, or occupier of a business or industrial premises) must carry out a fire risk assessment. Responsible persons under the Order are required, following a risk assessment to implement appropriate fire safety measures to minimise the risk to life from fire; and to keep the assessment up to date.

This document suggests information that should be contained in a fire risk assessment record. When completed in accordance with all suggestions, it may serve as a record of a fire risk assessment as required by The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

From the date these Regulations came into force, it became a requirement for all responsible persons to:

- Carry out a fire risk assessment of the workplace, taking into consideration all employees and all other people who may be affected by a fire in the workplace and to make adequate provision for any disabled people with special needs who use, or may be present in the premises.

- Identify the significant findings of the risk assessment and the details of anyone who might be especially at risk in case of fire. If five or more people are employed, it is a requirement that these significant findings are recorded (however it is recommended that a written record is produced on all occasions to assist with the process of ongoing reviews).

- Provide and maintain such fire precautions as are necessary to safeguard those who use the workplace; and

- Provide information, instruction and training to employees about the fire precautions in the workplace

Further guidance can be found in a series of guides produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) at **www.cornwall.gov.uk/fireriskassessment**

For record keeping we have also produced a fire safety logbook which will assist you in the management of your control measures, it can be downloaded from **www.cornwall.gov.uk/firelogbook**

2. How to complete a fire risk assessment

Divide the premises into areas/rooms/floors as necessary and carry out a fire risk assessment for each part. You will also need to appreciate the impact one area or floor may have on other areas. During the assessment and evaluation of the findings, you should bear in mind the following.

The recording of information within this document should be in a narrative format and not simply a yes or no answer to a question.

Significant findings

Upon completion of the fire risk assessment, the significant findings should be recorded (Section 23) and the significant findings should include:

- A record of the protective and preventative measures already in place to control the risks;

- What further action, if any needs to be taken to reduce risk sufficiently.

Review and revision

The assessment should be reviewed or revised following any of the following:-

- Any changes to legislation

- Any significant change of work practices

- Any significant change in staff levels

- Staff changes or a new group of relevant persons

- Any structural or material alteration to the premises

- Any near miss or fire
- It is recommended that the assessment be reviewed at least annually

3. Premises particulars

Specify the following particulars:

- Name and address of premises

- Telephone number

- Use of Premises – Office, shop, factory, warehouse etc…

- Name and position/status of the Responsible Person (owner/Employer/Person(s) in control of the workplace)***

- Name, date and position of the lead risk assessor (the person who is the original author of the risk assessment)

- Name, date and position of the person who reviewed the fire risk assessment

*** The "Responsible Person" concept is hierarchical. It starts with the employer; if someone is employed on a premises, the employer is responsible for compliance with the Fire Safety Order. If no-one is employed, such as village halls, scout huts etc, it is the person in control of the premises. Finally, if it is neither of those it is the owner of the premises.

4. Provide a general statement of policy

A safety policy is a written statement of an employer's intent to ensure the safety of their employees. The purpose of the safety policy is to give clear commitment to comply with the relevant Regulations.

Example:

"It is the policy of (employer/company/etc.) to protect all persons including employees, customers, contractors and members of the public from potential injury and damage to their health which might arise from work activities.

The company will provide and maintain safe working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all employees, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

The company will give a high level of commitment to health and safety and will comply with all statutory requirements."

Fire Risk Assessment

3. Premises details

Premises Name:	**Use of Premises:**
Address:	**Name of the Responsible Person:**
Post Code:	**Position or status:**
Tel:	

Date of Assessment:	**Date of Review:**
Name of Lead Risk Assessor:	**Risk Assessment Reviewed by:**
Position:	**Position:**

4. General statement of policy

Signed:	**Print Name:**	**Date:**

5. Management systems

Provide a statement specifying the planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the fire risk assessment.

- **Planning** – How the employer proposes to complete the fire risk assessment and determine priorities in eliminating any hazards and reducing risks to persons.

- **Organisation** – How the organisation is structured. To include how health and safety information is communicated to all employees, and what their involvement has been in complying with all aspects of the fire risk assessment.

