



Fire Safety in General Practice

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Fire Safety



Each employee needs to know about the fire escape routes, assembly points and the Responsible Person for Fire safety.

Each practice has a fire policy. Please ensure that you have read yours.

Who is your Responsible Person for fire safety? You should talk to that person or the Practice Manager- you may need help evacuating safely from the building in the event of a fire.

You can help to keep the practice safe by:

- Only using practice electrical items and report any faults to the site manager or Practice Manager.
- Never prop doors open unless they have automated closers.

Check that you know your evacuation routes from the building and assembly point. Do not pick up your belongings and take the most direct exit from the building- your safety is the practice's priority.

You will have some training as part of your Induction and then have regular updated training. You may be asked to become a Trained Fire Marshal at some time in the future.

Information for Practice Managers

The Responsible Person for Fire Safety (usually the building or business owners) has several tasks

This person:

- ✓ Carries out a fire risk assessment of the premises and reviews it annually.
- ✓ Tells staff and management about the risks they have identified.
- ✓ Has put in place, and maintains, appropriate fire safety measures.
- ✓ Has a plan for an emergency.

Provides staff information, fire safety instruction and training. Our fire risk assessment includes:

- ✓ Identification of fire hazards.
- ✓ Identification of people at risk.
- ✓ Evaluation, removal, or reduction of the risks.
- ✓ Recording of our findings, preparing an emergency plan, and provision of training.
- ✓ Reviewing and updating the fire risk assessment annually.

Many practices are in health centres so they become familiar with the policy in the health centre, evacuation routes, assembly points and the dates for fire inspections and on extinguishers. Also, review the fire risk assessment regularly – especially if things change eg. you have building works ongoing. If there is more than one Responsible Person in the building, you need to take reasonable steps to work together.

Relevant Legislation:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) - came into force on 1st October 2006 in England and Wales. The FSO (Fire Safety Officer) amends, repeals and revokes many pieces of legislation including repealing the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 as amended by the Fire Precautions (Workplace) (Amendment) Regulations 1999.

Under the legislation fire certificates are abolished. Instead, responsibility for fire safety and compliance with the provisions of the FSO rest with the 'Responsible Person'. The 'Responsible Person' is defined as the person or persons who have control of any part of the premises. In cases where the partners own the premises, the partners are the Responsible Person. In cases where the owner of the premises is not the partners, then the partners and the owner are collectively the Responsible Person. For practices run by a PCO, the PCO is the Responsible Person. The FSO states that if there is more than one Responsible Person in any type of premises (e.g. two practices sharing the same building), all must take all reasonable steps to work with each other.

The Responsible Person must carry out a fire risk assessment which must focus on the safety in case of fire of all 'relevant persons' ('relevant person' includes all staff and anyone else

who is lawfully on the premises [e.g. patients, contractors, locums, District Nurses etc] and anyone around it who could be affected by a fire). The risk assessment should pay particular attention to those at special risk, such as the disabled and those with special needs, and must include consideration of any dangerous substances likely to be on the premises. A useful understandable guide is available at [Fire safety risk assessment: 5-step checklist - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Practice action

Practices must identify their 'Responsible Person' and that person must undertake a fire risk assessment. The enforcing authority (usually the Fire Authority) will visit and inspect premises to ensure compliance with the FSO. They must ensure that there is a suitable Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Policy and that they are up to date. Whilst the Responsible Person retains their responsibility, they may ask the Practice Manager or Site Manager to complete some of the tasks and be the go-between with any other Responsible Person.

Fire Extinguishers

British Standard BS5306-3:2009 (introduced in 2009) requires that new fire extinguishers must be commissioned by a 'Competent Person' at the place they are to be installed. This is intended to stop businesses from buying and installing cheap extinguishers which may not be fit for purpose. Practices should ensure that they buy from suppliers who follow the new BS code. Also, ensure that they are maintained and create a schedule for checks.

Fire drill/evacuation

Employers should organise periodic fire drills so that staff are familiar with the process for evacuating the building and the location of their Assembly Point(s). Frequency of fire drills depends on a number of factors. In cases where there is low staff turnover and no changes have been made to the building, an annual drill is adequate. In cases where there are new staff or there have been building alterations/new building, drills should be more frequent.

Building savvy:

- ✓ Ensure that electrical items are PAT tested regularly.
- ✓ Ensure that the doors to kitchens are closed.
- ✓ Make sure that staff do not prop doors open.

Relevant legislation and Guidelines

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37

Health and Safety Executive. Fire safety www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm

UK Government. Fire safety risk assessment in healthcare premises
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14892/fsra-healthcare.pdf

UK Government. Managing Healthcare Fire Safety
www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-healthcare-fire-safety

Health and safety guidance check list : www.firstpracticemanagement.co.uk/health-and-safety-guidance/fire-safety/

A useful place for online staff fire safety and fire warden training is **Blue Stream or Team Net** www.bluestreamacademy.com/. Team Net also has sample policies.

Health and Safety Executive. Guidance www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm

Health and Safety Executive. Health and Safety Training: a brief guide
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.pdf

Health and Safety Executive. Reporting accidents, incidents and diseases

Government guidance on the **risk assessment** can be found at [Fire safety risk assessment: 5-step checklist - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)