

## Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
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# Fire

Many people die or are seriously injured every year as a result of fires at work. These catastrophes along with millions of pounds worth of damage to property, disruption to business, compensation claims and increased insurance premiums could be avoided or the effects minimised if effective fire precautions, controls and procedures were in place.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect in October 2006 and replaced over 70 pieces of existing fire safety law. Fire certificates are no longer required, and the emphasis is on preventing fires and reducing risk. The regulations apply to all non-domestic premises. A "responsible person" must be identified who has control, or a degree of control, over premises or fire-prevention systems within premises.

This is frequently the facility manager who must carry out a fire-risk assessment and identify possible dangers and risks. The responsible person can appoint some other competent person to do the actual assessment, but they are still responsible in law. The findings must be recorded and reviewed as and when necessary.

The objective is to remove the risk from fire, as far as reasonably possible and to put in place fire precautions to deal with any risks that remain. The risk assessment should consider those who might be particularly at risk such as disabled staff, or people who work with chemicals. The plan must also make sure there is protection for the use or storage of flammable or explosive materials and there must be a plan to deal with fire related emergencies.

The responsible person must make sure that everyone who might be on the premises can escape if there is a fire including employees, visitors or members of the public. Particular attention must be paid to those who may need special help, such as elderly or disabled people or children.

In many premises achieving fire safety is likely to be a matter of common sense providing the responsible person makes enough time available to go through all the necessary steps. The enforcing authority, which is usually the local fire authority, must be satisfied with the safety measures developed. If they find major problems they can restrict the use of the premises or close them altogether until the issues identified are resolved.

*Fire Gateway is a web portal which has been funded by Communities and Local Government and developed with the involvement of English Fire and Rescue Services to provide a wide range of fire-related advice and links to useful sites. [www.fire.gov.uk](http://www.fire.gov.uk)*