- **Control** - Identify the people (at all levels) who may have responsibility for carrying out the management of health and safety issues throughout the workplace.

- **Monitoring** – Identify how the employer will measure the success of the health and safety policy. This should include regular checks of fire precautions, investigation of causes of incidents and the recording of other relevant information.

- **Review** – Identify a regular review procedure to include any identified deficiencies and a process by which they can be rectified.

5. Management systems

6. General description of the premises

Give a general description of the premises and the use to which it is in use including the following details:

- Construction detail of the premises (i.e. Brick/Timber/Concrete)

- Approximate age of premises

Occupancy

- Occupancy times

- Total number of persons employed in the premises at any one time

- Total number of persons who may resort to the premises at any one time

Size

- Size of the premises (Length and Width and/or area)

- Number of floors and staircases

7. Fire safety systems

Give details of any fire safety systems in the premises such as fire warning systems, escape lighting, sprinklers e.g. Fire alarm break- glass system to British Standard 5839, escape lighting to British Standard 5266.

If none are to be provided briefly state the reasoning for that decision e.g. small open workshop, only three people at any one time, clear visibility or word-of-mouth sufficient to raise the alarm.

6. General description of the premises

Occupancy

The premises are in use from   to

Total number of persons **employed** within the premises at any one time =

Total number of persons who may resort to the premises at any one time =

Total =

Size

Building footprint (Metres x Metres)

          x   =

Number of floors:

Number of stairs (MOE):

7. Fire safety systems within the premises

Fire warning system (e.g. automatic fire detection, break-glass system):

Emergency lighting (e.g. maintained/non-maintained, 1hr/3hr duration to BS5266):

**Other systems (e.g. sprinkler systems):**

8. Plan drawing

To assist the assessor in completing an assessment, and employees in understanding the findings and evacuation procedures/plans it is recommended that a single line drawing of the premises/area/room/floor is prepared, which should be attached to the risk assessment.

The plan should show:

- Escape routes

- Number of exits

- Number of stairs

- Fire resisting doors

- Fire resisting walls and partitions

- Places of safety etc

- Fire safety signs and notices (e.g. pictographic fire exit signs, fire action notices etc)

- The location of fire warning devices (e.g. break-glass alarm points, sounders, rotary gongs)

- The location of emergency lights (to include hand held torches if provided)

- The location and type of fire fighting equipment (e.g. water extinguishers, foam extinguishers etc)

8. Plan drawing
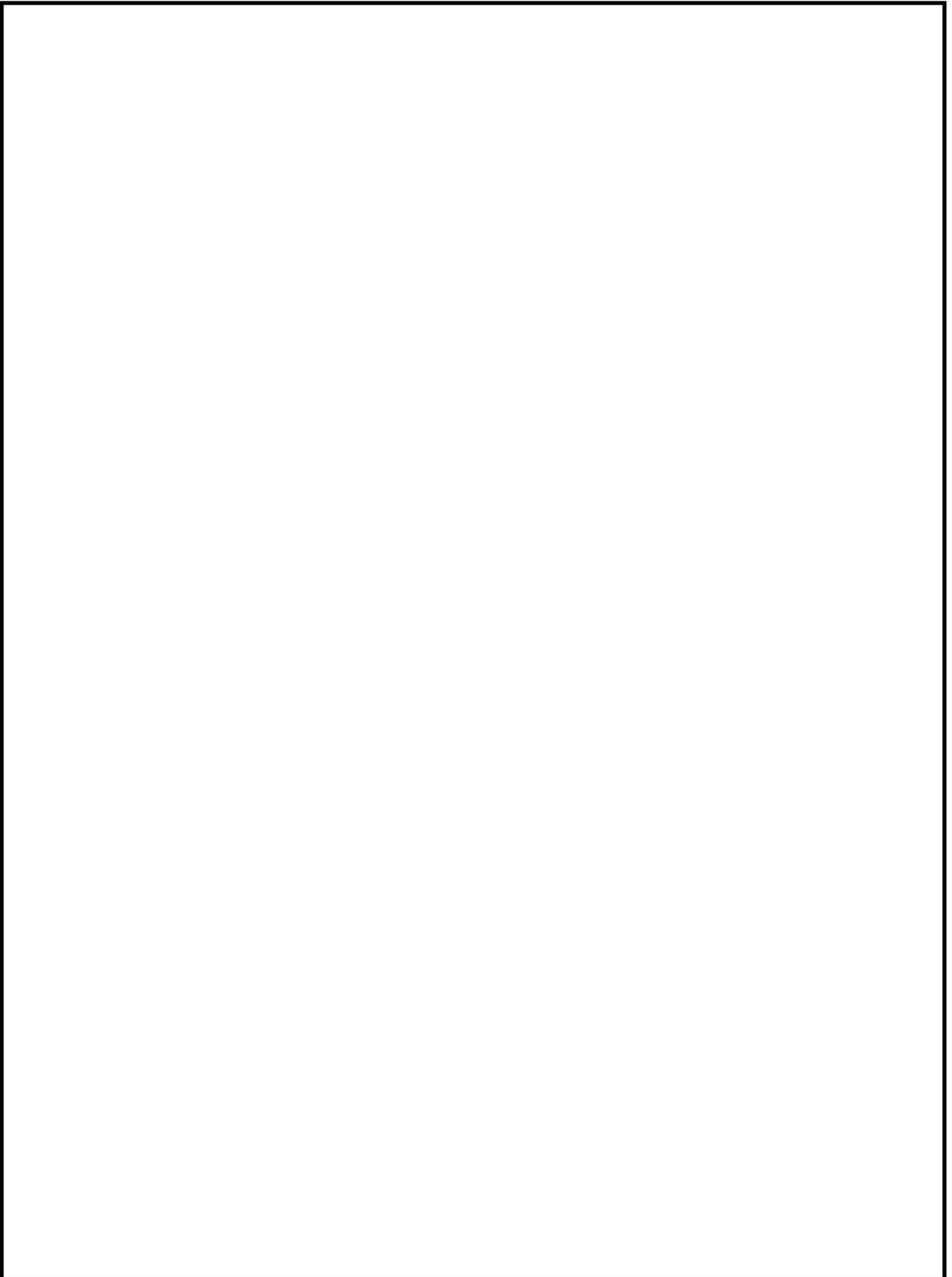
9. Identify fire hazards within the area/room/floor

Consider any fire hazards within the area/room/floor such as:

Ignition sources

- Smoking materials /matches, lighters etc

- Naked flames and hot work processes

- Fixed and portable heaters

- Boilers, engines, machinery

- Cooking

- Lighting equipment

- Friction and sparks

- Arson

Fuel sources

- Flammable liquids, solvents, oils etc

- Chemicals

- Wood, paper, cardboard etc

- Plastics, rubber, foam

- Furniture and furnishings

- Flammable gases

- Textiles

- Display materials

- Waste materials

Work processes
Can any fire risks identified be removed, replaced or reduced?

Structural features
Consider any structural features that could promote the spread of fire (e.g. open staircases, openings in walls and floors, large voids above ceilings and below floors). Additionally consider the potential combustibility of any structural features.

9. Identify the fire hazards

Sources of ignition:

Sources of fuel:

Work processes:

Structural feature that could promote the spread of fire:

10. Identify the people at risk from fire

Consider:

- Employees

- Visitors / Customers

- Employees, visitors, and other persons whose mobility, hearing or eyesight is impaired

- Other persons in the premises if the premises are multi-occupied

- Varied working practices (e.g. areas of your premises occupied when others are not)

- Areas where employees and others are isolated

- Contractors

- Persons who may be asleep in your premises

10. Identify the people at risk from fire

Identify and specify the likely location of people at significant risk in case of fire, indicating why they are at risk and the control's in place or that are needed:

11. Evaluate, remove or reduce and protect from the risk

- Evaluate the risk of a fire starting

- Evaluate the risk to people from a fire

- Remove fire hazards (where possible)

- Remove or reduce the risks to people from a fire

- Protect people by providing fire precautions

11. Evaluate, remove or reduce and protect from the risk

# 12. Means of escape – horizontal evacuation

Consideration of the following factors should be recorded in a narrative format and not simply a yes or no answer to a question.

