



# Guidelines for Hut Managers

No. 3.1 February 2015\*



## Fire Safety – 1. England & Wales

### Scope and context

As owners or occupiers of a hut, clubs have a legal *duty of care* to make their premises safe to use. Fire safety forms a major part of this duty.

### The legislation

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order) came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006. Under the Order all non-domestic premises, which includes club huts, have to comply. A copy of the Order can be downloaded from –

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made)

Guidance notes relevant to the Order are available from –

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business)

See particularly the guides entitled *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: a short guide to making your premises safe from fire*, *Fire safety risk assessment: 5-step checklist* and *Sleeping accommodation*. See also *Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people* and refer to hut guideline no. 4 *Disability Discrimination*.

To get an overview of the requirements set out in the guidance documents refer to the checklist on page 2 of these guidelines.

### The requirement for a risk assessment

The Order requires a fire risk assessment to be conducted for all non-domestic premises, which includes club huts. A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at your premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises.

The aims of the fire risk assessment are:

- To identify the fire hazards and those who might be at risk.
- To reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable.
- To decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your premises if a fire does start.

Good management of fire safety is essential to ensure that fires are unlikely to occur; that if they do occur they are likely to be controlled or contained quickly, effectively and safely; or that, if a fire does occur and grow, everyone in the premises is able to escape to a place of total safety easily and quickly.

The risk assessment that must be carried out will help you ensure that your fire safety procedures, fire prevention measures, and fire precautions (plans, systems and equipment) are all in place and working properly, and the risk assessment should identify any issues that need attention. An outline of the key steps involved in risk assessment is appended after p. 3.

\*See notes in the information box on page 3 re. the currency (version no.) of this guideline

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The fire and rescue service will enforce the Order. The enforcing authority has the power to inspect your premises to check that you are complying with your duties under the Order. They will look for evidence that you have carried out a suitable fire risk assessment and acted upon the significant findings of that assessment. You are required to record the outcome of the assessment and they will expect to see a copy.

If the enforcing authority is dissatisfied with the outcome of your fire risk assessment or the action you have taken, they may issue an *enforcement notice* that requires you to make certain improvements or, in extreme cases, a *prohibition notice* that restricts the use of all or part of your premises until improvements are made.

Those who fail to comply with the Order may be found guilty of committing an offence. They may face a fine (up to £5,000) and/or imprisonment of up to 2 years.

The Chief Fire Officers Association has issued its own short guide, which states:

*“If you do not meet the Order, the fire authority will provide practical advice or, if the risk is serious, a formal notice. Except in the most serious cases, the fire authority will work with you to achieve a satisfactory level of fire safety.”*

The club will have to decide who is the ‘responsible person’ for each of their huts. The responsible person must –

- a) be competent to carry out the required tasks, or
- b) must appoint a ‘competent person’ to carry out the fire risk assessment, which must focus on the safety in case of fire of all ‘relevant persons’. It should pay particular attention to those at special risk and should include plans as to how to alert and evacuate any disabled persons.

The risk assessment will need to be reviewed periodically. There is no set frequency at which reviews have to be done but if you have reason to suspect that the risk assessment is no longer valid you should review it. This would be necessary if there had been significant alterations to the premises or if there had been a fire or ‘near miss’.

See guideline no. 4 *Disability Discrimination* for details of where to find specialist advice.

**Note:** *Different legislation applies in Scotland – see guideline no. 3.2 in this series.*

## **FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST**

If the answer to all the following questions is ‘Yes’ the fire risk assessment should not identify major problems.

**Note:** *This list should not be regarded as definitive and does not address all the management arrangements that may be required.*

- Are the internal dividing walls built of non-combustible materials?
- Are the floors / ceilings below upper rooms 30 minute fire rated?
- Are all rooms, except washrooms and toilets, fitted with self-closing fire doors that have intumescent strips and smoke seals?
- Are there protected corridors and staircases leading directly to external escape doors or windows?
- Are all final exit doors or windows capable of being opened without the use of a key?
- Do all bedrooms have alternative means of escape?
- Are there smoke / heat detectors in all rooms except washrooms and toilets?
- Are the fire alarm system and the emergency lights tested at regular intervals?

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- Is there a suitable fire alarm system capable of being heard in all parts of the building?
- Are there fire alarm call points?
- Are the escape routes well illuminated and fitted with emergency lights?
- Are the escape routes and fire exits clearly signed and kept free from obstructions?
- Are there sufficient portable fire extinguishers of the correct type?
- Are the fire extinguishers tested annually?
- Is there a layout of the building, displayed in a prominent position, showing escape routes, fire appliances and fire call points?
- Is there a fire instruction notice displayed in a prominent position?
- Are all flammable materials segregated and stored safely?
- Is the complete gas installation tested annually by a Gas Safe\* registered gas fitter?
- Is the electrical installation in good condition and tested regularly?

\* [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

See appendix after p.3.

**Note:** If viewing this .pdf while online then clicking on any [URL](#) will take you to that website.

## Hut Guidelines

These guidelines have been produced by the Huts Group of the British Mountaineering Council and the Huts Advisory Group of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland to assist those operating mountain huts in Britain.

