

All you need to know about the “Fire Risk Assessment”

What is a Fire Risk Assessment?

A Fire Risk Assessment is a process which involves a systematic evaluation of the factors that determine the hazard from fire, the likelihood of a fire occurring and the consequences if one were to occur.

The assessment is normally carried out to meet the criteria laid down within the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, BS9999:2008 Code of Practice: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings and Building Regulations Part B - Fire Safety etc.



Who carries out the Fire Risk Assessment?



The person carrying out the Fire Risk Assessment must be competent to do so. A competent person is regarded as a person with sufficient training, experience and knowledge of fire safety to enable them to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment properly.

Firecomply are an affiliate of the Institution of Fire Engineers. Qualifications range from BEng (Hons) in fire engineering and third party accreditation to MIFireE. All our Assessors are former career Fire Service officers with experience as a Fire Safety Enforcement Officer.

What does a Fire Risk Assessment involve?

A Fire Risk Assessment involves a physical inspection/survey of the building. This will determine the current adequacy of the fire precautions in place and the need for any additional measures. Of equal importance is a review of the current fire safety management within the building and consideration of the human factors such as how people respond to an emergency.

A Fire Risk Assessment could take half an hour in a small block of flats, an hour and a half in a small school and possibly a full day on a very large office block for example.

There are some practical limits to the extent of the survey and evaluation of fire precautions. For example, we would not carry out testing of active fire protection systems such as fire alarms or emergency escape lighting, but would inspect such systems visually. The

inspection/survey of the construction of the building would extend to those areas which are readily accessible areas of the building only. Generally, it is not necessary to undertake destructive survey e.g. opening walls/ceilings. We would however where practicable inspect above false ceilings to determine the line of fire resistance.

The overall objective of the risk assessment is to ensure the safety of the occupants of the building. In addition we may make recommendations on property protection. The Fire Risk Assessment does not consider or make recommendations in respect of business interruption or continuity.

The Fire Risk Assessment is a mandatory legal instrument to protect life safety. You should always seek professional advice if there are changes in the configuration or use of the building. Even professionals such as architects, H&S managers and surveyors come to us. Firecomply will always give advice in the client's best interests. We don't sell equipment so why would we over specify requirements.

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The survey will include, where appropriate the following:

- Fire hazards
- Fire prevention
- Storage and handling of flammable liquids and gases
- Fire safety requirements for contractors working on site
- Housekeeping
- Means of escape
- Compartmentation
- Flammability of linings
- Emergency escape lighting
- Fire safety signs and notices
- Fire detection and fire alarm systems
- Fire extinguishing systems and appliances
- Smoke control systems
- Facilities for use by the Fire and Rescue Service
- Arrangements for management of fire safety
- Fire procedures
- Training and evacuation drills
- Testing and maintenance, and
- Record keeping

How long is a Fire Risk Assessment valid for?

Under static circumstances this depends upon the risk profile of the property and the appetite of the client to mitigate risk. Firecomply normally recommend two years. Simple properties such as small blocks of flats could go three years or more. High risk sites may be required annually. Some fire companies say annually for all, but why spend money unnecessarily!

Mandatory Fire Risk Assessments are to protect occupants. Occasionally a Fire Risk Assessment may be required by an insurance company to protect a building of high value or one containing valuable contents.

Realistically the process should be dynamic and take into account change. It is therefore necessary to review things when there is a reason to suspect that it is no longer valid, and in particular, if significant changes take place such as an increase in the numbers of people in the building, or changes to floor layouts. Fire Risk Assessments should also be reviewed after a fire. The Fire Risk Assessment process will determine the next review date.

If you need more information or have any questions call us on 01889 742583 or get in touch through the contact page on our website www.firecomply.com



Obvious hazards include ...
large gaps between fire doors



...breaches in the fire
compartment requiring fire
stopping work



...fire door with missing smoke
seals and intumescent strips,
often incomplete or damaged



...excessive combustible
materials (fire loading) stored
on means of escape