



# **Commercial Fire Safety**

## **A Guide For Businesses**

***JLA FIRE***

# About JLA Fire

**JLA is the UK's leading partner for critical equipment supply and servicing.**

JLA Fire combines over 100 years of collective experience in keeping people and premises safe with fire risk assessments, detection & warning solutions and fire fighting equipment, as well as servicing, maintenance and testing for your fire doors, signage and lighting.

This useful guide provides the key information you should be aware of as a business owner, commercial landlord or Responsible Person to ensure you are compliant with fire safety legislation and to minimise the threat of fire to your people and premises.

For more information on how we can support you with any of the information contained in this booklet, please **visit [jla.com](https://jla.com) or call 0800 591 903.**



**“ over 100 years  
of collective  
experience ”**



# Fire Legislation

Due to its critical role in the protection of life and property, fire safety is governed by stringent legislation and it is the responsibility of all businesses to ensure they comply with the relevant regulations.

## What regulations govern fire safety?

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 covers general fire safety in England and Wales. In Scotland, requirements on general fire safety are covered in Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, supported by the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

The order applies to the majority of commercial premises including: offices and shops, premises that provide care, including care homes and hospitals, community halls, places of worship and other community premises; the shared areas of properties several households live in (housing laws may also apply); pubs, clubs and restaurants; schools and sports centres; tents and marquees; hotels and hostels; and factories and warehouses.



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**You could be fined or go to prison if you do not follow fire safety regulations.**

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## Fire Safety Act 2021

In response to the Grenfell tragedy in 2017, the Fire Safety Bill was proposed and in April 2021 the Fire safety act 2021 was passed as law in England and Wales.

The aim was to minimise fire safety risk to tenants of domestic residential properties with multiple occupants, such as apartment blocks and student accommodation.

The key change was to place absolute accountability upon the Responsible Person for managing and reducing the risk of fire.

## Enforcement & Penalties

Your local fire and rescue authority have the power to enforce fire safety legislation. They will visit premises to check your fire risk assessment and fire prevention measures are appropriate.

They can also take action if they think your fire safety measures are not adequate. For example, they might issue an informal notice suggesting safety measures. They could also give you a formal fire safety notice. They'll tell you how to fix the problems described in the notice.

## Alterations notice

You could get an alterations notice if your premises have high safety risks or will have high safety risks if the use of the premises changes.

## Enforcement notice

You could get an enforcement notice if the fire and rescue authority finds a serious risk that's not being managed. It will say what improvements are needed by when.

## Prohibition notice

These take effect immediately if the fire and rescue authority thinks the fire risk is so great that access to your premises needs to be prohibited or restricted.

## Penalties

You could be fined or go to prison if you do not follow fire safety regulations.

Minor penalties - up to £5,000.

Major penalties can have unlimited fines and up to 2 years in prison.



**You can find more information at:**  
**[gov.uk/ workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities](https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities)**

# What is a Responsible Person?\*

**A Responsible Person is someone who has control of a non-domestic building – either through ownership or management. The responsible part in this context is all about taking the reins when it comes to identifying as well as reducing risks, and putting steps in place for fire safety precautions and escape.**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 demands that a Responsible Person takes all steps possible to reduce the risk of fire, and to put steps in place for efficient evacuation in the event that a fire does occur in spite of their best efforts and precautions.

Your Responsible Person is the individual who is responsible for carrying out, or commissioning a suitable and sufficient a fire risk assessment.

According to Government Guidelines, the Responsible Person in your business must carry out and regularly review a fire risk assessment of the premises. This will identify what you need to do to prevent fire and keep people safe.

\*Appropriate Person in Scotland & NI





# **// The meaning of responsible person**

**In this Order “responsible person” means—**

**(a) in relation to a workplace, the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control;**

**(b) in relation to any premises not falling within paragraph (a)—**

- (i) the person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business or other undertaking (for profit or not); or**
- (ii) the owner, where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on by that person of a trade, business or other undertaking.**



The background features a collage of fire safety-related items. At the top right is a red fire alarm pull station. Below it are various safety signs and diagrams, including a 'DON'T SMOKE' sign with a crossed-out cigarette icon, a 'SWITCHBOARD' warning, a lightning bolt symbol, a floor plan with red dashed lines indicating fire escape routes, and a 'First aid kit' sign. The word 'EVA' is partially visible on a sign at the bottom right. A large, semi-transparent red circle is centered over the text area.

# Assessments

**A commercial fire risk assessment is a crucial element for any business. Not only is it a legal requirement, but this assessment ensures the long-term safety of both your staff and premises from potential fire damage.**

It's much better to be proactive in identifying ways to prevent a blaze and keep people safe, rather than have to deal with the aftermath of a dangerous fire in the workplace. Businesses can either conduct an FRA themselves or bring in a specialist risk assessor to support them with this, providing the reassurance many business owners value.

# What is a fire risk assessment?

A fire risk assessment is a detailed, step-by-step process whereby your building and on-site activities are reviewed in order to determine where risks are with regards to fire hazards. Where fire risks are identified, actions should be planned to help reduce incidents from occurring in the future.

There are 5 key steps in the Fire Risk Assessment checklist as set out by the legislation:

- 01 Identify fire hazards**
- 02 Identify people at risk**
- 03 Evaluate, remove or reduce the identified risks**
- 04 Record your findings, create an emergency plan & provide suitable training**
- 05 Review & update the fire risk assessment regularly**

A commercial fire safety risk assessment should also be reviewed as part of a continuous risk assessment process, especially if any changes have taken place which may impact existing safety procedures.

These include:

- › Alterations to the commercial property as this may affect exit routes
- › When young persons are employed - as they are deemed vulnerable
- › Storage changes to hazardous substances
- › When an accident occurs
- › When a fire-related incident occurs
- › When fire safety equipment becomes damaged or has expired
- › In the event of staff changes - this could include a large increase in personnel or the hiring of a person with disabilities

All JLA fire risk assessments are carried out under BAFE SP205 accreditation.



# Fire safety & evacuation plans

Firstly, it is a legal requirement for business owners to have a fire escape plan in place and there could be lots of implications for those who are found not to have one. Equally, having a suitable plan will greatly reduce the risk of members of staff or visitors and customers from becoming injured in the event of a fire, by ensuring everyone knows what action should be taken.

## Your plan must show how you have:

- › A clear passageway to all escape routes
- › Clearly marked escape routes that are as short and direct as possible
- › Enough exits and routes for all people to escape
- › Emergency doors that open easily
- › Emergency lighting where needed
- › Training for all employees to know and use the escape routes
- › A safe meeting point for staff

You should also carry out at least one fire drill per year, recording and keeping the results as part of your fire safety and evacuation plan.

# Passive & Active Fire Systems

The devices and measures that make up a fire safety system can be classified as 'passive' or 'active' based on their purpose. As the two compliment each other in providing the maximum protection, it is critical that both are implemented.

## Active

Active fire protection can be thought of as those devices which are activated in order to extinguish or draw attention to a fire. This includes elements such as fire alarms, extinguishers, sprinkler systems and sounders.



## Passive

Passive fire protection consists of structural measures which are primarily used to contain a fire and prevent its spread throughout a building. This can include compartmentation, fire doors and fire proofing.



## Did you know?...

The typical lifespan\* of the key devices in your fire system are;

**Fire panel** – 15-20 years

**Detectors** – 10-15 years

**Manual call point** – 10 years

When faults and failures appear age-related and become more frequent, it is time to consider replacing your equipment.

Environment can also have an impact on lifespan e.g. a detector in a busy, smokey kitchen is likely to have a shorter life.

A poorly installed and maintained system can lead to numerous false alarms. This can have serious consequences if occupants begin ignoring alarms as a result and fail to react when there's a real emergency.

\*manufacturer dependent

# Focus on: Fire Doors

In line with the Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2005, all commercial buildings must be designed to delay the spread of fire. Fire-resistant doors are therefore one of the most vital components in passive fire protection.

## The role of fire doors in fire safety

Fire doors offer two main functions:

1. When kept closed, they contain a fire
2. They play a key role in effective evacuation when open along escape routes.

## How are fire doors certified?

Here at JLA we manufacture, install, and maintain all doors to the highest standard, We are audited by and accredited to **BM Trada** which is the industry gold standard for passive fire.

Being the leading Third party certification scheme. All our work carries the full BM Trada certification giving you peace of mind for full compliance.