Contact the BMC Huts Group by e-mail – [huts@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:huts@thebmc.co.uk) or telephone 0161 445 6111.

Contact the MCoFS Huts Advisory Group by e-mail – [huts@mcofs.org.uk](mailto:huts@mcofs.org.uk)

**Websites:** [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) and [www.mcofs.org.uk](http://www.mcofs.org.uk)

**URLs:** If any of the URLs (web addresses) given on the preceding pages are found to be 'dead links' please notify [huts@mcofs.org.uk](mailto:huts@mcofs.org.uk)

**Disclaimer:** These guidelines were revised on the date shown below and the information herein is believed to be accurate at the time of writing. No responsibility can be accepted for any loss of benefit or entitlement arising through use of these guidelines – they are not intended to be definitive.

**Version no. 3 – February 2015**

These guidelines are updated periodically; to check on the currency of this version go to one of the websites above where the latest version will always be displayed.

# FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

► Follow the 5 key steps ► Fill in the checklist ► Assess your fire risk and plan fire safety

## 1 Fire hazards

Fire starts when heat (source of ignition) comes into contact with fuel (anything that burns), and oxygen (air).

You need to keep sources of ignition and fuel **apart**.

### How could a fire start?

Think about heaters, lighting, naked flames, electrical equipment, hot processes such as welding or grinding, cigarettes, matches and anything else that gets very hot or causes sparks.

### What could burn?

Packaging, rubbish and furniture could all burn, just like the more obvious fuels such as petrol, paint, varnish and white spirit. Also think about wood, paper, plastic, rubber and foam. Do the walls or ceilings have hardboard, chipboard, or polystyrene? Check outside, too.

- Have you found anything that could start a fire?

*Make a note of it.*

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- Have you found anything that could burn?

*Make a note of it.*

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## 2 People at risk

### People at risk

Everyone is at risk if there is a fire. Think whether the risk is greater for some because of when or where they work, such as night staff, or because they're not familiar with the premises, such as visitors or customers. Children, the elderly or disabled people are especially vulnerable.

### Have you identified?

- Who could be at risk?  
 Who could be especially at risk?

*Make a note of what you have found.*

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## 3 Evaluate, and act

### Evaluate

First, think about what you have found in steps 1 and 2: what are the risks of a fire starting, and what are the risks to people in the building and nearby?

### Remove and reduce risk

How can you avoid accidental fires? Could a source of heat or sparks fall, be knocked or pushed into something that would burn? Could that happen the other way round?

### Protect

Take action to protect your premises and people from fire.

- Have you assessed the risks of fire in your workplace?  
 Have you assessed the risk to staff and visitors?

- Have you kept any source of fuel and heat/sparks apart?  
If someone wanted to start a fire deliberately, is there anything around they could use?  
 Have you removed or secured any fuel an arsonist could use?  
 Have you protected your premises from accidental fire or arson?

### How can you make sure everyone is safe in case of fire?

- Will you know there is a fire?  
 Do you have a plan to warn others?  
 Who will make sure everyone gets out?  
 Who will call the fire service?  
 Could you put out a small fire quickly and stop it spreading?

### How will everyone escape?

- Have you planned escape routes?  
 Have you made sure people will be able to safely find their way out, even at night if necessary?  
 Does all your safety equipment work?  
 Will people know what to do and how to use equipment?

*Make a note of what you have found.*

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## 4 Record, plan and train

### Record

Keep a record of any fire hazards and what you have done to reduce or remove them. If your premises are small, a record is a good idea. If you have five or more staff or have a licence then you must keep a record of what you have found and what you have done.

### Plan

You must have a clear plan of how to prevent fire and how you will keep people safe in case of fire. If you share a building with others, you need to coordinate your plan with them.

### Train

You need to make sure your staff know what to do in case of fire, and if necessary, are trained for their roles.

- Have you made a record of what you have found, and action you have taken?

- Have you planned what everyone will do if there is a fire?  
 Have you discussed the plan with all staff?

### Have you?

- Informed and trained people (practised a fire drill and recorded how it went)?  
 Nominated staff to put in place your fire prevention measures, and trained them?  
 Made sure everyone can fulfil their role?  
 Informed temporary staff?  
 Consulted others who share a building with you, and included them in your plan?

## 5 Review

Keep your risk assessment under regular review. Over time, the risks may change.

If you identify significant changes in risk or make any significant changes to your plan, you must tell others who share the premises and where appropriate re-train staff.

### Have you?

- Made any changes to the building inside or out?  
 Had a fire or near miss?  
 Changed work practices?  
 Begun to store chemicals or dangerous substances?  
 Significantly changed your stock, or stock levels?  
 Have you planned your next fire drill?

## Completed the checklist? Do you need more information?

The checklist above can help you with the Fire Risk Assessment **but** you may need additional information especially if you have large or complex premises.

We have produced a series of guides for different business sectors. These guides will give you more information about how to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment, with specific advice for your type of premises. These guides are free to download at [www.communities.gov.uk/fire](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire)