



CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTE FOR HOSTING SLEEPOVERS

Introduction

Premises such as village halls, schools and museums which were not designed as sleeping accommodation are increasingly being used to hold sleepovers.

This guidance note aims to assist those organising sleepovers in non-domestic premises to meet their fire safety responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO).

During the day people using these premises will be awake and aware of their surroundings. When people are asleep, they are not aware of their surroundings and so are at more risk from fire. If you are planning a sleepover, it is your responsibility to ensure that suitable fire safety measures are in place so that people who may be asleep are alerted to a fire and can escape safely.

Consideration should also be given to notifying your insurance company of the event if you have not already done so.

If the building has a fire alarm installed and it is monitored by an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC), please contact them to inform them of this sleepover event and any future occurrences.

It may be the case that the building in which the sleepover is proposed cannot practically be made safe enough and therefore the sleepover should not take place. In this instance, you may choose to seek for an alternative venue that is purpose-built to accommodate people sleeping, or another venue that can be practically improved to be made safe.

Fire Risk Assessment

If you are organising the sleepover and will be in control of the premises you will have legal responsibilities as a "responsible person" and must therefore ensure compliance with the FSO. The responsible person must carry out a fire risk assessment to identify the fire hazards and risks within the premises and take appropriate steps to reduce these.

As a responsible person, the organiser of the sleepover should ensure that any additional risk posed by having sleeping occupants on the premises are captured within the fire risk assessment. If the building does not have a fire risk assessment, one must first be carried out.

The five steps to carrying out a risk assessment are:

- Identify fire hazards (sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen)
- Identify people at risk
- Evaluate, remove and protect from risk
- Record, plan, inform, instruct and train
- Review

The fire risk assessment should take into consideration the whole premises, not just the group sleeping area. When carrying out the fire risk assessment the responsible person must:

- Identify people who may be at risk including children and people with disabilities who may need help to evacuate in the event of a fire.

- Ensure that there is an adequate means of detecting and alerting people if a fire occurs on the premises. This may require an adult to stay awake during the night on 'fire watch' or the fitting of an automatic detection and alarm system.
- Ensure that there is adequate emergency lighting on the premises that would help people to navigate to an exit and away from the building in the event of conventional lighting failures.
- Check that the escape routes and exit doors are sufficient for the number of people attending the sleepover. Ensure that escape routes are free from obstruction at all times, that exit doors can be easily opened, and that fire doors are kept closed.
- Ensure that there are enough fire extinguishers on the premises and that staff are aware of their location and operation.
- Prepare an evacuation plan to include the actions to be taken in the event of a fire, including calling the fire and rescue service and taking a roll call at a designated assembly point.
- Train staff or volunteers in fire safety procedures for the premises prior to the sleepover taking place.

Consideration should also be given to staff sleeping arrangements during the sleepover. It may be necessary to ask staff to remain awake throughout the night to alert sleeping individuals of a fire and aid their escape.

Notifying the Fire & Rescue Service

If you are organising a sleepover, you should complete and submit the "Temporary sleepover notification" form on the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service website. This form should be completed at least two weeks (14 days) prior to the event. This will allow sufficient time for the Service to assess the suitability of the premises in accommodating sleeping occupants.

Failure to notify in accordance with this timescale may result in there being insufficient time for the Service to determine the suitability of the premises for sleeping.

To make a full assessment of suitability, the Service may request additional documentation such as a copy of the fire risk assessment or other relevant documentation relating to the fire safety measures on the premises. It may be necessary for the Service to carry out a visit to the premises prior to the event.

Useful Information

The Government published a series of fire safety guides that provide further advice on fire safety and how to carry out a fire safety assessment. For those premises listed above, the following documents may be appropriate:

- A short guide to making your premises safe from fire
- Small and medium places of assembly
- Sleeping accommodation

A free copy of these documents is available on the [Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service website](#).