



8. Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Arson Risk Assessment & Perimeter Security Review

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Risk Assessments & Planning
Frequency:	Yearly
Status:	Best Practice
Type:	Competent Person
Priority:	Recommended
Commonality:	Common

Note: This document provides guidance to support compliance but is not a substitute for professional advice.

Why This Task Matters

Your proactive approach to assessing arson risks and maintaining perimeter security protects the school from deliberate fire-setting, safeguarding pupils, staff, and valuable educational resources. By identifying and addressing potential security vulnerabilities, you demonstrate your comprehensive commitment to fire prevention and community safety. Your vigilance in this area builds confidence that the school is well-protected during unoccupied hours and contributes to a secure learning environment for all.

Task Summary

Best Practice: An annual review of arson risk and perimeter security checks that bins, stores, and external access points do not present fire-loading risks. This comprehensive assessment involves evaluating the site's vulnerability to arson, examining perimeter security measures, and identifying potential ignition sources or fuel loads that could be exploited. The review includes inspecting external areas for waste storage, checking security lighting and access controls, and assessing the site's attractiveness to arsonists. In schools, which are often unoccupied in the evenings and holidays but remain attractive targets, good security and waste management reduce this risk and safeguard pupils and assets. The assessment includes documenting current security measures, identifying

vulnerabilities, and recommending improvements. Evidence produced includes the reviewed assessment document with updated risk ratings, site inspection photos showing security measures and potential vulnerabilities, and any improvement recommendations.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires consideration of arson risks in fire risk assessments
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on external fire risks and security
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on arson prevention and perimeter security
- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles:** Provides guidance on designing out crime opportunities
- **Secure by Design principles:** Offers guidance on building design for crime prevention

Typical Frequency

The arson risk assessment and perimeter security review should be conducted annually, or sooner if there are changes to the site's security arrangements or surrounding environment. In educational settings, annual reviews typically occur during school holidays when security vulnerabilities may be more apparent. However, more frequent reviews may be needed following local arson incidents, changes to perimeter security, or modifications to waste storage arrangements. Any significant changes to the site's security or local crime patterns should trigger an immediate review regardless of the annual schedule.

Applicability

This task is recommended for all educational establishments, particularly those in areas with higher arson risks or those with valuable equipment and resources. It is especially important for schools in urban areas, those with historical arson incidents, or institutions with significant IT or scientific equipment. The task applies to all premises with external areas, waste storage, or perimeter security measures. While not statutory for all premises, it is essential best practice for protecting educational facilities from deliberate fire-setting.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** Competent Person
- **In-House Requirements:** This task can be completed by facilities staff or security officers who have received appropriate training in risk assessment and perimeter security

evaluation. Staff should be familiar with the site's security systems and local crime patterns.

- **Permit to Work:** No permit to work is typically required for this assessment task.
- **Delivery Model:** Normally completed in-house by trained facilities staff, with support from security advisors if needed.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during school holidays when security issues are more visible
- **Cost implications:** Minimal cost if completed in-house, though may involve security equipment upgrades
- **Resource requirements:** Access to site perimeter and external areas
- **Potential disruption:** May require evening or weekend visits to assess security lighting
- **Risk assessment requirements:** Findings should inform updates to the fire risk assessment

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure access to current arson risk assessment and security documentation
- Confirm availability of site keys and security codes
- Gather information about local crime patterns and previous incidents
- Ensure safe access to external areas, especially after dark

Tools & Materials

- Current arson risk assessment document
- Site plans showing perimeter and external areas
- Photographic equipment for documentation
- Torch for inspecting dark areas
- Local crime statistics and incident reports

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Document Review and Planning

1. Review current arson risk assessment and security measures
2. Gather information about local arson incidents and crime patterns
3. Plan systematic inspection of perimeter and external areas

4. Schedule inspection during different times to assess security effectiveness

Phase B: Perimeter Security Inspection

1. Examine perimeter fencing, gates, and access points for vulnerabilities
2. Check security lighting coverage and effectiveness
3. Assess external waste storage and potential fuel loads
4. Inspect building openings and potential entry points
5. Evaluate visibility from public areas and natural surveillance
6. Review CCTV coverage and blind spots

Phase B: Risk Assessment and Documentation

1. Evaluate site's attractiveness to arsonists based on location and contents
2. Assess current security measures and their effectiveness
3. Identify potential ignition sources and fuel loads
4. Document vulnerabilities with photographs
5. Prepare updated risk assessment with recommendations

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Perimeter security must provide adequate deterrence and detection
- Security lighting must illuminate potential access points effectively
- Waste storage must not create significant fuel loads near buildings
- Access controls must be effective and well-maintained

If Results Fail

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Immediately secure any critical vulnerabilities identified. Escalate significant security concerns to senior management. Arrange urgent implementation of security improvements.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

No reinstatement required as this is an assessment task. Ensure all documentation is securely filed.

Completion Checks

Verify that the assessment covers all perimeter areas and potential vulnerabilities. Confirm that recommendations are practical and prioritised. Ensure photographic evidence supports findings.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** No statutory evidence is required for this task.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Updated arson assessment document, inspection photographs, and security improvement recommendations support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Underestimating local arson risks, failing to consider unoccupied periods, or not addressing waste storage issues
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Coordinate with local police for crime statistics, conduct inspections at different times, and involve security experts for complex assessments
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Link arson prevention to community policing programs, maintain clear waste storage policies, and educate staff about security awareness
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Previous arson attempts, inadequate perimeter lighting, accessible waste materials, or lack of natural surveillance

Quick Reference Checklist

- Current arson assessment reviewed
- Local crime patterns researched
- Perimeter security inspected
- External areas assessed for fuel loads
- Security lighting evaluated
- Vulnerabilities documented with photos
- Updated assessment prepared
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

Grouping is feasible; align with related tasks of the same frequency and contractor visit.

Related Tasks

- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Risk Assessment Review & Renew
- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Compartmentation Survey

- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Stopping & Service Penetration Inspection
- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Fire Alarm Zone Plan Update & Verification
- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) Review
- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Generic Emergency Evacuation Plan (GEEP) Review
- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Fire Logbook Review & Update
- Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Fire Safety Management Policy Review

Disclaimer

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Users must ensure that all tasks are carried out in line with current legislation, manufacturer instructions, site-specific risk assessments, and organisational policies. Where necessary, professional advice should be sought from competent and accredited specialists — for example, fire risk assessors, water hygiene consultants, electrical engineers, gas safety contractors, or health and safety advisors.