- How fire hazards are controlled within the area, room or floor

- The need to control and monitor the number of occupants

- The number of occupants in the area, room or floor and their familiarity with the premises

- The likely spread of fire

- The time it would probably take to escape (e.g. 2-3 minutes)?

- In the event of a fire can all persons safely evacuate the premises after taking into account the fire risks in the area?

- Travel distances. How far to the nearest exit?

- Definition and number of escape routes, easily identified and available at all times?

- Number and widths of exits, sufficient to evacuate all occupants quickly and easily?

- Inner rooms situations. Is there exit only available through another room?

- Corridors. Do they need to be protected by fire resisting walls and doors?

- Dead-end rooms, corridors, floors; is there only one way out?

- Door openings and door fastenings, can door(s) be opened easily without the use of a key?

- Do all escape routes lead to a place of safety (e.g. not to an enclosed yard)?

- Housekeeping. Is there storage of combustibles or obstructions in escape routes?

- Sufficient number of stairways

- Provisions for people with disabilities. Deaf, Blind, Mobility issues or special needs etc


13. Means of escape – vertical evacuation

- Are there sufficient stairways to get all occupants out of the premises even if one stairway is inaccessible due to fire?

- Are the stairways wide enough to get all occupants out of the premises (including disabled persons)?

- Do the doors, walls and partitions to the stairways need to be fire resisting (e.g. could a fire spread to the staircase(s) before occupants have evacuated taking into account the fire hazards present)?

- Do the exits from the stairways lead to place of safety (e.g. not to an enclosed yard)?

