



To whom it may concern,

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – COMMON AREAS OF FIRE SAFETY CONCERN

We have produced this letter to provide education providers with essential information regarding common fire safety concerns identified during audits carried out at similar premises.

Unfortunately, these sorts of concerns are very common. This letter includes information on action that can be taken to address these concerns in order to reduce the risk. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

What can you do to reduce the risks?

- Ensure that a fire risk assessment is undertaken for the premises.
- Ensure that the use of corridor displays is assessed as part of the fire risk assessment, it should consider the risk associated with any increase in fire loading on escape routes. This should also give consideration to any temporary displays and/or decorations used as part of events or functions.
- Ensure that fire safety training is provided to all employees.
- Ensure appropriate procedures and safety drills, which are followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to persons, are established and followed.
- Ensure an out of hours fire plan is in place including procedures for key holders and consideration for facilitating the attendance of the emergency Services.
- Ensure that the integrity of any compartmentation included in the design of your premises is checked and confirmed on a routine basis. Any damage identified should be rectified without delay.
- Ensure kitchen extract ventilation systems are tested and maintained.
- Ensure that all of your evacuation routes are kept clear at all times.
- Ensure that the fire alarm system is functioning correctly and is regularly tested and maintained.
- Ensure that emergency lighting is functioning correctly and is regularly tested and maintained.
- Ensure that all fire doors are tested and maintained including any hold open or electronic locking devices, any damage identified should be rectified without delay.

Guidance for sleepovers

We are finding that premises such as village halls, schools and museums are increasingly being used to hold sleepovers despite not being designed for such events. During sleepovers people are more at risk from fire, due to being less aware of their surroundings.

If you are organising a sleepover, you should notify the Fire Service that there will be people sleeping on the premises. Failure to notify in accordance with this timescale may result in there being insufficient time for the Fire Service to adequately consider the sleepover.

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure suitable fire safety measures are in place to alert those sleeping, allowing them to escape safely. 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.

For further information and to submit a 'Notification of sleepover form' please visit [Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service - Room hire and sleepovers](#).

Fire Risk Assessment

If you own or manage a commercial premises, such as a school, then you must comply with fire legislation set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Part of this legislation requires the responsible person to carry out a fire risk assessment to identify the hazards and consider who may be at risk. You will then be able to decide whether the risks identified are acceptable or whether you need to take steps to reduce or control them. Staff should be made aware of the findings of the fire risk assessment.

All of the above areas must be addressed as part of your fire risk assessment including the associated hazards. Action must be taken to ensure that adequate control measures have been implemented to manage those risks and reduce the risk from fire.

If you chose to appoint a third-party Fire Risk Assessor to carry out the assessment on your behalf, then you must take steps to ensure that the Fire Risk Assessor is competent. You can view advice on choosing a competent Risk Assessor on the Fire Protection section of our website [Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service - Fire Risk Assessment](#).

If you need further advice, please consult the HM Government Guide to Fire Safety Risk Assessment in Educational Premises which provides more comprehensive guidance on how to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These publications can be obtained from the Fire Protection, Free Templates and Tools section of our website - [Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service - Free templates and tools](#).

If you have any queries or questions relating to the letter, then please contact our headquarters fire protection team on 01606 868700 or by email to fireadvice.shq@cheshirefire.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Steve McCormick
Head of Prevention & Protection