## Features of a Fire Door



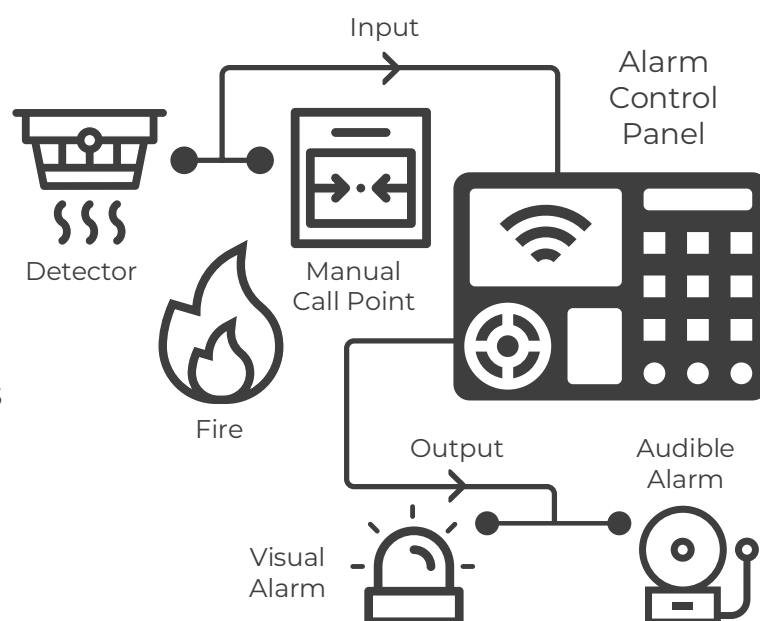
# Fire Alarm System Types

A typical fire alarm system in any business would usually include the components shown in the infographic on the right.

It is a requirement by law that the fire alarm system on your business premises is fit for purpose.

The fire alarm grade and category needed in your business will depend on your business type, layout and size and **should be specified by your Fire Risk Assessment.**

By ensuring your system falls into the correct category, you can help keep everyone in your building safer.



## > Category 'P' systems:

Protect property

In a Category P system, unless the premises are continuously occupied at all times, the objective of property protection is unlikely to be satisfied unless the system incorporates means for automatic transmission of alarm signals to an ARC.

For all Category P systems other than those continuously manned, or those with

power supply fault signals monitored by an ARC, the standby battery capacity should be sufficient to maintain the system in operation for at least 24 hours longer than the maximum period for which the premises are likely to be unoccupied or for 72 hours in total, whichever is less, after which sufficient capacity should remain to operate all fire alarm devices for at least 30 minutes.



**P1:** Detection is installed everywhere in the building including voids in the construction.



**P2:** Detection is only used in certain areas to manage a particular fire risk.

## > Category 'L' systems:

Protect life

L5 is a customised design specific to a building and its operations and can in fact lead to an extensive level of cover in many areas.

**Highest level of cover**  
Detection's installed everywhere in the building including voids in the construction



## > Category 'M' systems:

Some businesses may still be operating an 'M' category system which stands for 'manual'. This is the least sophisticated category and requires occupants to detect a fire and raise the alarm manually, for example using break glass units.

## Focus on: Conventional versus addressable systems

Both link devices such as call points and smoke detectors with the call panel. The main difference between the two is how

closely you can identify the location of an activated device.

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### > Conventional systems:

A conventional fire detection system groups detectors into zones. When a detector is in alarm/fault only the zone is reported on the panel.

### > Addressable systems:

An addressable (intelligent) fire detection employs a loop of sensors and other devices which are all individually named. When a sensor is activated it is possible to identify its exact location in the system from the control panel to enable a fire to be quickly found and extinguished.

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Where occupants of a building will require assistance from staff to evacuate the building (e.g. in residential care premises and hospitals), the fire detection and fire alarm system should be **ADDRESSABLE** if the building has facilities for **MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE** to sleep. This is only applicable to new installations and not to current installations.



Up to 10 beds **non-addressable**



More than 10 beds **addressable**



# Checklist

Use this handy checklist to ensure you have everything covered from a Fire Safety perspective in your business.

- ☐ Fire safety and evacuation plan
- ☐ Fire risk assessment
- ☐ Responsible person appointed
- ☐ Fire drills scheduled
- ☐ Training for staff
- ☐ Equipment reviewed and replacement installations planned
- ☐ Servicing planned and carried out
- ☐ Schedule a review of FRA and fire safety processes
- ☐ Log book

**// It is a legal requirement for business owners to have a fire escape plan in place //**



**Call us free on**  
0800 591 903

**Send us an email**  
[enquiries@jla.com](mailto:enquiries@jla.com)

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