



BWRDD CROESO CYMRU  
WALES TOURIST BOARD

# FIRE SAFETY

This factsheet has been produced by the Wales Tourist Board to help businesses in all sectors of the tourism industry to protect their operations from fire and conform to fire safety legislation.

## The importance of fire safety

As well as endangering life, a fire can cause serious damage to the property of a business and to its trade. It can also result in very unfavourable publicity. Even if no-one is killed or injured, the costs of a fire in a tourism business can be high and many businesses that experience a fire do not subsequently re-open.

It is therefore essential for any tourism business to take action to:

- prevent fires occurring;
- stop them spreading and minimise danger and damage if a fire does occur;
- purchase adequate insurance cover.

## Fire safety legislation

As well as having responsibilities under The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, employers must comply with legislation related specifically to fire safety, including:

- The Fire Precautions Act 1971;
  - The Fire Precautions (Hotels and Boarding Houses) Order 1972;
  - The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997;
  - The Fire Precautions (Workplace) (Amendments) Regulations 1999.
- Legislation requires businesses to:
- carry out a fire risk assessment of the workplace;
  - identify the significant findings of the risk assessment and details of anyone who would be especially at risk in case of fire;
  - provide and maintain such fire precautions as are necessary to safeguard those who use business premises;
  - provide information, instruction and training to employees about fire precautions.

Where it is necessary to safeguard your employees, you must nominate people (including yourself, if appropriate) to undertake any

## Changes to legal requirements

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is changing fire safety law to make it easier to understand and to comply with.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order is currently going through the Parliamentary processes required to make it law. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the RRFSO is expected to come into force later in 2005.

The new law will be a reform of all the current fire safety law, which is contained in over 100 separate pieces of legislation. The main emphasis of the changes will be to move towards a greater emphasis on fire prevention.

Fire certificates will be abolished and will cease to have legal status. Under the RRFSO, the 'responsible person' for premises will be required to carry out a risk assessment of fire and take steps to reduce or remove the risk.

Further details are available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website: [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

special roles that are required under your emergency plan.

You must consult your employees (or their elected representatives or appointed trade union safety representatives) about the nomination of people to carry out particular roles in connection with fire safety and about proposals for improving the fire precautions.

You must inform other employers who also have workplaces in the same building of any significant risks you find that might affect the safety of their employees, and co-operate with them about the measures proposed to control the risk.

You must establish a suitable means of contacting the emergency services, and ensure that they can be called easily.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister publishes *Fire Safety: an employer's guide*, which can be downloaded from its website: [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk). In conjunction with the Fire Safety Association, it also publishes *Guidance on Fire Safety at Work*.

## Fire Certificates

Some tourism businesses currently require a Fire Certificate (such as hotels or guesthouses providing sleeping accommodation for more than

six guests or staff, or accommodation above the first floor or below the ground floor). These are issued by local fire authorities and describe the fire safety arrangements for your property, including emergency routes and exits, fire fighting equipment and warning procedures.

To apply, it is necessary to submit an application form. The fire authorities in Wales usually request a copy of a fire risk assessment as well. Procedures on receipt of an application vary.

When revised fire safety legislation is introduced, Fire Certificates will no longer be required.

## What is a risk assessment?

A fire risk assessment is an organised examination of what, in your business activities and on your premises, could cause harm to people.

A fire risk assessment will help you to determine:

- the chances of a fire occurring;
- the dangers from fire that your premises pose for the people who use them, including staff, customers and other visitors.

It allows you to consider whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to avoid harm. The important things that you need to decide are:

## Hazard and risk

A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm.

A risk is the chance, high or low, of that harm occurring.

- whether a hazard is significant;
- whether you have covered it by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is acceptably low.

A fire risk assessment can be carried out either as a part of a more general health and safety risk assessment or as a separate exercise.

Information on undertaking a risk assessment is available from the Health and Safety Executive website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

## Stages of a risk assessment

A fire risk assessment should include the following five stages:

- identifying potential fire hazards;
- deciding who might be in danger in the event of a fire, on your premises or while trying to escape from them, and noting their location;
- evaluating the risks arising from the hazards you have identified and deciding whether your existing fire precautions are adequate or whether more should be done to

- eliminate the hazard or reduce the risks;
- recording your findings and details of the action you have taken as a result, and telling your employees about the results;
- keeping your assessment under review and revising it when necessary.

## Undertaking a risk assessment

It is important to carry out your risk assessment in a practical and systematic way, and include a tour of your premises. It must take into account the whole of your premises, including outdoor locations, any rooms or areas that are rarely or not used, staircases and corridors. Concentrate your efforts on identifying significant hazards.

Be prepared to talk to your employees or their representatives, and to use their knowledge and experience. They can help you to identify key issues and many have practical suggestions for improvement.

If your business premises are in a building shared with other employers, you and all the other occupiers and any other person who has control of any other part of the building will need to discuss your risk assessments. This can help to ensure that any areas of higher

risk, and the need for extra precautions, are identified.

## Identifying potential fire hazards

For a fire to start, three things are needed:

- fuel;
- an ignition source;
- oxygen (usually from the air).

Taking steps to avoid the three coming together will reduce the risk of a fire.

Anything that burns is fuel for a fire. So you need to look for things that will burn reasonably easily and are present in sufficient quantity to provide fuel for a fire or cause it to spread to another fuel source.

Some of the most common fuels for fire found in tourism businesses are:

- paper;
- wood;
- furniture, including fixtures and fittings;
- flammable liquids, such as oil, petrol, paint or varnish;
- flammable gases, such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG);
- plastics, rubber and foam;
- textiles;
- waste materials.

You should also consider the construction of your premises and how

this might contribute to the spread of a fire. For example, if there are extensive areas of hardboard or synthetic ceiling or wall coverings, such as polystyrene tiles.

You can identify ignition sources in your premises by looking for possible sources of heat, which could get hot enough to ignite materials. These sources of heat could include:

- naked flames;
- engines or boilers;
- electric, gas or oil-fired heaters;
- kitchen equipment;
- machinery;
- electrical, lighting or office equipment;
- smokers' materials, such as cigarettes and matches.

Watch out for any evidence of potential problems, such as scorch marks on furniture or fittings, charred electrical plugs or sockets, or cigarette burns.

## Deciding who might be harmed

If there is a fire, the main priority is to ensure that everyone reaches a place of safety quickly. Putting the fire out is secondary to this because the greatest danger from fire in a tourism business is the spread of fire, heat and smoke through the premises. If you do not

have adequate means of detecting and giving warning or means of escape, a fire can trap people or they may be overcome by the heat or smoke before they can evacuate.

As a part of your assessment, you therefore need to identify who may be at risk if there is a fire (including employees, any volunteers and customers), how they will be warned and how they will escape. To do this you need to identify where people are working and where customers and other visitors are likely to be found.

## Evaluating the risks

Once you have identified the hazards and who might be at risk because of them, you can evaluate the risk and decide whether you have done enough to reduce this or need to do more. It is helpful to consider:

- the chance of a fire occurring and whether you can reduce the sources of ignition or minimise the potential fuel for a fire;
- the fire precautions you have in place and whether they are sufficient for the remaining risks and will ensure that everyone is warned in case of a fire;
- the maintenance and testing of fire detection and warning systems and fire fighting equipment;

- the means people can use to make their escape safely or put the fire out if it is safe for them to do so;
- fire safety training of employees.

## Reducing the potential fuel for a fire

There are a number of ways of reducing the risks caused by materials and substances that will burn. These could include:

- replacing flammable materials with less flammable alternatives;
- ensuring that flammable materials are handled, transported, stored and used in a safe manner;
- storing larger quantities of flammable substances in fire-resisting cabinets or stores;
- removing or treating large areas of flammable wall or ceiling linings to reduce the rate at which flames could spread;
- ensuring that flammable waste materials and rubbish are not allowed to build up and are stored carefully before disposal.

## Reducing ignition sources

It is possible to reduce the hazards caused by potential sources of heat by:

- removing unnecessary sources of heat or replacing them with safer alternatives;

- installing machinery and equipment that is designed to minimise the risk of fire and explosions;
- using electrical and other equipment in a safe manner and undertaking routine maintenance in line with the manufacturer's recommendations;
- ensuring that all electrical fuses and circuit breakers are of the correct rating;
- keeping ducts and flues clean;
- operating a smoking policy with smoking only permitted in designated areas;
- taking action to avoid vandalism or arson.

## Action following a risk assessment

If you employ five or more people, you are legally obliged to record the findings of your risk assessment. It is good practice for all tourism businesses to keep a written record of their fire risk assessment.

Employees should be informed about the findings of your risk assessment and, if you share the premises with other businesses, they should also be informed of the risks identified and any action planned.

You may also need to make changes in the light of the findings. If your premises have a Fire Certificate, you

will need to check that any changes you propose are acceptable to your fire authority.

It is then possible for you to develop an emergency evacuation plan.

## Detection and warning of fire

All tourism businesses should have satisfactory arrangements for detecting fire and warning of its presence in place.

Small businesses may only require smoke alarms. Each of these units includes a smoke detector and a warning device, and they can be mains powered with battery back-up. Ionisation, optical and combined versions are available. Smoke alarms can operate independently or in conjunction with other units to which they are interlinked. Smoke alarms should conform to the requirements of British Standard 5446: Part 1.

Larger operations will require automatic fire detection system based on point-type fire detectors linked via control equipment to separate fire-warning devices.

Basic smoke alarms tend to be more sensitive than smoke detectors used in more sophisticated fire detection/alarm systems, which can result in false fire signals. They may also be less reliable.

Before installing an automatic fire detection system or a series of

interlinked smoke alarms, it is advisable to consult the fire authority about what you propose. This can help make sure the system is appropriate to your business and avoid unnecessary costs.

## Fire fighting equipment

**Fire extinguishers** can contain water, a chemical, or an inert (unreactive) gas or powder, which is expelled under pressure to put out fires. There are a number of different types of extinguisher, which should be used for different types of fire. It is important to make sure that you and all employees know which are unsafe for use on a particular type of fire, such as an electrical appliance.

Fire extinguishers should conform to a recognised standard such as British Standard EN 3 for new ones and British Standard 5423 for existing ones.

Fire extinguishers should normally be located in conspicuous positions on escape routes, preferably near exit doors and, where practicable, they should be securely hung on wall brackets. Where this is impracticable, extinguishers should be placed on a suitable base plate, not on the floor.

Once an extinguisher has been used, even if only partially, it must be recharged according to the manufacturer's instructions.

**Fire blankets** are made of a special fire retardant material. They are particularly useful for smothering flames. They can be used for:

- wrapping around a person whose clothes are on fire;
- oil fires;
- chip pan fires.

**Hose reels** are used to supply water for fire fighting. They should only be used on fires involving solid materials, not liquids such as oil or paint, or on electrical fires.

**Sprinkler systems** may be needed in more complex or larger buildings. They are an efficient means of protecting buildings against extensive damage from fire, and of reducing the risk to life from fire. Sprinkler systems need to be specifically designed and installed to the appropriate hazard category in accordance with an approved code of practice, to ensure that the operation of the system will effectively limit/control the effects of the fire with minimal failures or unwanted operations. Further information on the requirements for sprinkler systems, and their benefits, can be obtained from your local fire authority.

**Fire points** are usually required in caravan and camping parks to conform to Site Licence requirements. These have fire-warning and fire-fighting

equipment, such as portable fire extinguishers or hose reels.

Information on suppliers of fire fighting equipment is available from the British Fire Protection Systems Association: [www.bfpsa.org.uk](http://www.bfpsa.org.uk)

## Means of escape

It is essential for all tourism businesses to provide adequate means of escape from premises for both employees and customers in the event of a fire. You should:

- make sure that escape routes are as short as possible;
- consider how many people are going to be using each escape route;
- consider the impact if one of the means of escape has been blocked;
- ensure there is a clear passageway, at least one metre in width, to all escape routes. Passageways that are more than 30 metres in length should be subdivided into equal parts by fire doors;
- ensure escape routes are kept free of any obstructions at all times;
- consider what arrangements you need to make for the evacuation of disabled people;
- inform and train all employees in how to escape the building;
- install an emergency lighting system;
- identify all escape routes with appropriate safety signs.

## Emergency lighting

All escape routes, including external ones, must have sufficient lighting for people to see their way out safely. Emergency escape lighting may be needed if areas of your premises are without natural daylight or are used at night.

Before providing emergency escape lighting, check the relevant parts of the building with the lights off to see whether there is sufficient borrowed light from other sources to illuminate the escape route, such as street lighting. Where you decide there is insufficient light, you will need to provide some form of emergency lighting. Emergency lighting needs to function not only on the complete failure of the normal lighting, but also on a localised failure if that would present a hazard.

Emergency escape lighting should:

- indicate the escape routes clearly;
- provide illumination along escape routes to allow safe movement towards the final exits;
- ensure that fire alarm call points and fire-fighting equipment can be readily located.

## Fire safety signs

It is necessary to put up fire safety signs to indicate emergency escape routes and exit doors, particularly

those that are not normally used. In places of public assembly all exit doors must be marked. If fire extinguishers are hidden from view, you must also use signs to indicate their location.

Your local fire authority can advise you and there will be specific requirements for the premises if a Fire Certificate is in force.

The regulations on safety signs set out the pictograms and symbols you must use on signboards. In some cases you may also have to use illuminated signs.

The Health and Safety Executive website includes a guide to regulations on health and safety signs: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

## Maintenance and testing of fire equipment

All equipment, such as fire doors or fire fighting equipment, must be regularly checked and maintained. This includes checking that:

- the control panel shows that all electrical fire detection and alarm systems are working. If not, that all faults are recorded and dealt with immediately;
- all emergency lighting is working. If not, that all faults are recorded and dealt with immediately;
- all escape routes and fire exits are clear of obstacles and the floor is in good repair;

- all fire escapes can be opened without any delays;
- all automatic fire doors close correctly when activated;
- all fire exit signs are in the correct position.

