



1. Fire - Risk Assessments & Planning - Risk Assessment Review & Renew

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Risk Assessments & Planning
Frequency:	Yearly
Status:	Statutory
Type:	Approved Contractor
Priority:	Core
Commonality:	Common

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

Why This Task Matters

Your dedication to maintaining current fire risk assessments protects every pupil, teacher, and visitor in your educational setting. By ensuring that evolving risks from building changes, new equipment, or increased occupancy are properly identified and managed, you create a secure learning environment that staff and parents can trust. Your expertise in keeping these assessments up-to-date demonstrates your vital role in safeguarding lives and maintaining compliance, giving everyone confidence in the school's safety systems.

Task Summary

Statutory: The Fire Risk Assessment must be reviewed and renewed annually, or sooner if there are material changes such as building works, new equipment, or a significant incident. This comprehensive review involves a systematic evaluation of the premises, identifying potential fire hazards, assessing the adequacy of existing fire precautions, and ensuring compliance with current fire safety legislation. The assessment examines means of escape, fire detection and warning systems, firefighting equipment, and management arrangements. In educational settings, this is particularly important during term-time when large numbers of pupils occupy classrooms, laboratories, sports halls, and residential areas. The review process includes site inspections, consultation with staff, and

updating the assessment document to reflect any changes in building layout, occupancy patterns, or equipment. Evidence produced includes the updated fire risk assessment document, signed review record showing completion and approval, and any consultant's report if external expertise is engaged.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Primary legislation requiring regular review and renewal of fire risk assessments in non-domestic premises including schools and colleges
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on fire safety provisions in educational buildings, including assessment requirements
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:** General duty of care requiring employers to ensure employee and visitor safety, including fire safety
- **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** (for independent schools): Requires adequate fire safety measures and regular assessments
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Provides best practice guidance for fire safety management in buildings including schools

Typical Frequency

The fire risk assessment must be reviewed and renewed annually, or sooner if there are material changes to the premises. In educational settings, this annual review typically occurs during school holidays to minimise disruption to teaching activities. However, the frequency could vary based on several factors: older buildings with more complex fire safety systems might require more frequent reviews; sites undergoing major refurbishment or extension works may need interim reviews; and premises with high-risk activities such as science laboratories or workshops might warrant more frequent assessments. Changes in occupancy patterns, introduction of new equipment, or following any fire incidents would trigger immediate reviews regardless of the annual cycle.

Applicability

This task applies to all educational establishments including schools, colleges, and universities, as fire risk assessments are a statutory requirement for all non-domestic premises. It is a core statutory task that is common to virtually all education sites. The task is particularly critical in larger or multi-storey buildings, sites with boarding accommodation, or those with high-risk areas such as science laboratories, design technology workshops, or performing arts spaces. While the basic requirement applies to all sites, the depth and complexity of the assessment will vary depending on the size, age, and use of the building.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** Approved Contractor
- **Contractor Requirements:** This task should be carried out by a competent fire safety consultant or fire risk assessor holding appropriate qualifications and professional indemnity insurance. In the UK, fire risk assessors should have completed a suitable training course (such as those accredited by the Institution of Fire Engineers) and be familiar with educational premises. Typical cost range: £500-£2,000 depending on site size and complexity.
- **Permit to Work:** No permit to work is typically required for this assessment task.
- **Delivery Model:** Normally contractor-delivered in most schools and colleges due to the specialist expertise required and the need for independent assessment.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during school holidays to avoid disruption to teaching, but ensure immediate review following any significant changes
- **Cost implications:** Budget £500-£2,000 annually for professional assessment services
- **Resource requirements:** Allow time for site access and staff consultation during the assessment process
- **Potential disruption:** Minimal disruption if scheduled appropriately, though may require brief staff interviews
- **Risk assessment requirements:** The assessment itself is a risk assessment and should follow established methodologies

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure the assessor holds appropriate qualifications and professional indemnity insurance
- Confirm the assessor has access to all areas of the building and relevant documentation
- Provide copies of previous fire risk assessment, building plans, and incident records
- Ensure staff are available for consultation about fire safety procedures and concerns

Tools & Materials

- Current building plans and layout drawings
- Previous fire risk assessment documentation
- Incident and maintenance records
- Photographic equipment for recording hazards