12. Means of escape – horizontal evacuation
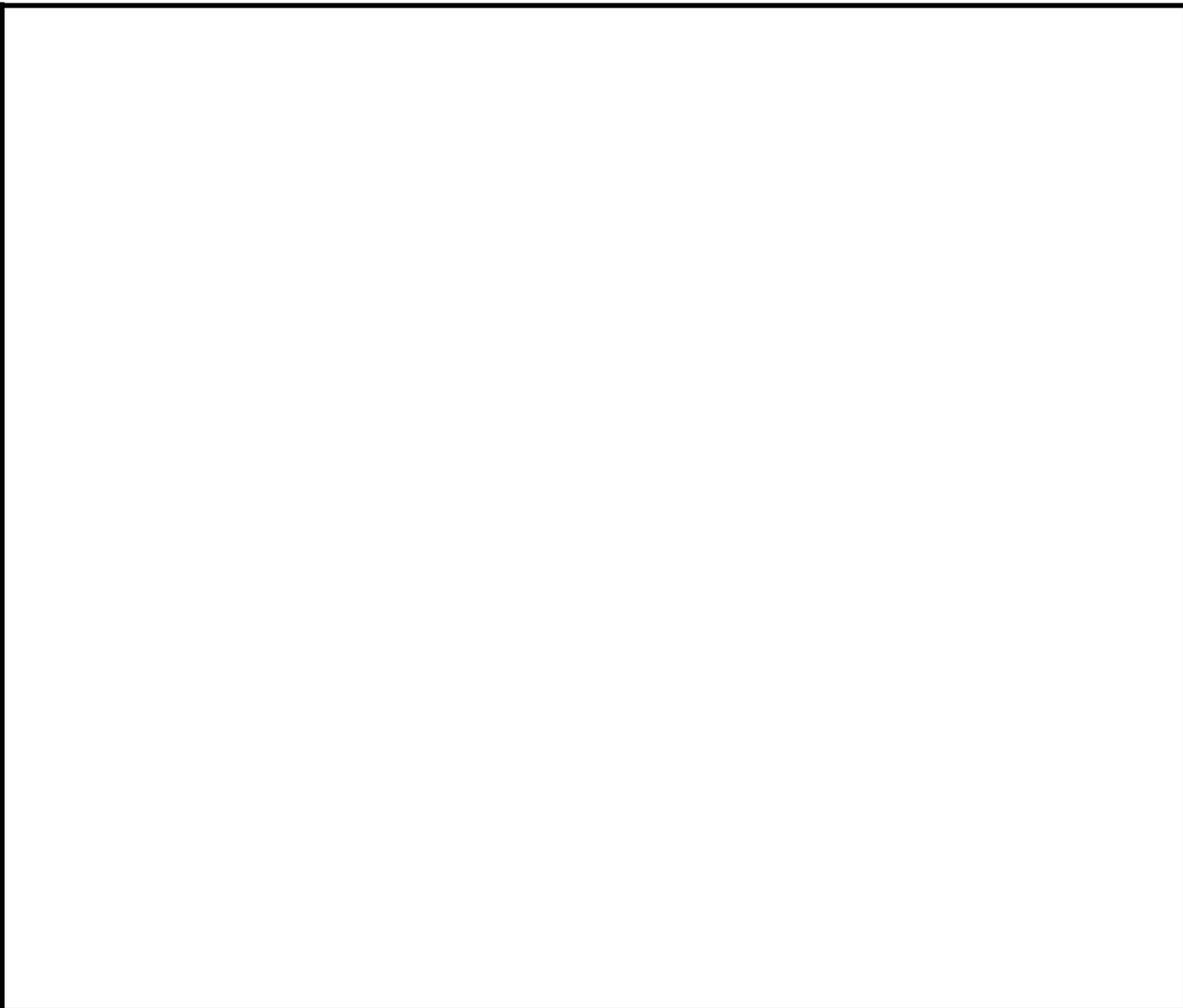
13. Means of escape – vertical evacuation
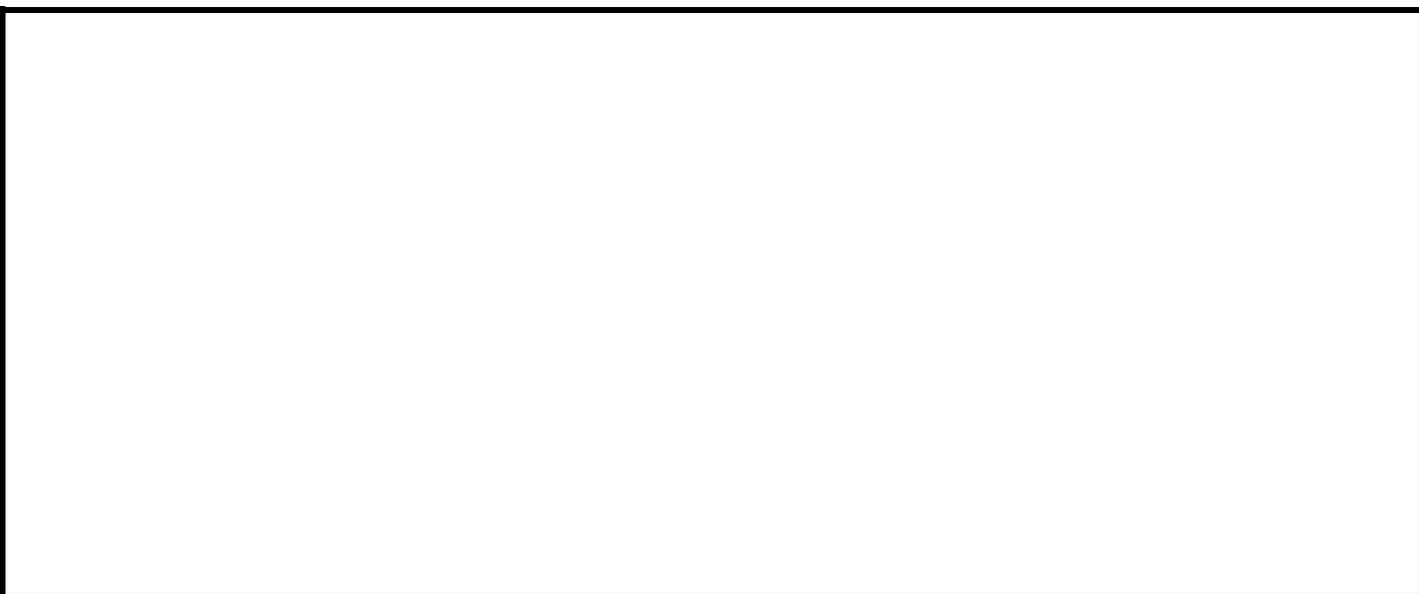
14. Fire safety signs and notices

- Do all fire safety signs comply with the current standard (e.g. BS5499 pictogram – symbols)?
- Sufficient fire exit signs on the escape routes?
- Internal fire resisting doors indicated with "**Fire Door-Keep Shut**" notices?
- Internal fire resisting doors to cupboards indicated with **"Fire Door – Keep Locked Shut"** signs?
- Where necessary are fire exit doors marked with "**Fire Exit-Keep Clear**" notices (outside face)?
- Signs indicating how to use door opening mechanisms e.g. "**Push Bar to Open**"?
- General fire action notices displayed stating what to do in a fire situation?
- Is fire-fighting equipment indicated?

15. Fire warning systems

- Is there a suitable fire warning system to alert occupants in the event of a fire?
- If the premises are large and/or complex an electric fire alarm should be installed to the current British Standard e.g. BS5839-1.
- Can all occupants be alerted when the alarm when it is sounded (Including persons with hearing difficulties)?
- Is there a need for automatic fire detection e.g. sleeping risks, multi-occupied premises, varied working, inner room's situations and mezzanine floors?

16. Emergency lighting system

- If the premises are in use during the hours of darkness (consider winter months) escape lighting should be provided (adjacent street lighting through external glazing, may be considered)
- Areas of the premises with no natural light (internal spaces) should be provided with escape lighting.
- If the premises are large and/or complex an escape lighting system should be installed to British Standard 5266.
- Where the premises are small a number of hand held torches strategically located may be sufficient?
- When operated is there sufficient illumination for occupants to see the external escape routes clearly?
- Does the system operate on sub-circuit failure?
- Is there sufficient illumination at changes in level and changes in direction?
- Is there sufficient illumination to show fire exit doors and their operation?
- Is there sufficient illumination to show fire alarm call points and fire fighting equipment?

17. Fire fighting equipment

- Is there sufficient fire fighting equipment provided for the area, room and floor?
- Is the fire fighting equipment appropriate for the risks?
- Is the fire fighting equipment simple to use?
- Has a competent person checked fire extinguishers within the last twelve months?
- Does it conform to a standard?
- Is the fire fighting equipment located on the escape routes and near to exit doors?
- Is it securely hung on wall brackets or suitable floor plates, unobstructed and easily accessible?

14. Fire safety signs and notices

15. Fire warning system

16. Emergency lighting system

17. Fire fighting equipment

18. Maintenance

The means of escape and other fire safety provisions must be maintained at suitable intervals, by a competent person and the maintenance recorded.

Produce a maintenance schedule that covers the means of escape, signs and notices, fire warning system, escape lighting and if provided for the fire fighting equipment.

Specify who will carry out the maintenance and where it will be recorded (download our fire log book from **www.cornwall.gov.uk/firelogbook**).

Use the table below to check that all the fire safety provisions have been covered in the maintenance schedule. Attach the maintenance record to the risk assessment.

Recommended maintenance schedule

Equipment	Period	Action
Fire detection and fire warning systems including self-contained smoke alarms and manually operated devices.	Weekly	Check all systems for state of repair and operation. Repair or replace defective units Test operation of systems, self contained alarms and manually operated devices.
	Every 6 months	Full check and test of system by competent service engineer. Clean self-contained smoke alarms and change batteries.
Emergency lighting equipment including self-contained units and torches.	Weekly	Operate torches and replace all batteries as required. Repair or replace any defective unit.
	Monthly	Check all systems, units and torches for state of repair and ensure good working order.
	Annually	Full check and test of systems and units by competent service engineer. Replace batteries in torches.
Fire fighting equipment including hose reels.	Weekly	Check all extinguishers including hose reels for correct installation and apparent working order.
	Annually	Full check and test by competent service engineer.

18. Management and maintenance

Is there a maintenance program for the fire safety provisions in the premises?

Are regular checks of fire resisting doors and self closers, walls and partitions carried out?

Are regular checks of escape routes and exits doors carried out?

Are regular checks of fire safety signs carried out?

Is there a maintenance regime for the fire warning system?

Is the fire alarm system tested weekly?

Is your alarm serviced by a competent engineer every six months?

Is there a maintenance regime for the emergency lighting?

Is the emergency lighting serviced by a competent person every 12 months?

Is your fire fighting equipment checked every week?

Is your fire fighting equipment serviced by a competent person every 12 months?

Are there records for all the above checks and tests?

19. Procedure for calling the fire service

Establish and record the specific method by which the fire service would be called in the event of a fire e.g. *(Automatic/person)*. If you use an automatic call centre (ARC), in an emergency always backup the ARC with a 999 or 112 call to ensure a fire appliance is en-route, never just rely just on your ARC if the building is occupied. Specify who will call the fire service and ensure business continuity (e.g. nominate more than more person to cover leave sickness etc).

20. Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

Produce an emergency action plan, which details the procedure to follow in the event of the fire alarm sounding or a fire in the workplace.

The EAP should cover:-

- All foreseeable events

- How people will be warned

- The action employees should take if the fire alarm sounds

- The action employees should take if they discover a fire

- How the evacuation is carried out (action on hearing fire warning)

- To include the evacuation of visitors and people with disabilities

- Assembly points

- Procedures for checking the premises have been evacuated

- Identify escape routes

- Fire fighting equipment

- Duties and identities of persons with specific responsibilities in the event of a fire

- Where appropriate the isolating of machinery and processes

- How the fire service are called and by who (**note:** the activation of a fire alarm is not the trigger to call the fire service unless there is a sign of fire e.g. smoke, smell of burning)

- Liaison with fire service on arrival

- Attach the EAP to the risk assessment

21. Staff Training

All employees should receive fire safety training including a full explanation of the EAP. This should be carried out on induction and other regular periods, (usually once or twice a year).

The training programme should also include the following:-

- Who receives training

- What training is given

- How often it is given

- Where it is recorded (to include staff acknowledgement of training given)

Attach the training programme to the risk assessment.

Fire drills - Regular fire drills should be carried out to both support the training given and to test that procedures work effectively.

19. Procedure for calling the Fire Service

20. Emergency action plan

21. Staff training

22. Rectification of fire safety deficiencies

- Make a list of the fire safety deficiencies found from the fire risk assessment

- Prioritise and rectify the deficiencies in order of risk by way of a fire safety action plan. (The highest priorities being dealt with first)

- Once fully rectified, amend the fire risk assessment sheets and fire safety records

- Review the fire risk assessment.

22. Fire safety deficiencies to be rectified

Date	Deficiency	Priority Level	Target date	Date completed

23. Significant findings

From the outcomes of the fire risk assessment record the significant findings.

The significant findings should include:

- A record of the protective and preventative measures currently in place to control the risks.

- What further action, if any, needs to be taken to reduce risk sufficiently (as identified in Section 19 Fire Safety deficiencies)

They should include:

- The fire hazards

- Any actions taken to remove or reduce the risk of fire (preventative measures)

- Any persons who may be at risk

- Any actions taken to prevent the risk of fire spread (protective measures)

- The actions people need to take in case of fire (emergency plan)

- Any information, training and instruction people need or have been given

23. Significant findings

Significant findings	Control measures and action

25. Additional hazards

Although not forming part of the risk assessment persons in control of a workplace are requested to inform the Fire Authority of any additional hazards within the workplace.

Emergency crews entering the site/building should be made aware of any hazards which may affect their safety, particularly those which may require special procedures for fire fighting.

Specify any such hazard and inform the Fire Authority in order that an appropriate operational plan can be undertaken.

25. Additional hazards