It is, of course, also essential to ensure that routes to be used by fire appliances are never blocked, for example by parked cars.

### Fire drills

Fire drills should be held regularly, preferably twice a year, to ensure that all employees know how to leave the premises in the event of fire. Employees should be trained to:

- recognise the fire alarm when it sounds;
- act in accordance with the evacuation plan;
- leave the premises quickly and by the nearest evacuation point;
- assemble for a roll call.

Owners or senior managers should evaluate performance during any fire drill, investigate the causes of any delays in evacuation and take steps to make sure delays are eliminated.

### Alterations and extensions to your premises

If you hold a fire certificate, you must

### Types of fire extinguisher

Type	Use
Water (or water with additives)	Fires involving solids such as wood, paper, cloth and plastics.
Carbon dioxide	Fires involving flammable liquids other than pans of cooking oil and electrical fires.
Foam or aqueous film forming foam (AFFF)	Fires involving solids or liquids other than pans of cooking oil.
Standard or multi-purpose dry powder	Fires involving solids or liquids such as grease, oil, paint, petrol, but not cooking oils (chip pans). Safe on live electrical equipment.
Wet chemical	Cooking oils

advise your local fire authority in advance if you wish to:

- materially extend or alter your premises;
- materially alter the inside of your premises;
- store any materials that are explosive or highly flammable.

The term 'materially' means any alteration that could result in fire evacuation measures and other fire precautions becoming redundant.

### Keeping records

You should keep the following records:

- a copy of any application for a Fire Certificate;

- a copy of any Fire Certificate;
- records of the risk assessment for fire hazards;
- records of fire fighting arrangements in place to control the fire risk;
- details of the contact at your local fire authority;
- details of fire training and instruction provided;
- details of fire drills carried out, including the date, evacuation time and any problems encountered.

### Fire safety for disabled people

You should make adequate fire safety provision for people with specific needs

who may be present in your premises. You need to consider both employees and customers, and take into account not only people who have restricted mobility but also those who have impaired hearing, sight or any other form of disability.

## Insurance

It is, of course, vital for all tourism businesses to have adequate insurance to cover costs associated with fire damage to buildings and contents, as well as employers and public liability insurance.

## Who can help?

### Arson Prevention Bureau

51 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HQ  
020 7216 7474  
[www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk](http://www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk)

### Association of British Insurers

51 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HQ  
020 7600 3333  
[www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)

### British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE)

4th Floor, Neville House, 55 Eden Street,  
Kingston-upon-Thames KT1 1BW  
020 8541 1950  
[www.bafe.org.uk](http://www.bafe.org.uk)

### British Fire Protection Systems Association

4th Floor, Neville House, 55 Eden Street,  
Kingston-upon-Thames KT1 1BW  
020 8549 5855  
[www.bafe.org.uk](http://www.bafe.org.uk)

### Department of Trade and Industry

1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET  
020 7215 5000  
[www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)

### Fire Industry Confederation

4th Floor, Neville House, 55 Eden Street,  
Kingston-upon-Thames KT1 1BW  
020 8549 8839  
[www.bafe.org.uk](http://www.bafe.org.uk)

### Fire Protection Association

London Road, Moreton-in-Marsh,  
Gloucestershire GL56 0RH  
01608 812500  
[www.thefpa.co.uk](http://www.thefpa.co.uk)

### Health and Safety Executive

Government Buildings, Phase 1, Ty Glas,  
Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5SH  
HSE infoline: 0845 345 0055  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Lime Grove Avenue,  
Carmarthen SA31 1SP  
0870 606 0699  
[www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk)

### North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Coast Road, Rhyl LL18 3PL  
01745 343431  
[www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk](http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk)

### Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

26 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH  
020 7944 4400  
[www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

### South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Lanelay Hall, Pontyclun CF72 9XA  
01443 232000  
[www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk)

### Wales Tourist Board

Business Support Unit, Brunel House,  
2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff CF24 0UY  
029 2047 5303  
[www.wtbonline.gov.uk](http://www.wtbonline.gov.uk)

### Welsh Assembly Government

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA  
029 2082 5111  
[www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

Please note that whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this booklet, it is intended to be an introductory guide only. It is not intended to be comprehensive or a definitive statement of the law in England and Wales. If you require precise or detailed information on the legislation mentioned in this guide, or on the legal implications for you in particular, you should consult a professional legal adviser.

This factsheet is one of a series of business development and marketing factsheets produced by the Wales Tourist Board to assist businesses in all sectors of the tourism industry in Wales. For details of other titles, please contact the Business Support Unit or visit [www.wtbonline.gov.uk](http://www.wtbonline.gov.uk)