- Assessment checklist and recording forms
- Measuring equipment for escape route widths and travel distances

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Preparation and Planning

1. Review previous fire risk assessment and identify any changes since last review
2. Gather all relevant documentation including building plans, equipment records, and incident logs
3. Schedule site visit during a period of normal occupancy to observe actual use patterns
4. Confirm access arrangements for all areas including restricted or unoccupied spaces

Phase B: Site Inspection and Assessment

1. Conduct systematic walkthrough of all building areas, including basements, attics, and external spaces
2. Assess fire hazards including ignition sources, fuel loads, and oxygen sources
3. Evaluate existing fire precautions including detection systems, alarms, extinguishers, and escape routes
4. Identify persons at particular risk including those with disabilities or mobility issues
5. Review management systems including staff training, maintenance procedures, and emergency plans
6. Assess the adequacy of escape routes, exit signage, and assembly points
7. Evaluate the condition and maintenance of fire safety equipment and systems

Phase C: Documentation and Recommendations

1. Document all findings including identified hazards and existing control measures
2. Prepare risk rating for each hazard based on likelihood and potential consequences
3. Develop action plan for any deficiencies with clear timescales and responsibilities
4. Update all relevant documentation including floor plans, equipment schedules, and procedures
5. Prepare final assessment report with executive summary and detailed findings

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Escape routes must meet minimum width requirements (typically 1200mm for new buildings, 900mm for existing)
- Travel distances to exits should not exceed 18-45 metres depending on building type and risk level
- Fire doors must achieve 30-60 minute fire resistance depending on compartment size

- Emergency lighting must provide minimum 1 lux at floor level on escape routes

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 implement any urgent safety measures identified. Escalate critical findings to senior management and the fire safety manager. Schedule urgent contractor visits for any defective equipment. Update the fire risk assessment with interim measures while permanent solutions are implemented.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

No reinstatement required as this is an assessment task rather than physical work.

Completion Checks

Verify that all assessment documentation is complete and signed by the assessor. Confirm that any urgent actions have been identified and scheduled. Ensure all recommendations are clear and actionable.

Client Oversight Checklist (Before the Visit)

- Confirm assessor's qualifications and experience with educational premises
- Provide access to all building areas and keys/security codes
- Supply previous fire risk assessment and all relevant documentation
- Arrange for staff availability for consultation and to accompany the assessor

Client Oversight Checklist (During the Visit)

- Observe the systematic nature of the assessment and thoroughness of inspections
- Ensure all areas of the building are accessed and assessed
- Confirm that staff consultation includes a representative sample of different roles
- Verify that photographic evidence is taken of key hazards and equipment

Deliverables & Acceptance Criteria (After the Visit)

- Receive the updated fire risk assessment document with clear findings and recommendations
- Review the assessment for completeness and relevance to your premises
- Ensure all recommendations are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART)
- Confirm that the assessment follows current legislation and best practice guidance

Defects & Follow-up

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Prioritise actions based on risk level and implement urgent measures immediately. Agree realistic timescales for implementing recommendations. Schedule follow-up assessments if major changes are planned.

Reinstatement & Sign-off

No reinstatement required. Complete final sign-off once all documentation is received and reviewed.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** The updated fire risk assessment document, signed review record, and any consultant's report are statutory evidence that must be retained for at least 3 years or until superseded.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Site photographs, assessment checklists, and staff consultation records support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Not reviewing assessments following building changes, failing to consult all relevant staff, or not implementing recommendations within agreed timescales
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Maintain a central file of all fire safety documentation, involve staff in the assessment process, and use digital tools for efficient record-keeping
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Schedule assessments during holiday periods, involve students in fire safety discussions where appropriate, and link fire safety to broader health and safety training
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Multiple fire incidents, blocked escape routes, missing equipment, or lack of staff awareness about fire procedures

Quick Reference Checklist

- Previous fire risk assessment reviewed
- Site inspection completed covering all areas
- Staff consultation conducted
- Fire hazards identified and risk-rated

- Existing precautions evaluated
- Recommendations developed with timescales
- Documentation updated and signed
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

This task is not normally grouped with other tasks.

Related Tasks

- 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 - Arson Risk Assessment & Perimeter Security Review
- 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.