

# **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS ON SCHOOL SITES**

## **GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

**DERBY CITY COUNCIL**  
The Council House  
Corporation Street  
Derby DE1 2FS

**Revision Date: May 2021**



Derby City Council

## 1 Fire Risk Assessment on School Sites

- 1.0 Derby City Council is responsible for ensuring its assets, including schools, are managed and to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that they should not harm, or cause loss, to those who could be affected. This includes the management of Fire Risk Assessments (FRA).
- 1.1 The aim of this guidance is to set in place measures and procedures, in the form of inspections, risk assessments and compliance checks, to ensure that as far as possible the Council and Community schools discharge their duty.
- 1.2 This guidance document sets out the responsibilities of schools in respect to fire risk assessments.
- 1.3 The Council will carry out FRAs for Community, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools.
- 1.4 For schools that are part of a Council PFI contract the responsibility for carrying out the FRA is set out within the terms of the PFI contract.
- 1.5 Schools that are outside of the Council's responsibility (Academies and Free Schools) are advised to adopt similar policies and procedures. The Council's Property Projects & Technical Services can undertake an FRA for Academies or Free Schools should the school wish to purchase one. Please contact the Fire Safety Team, E-mail: [FireSafetyTeam@derby.gov.uk](mailto:FireSafetyTeam@derby.gov.uk), for a fee proposal.
- 1.6 The frequency between FRAs will be reviewed and decided upon and based on a combination of factors including:
- Type of occupancy (risk profile – as detailed in BS9999)
  - Size / complexity of the building
  - Condition of building at last FRA
  - Whether significant changes have been made since last FRA
  - Quality of FS management
  - History (fire incidents; vandalism; unauthorised access etc.).

## 2 Overview

- 2.0 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (often cited as the FSO or RRO) replaces most fire safety legislation with one Order – it is now the principal legislation covering fire safety in occupied buildings in England and Wales. It means that any person who has some level of control in premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire. The order is designed to provide a minimum fire safety standard in all non-domestic\* premises.

\*The Fire Safety Act 2021 extends the FSO to any building containing two or more sets of domestic dwellings.

**The following requirements are taken directly from 'The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005'.**

### **Duty to take general fire precautions**

**8.—(1)** The responsible person must—

(a) take such general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of any of his employees; and

(b) in relation to relevant persons who are not his employees, take such general fire precautions as may reasonably be required in the circumstances of the case to ensure that the premises are safe.

### **Risk assessment**

**9.—(1)** The responsible person must cause to have carried out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions he needs to take to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed on him by or under this Order.

- 2.1 Schools are required to carry out certain fire safety duties which include ensuring that general fire precautions are satisfactory, and that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is carried out. If more than five persons are employed by the organisation, the assessment must be recorded. The purpose of the Council's Fire Risk Assessment is to address all applicable statutory requirements as imposed by current fire safety legislation.
- 2.2 On receipt, the Fire Risk Assessment will be reviewed by the Fire Safety Team prior to forwarding to the school. Any serious risks will be brought to the attention of the school by the Assessor at the time of the assessment and followed up by email or phone call. A copy of the FRA will be issued, together with an action plan, generally within 14 working days of DCC receiving the Fire Risk Assessment.
- Responsible Person**  
The Responsible Person generally means (in relation to a workplace) the employer or corporate body, e.g. the Governing body and / or Head teacher. Responsibilities may be delegated to workplace managers.
- 2.3. Further background information in relation to FRAs is available [here](#)

### **3 Schools FRA Assessment Process**

- 3.0 For Community, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools (excluding PFI schools) the Council will appoint a consultant to undertake the FRA.
- 3.1 An Assessor from the appointed company (currently Fire Compliance Management Services Ltd.) will contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time and date on or before the programmed FRA date.
- 3.2 The assessor will need to inspect all areas of the premises. Schools will need to make arrangements to facilitate this. Inspections will last between half a day and a full day depending on the size of the school. The school should be in normal occupation for the FRA to give a true reflection of the day to day operation of the school.
- 3.3 Prior to the assessment schools will need to ensure all relevant documents are available for the assessor at the time of the assessment. The school will be advised of these documents in the email sent by DCC advising them of a newly commissioned FRA.
- 3.4 On receipt of the assessor's FRA, the document and Action Plan will be reviewed by the DCC Fire safety Team prior to issue to the school.

In summary:

- School informed by DCC and / or Assessor of proposed date of the assessment.
- Assessor visits the site and completes assessment inspection
- DCC fire safety team review and issue the FRA to the school
- School review the Action Plan and address any 'Management issues' noted – see paragraph 5.1 below.

## 4 FRA Assessment Issue to School

- 4.0 The FRA will be received by the Fire Safety Team for review. A copy of this will be sent to the school Headteacher. The FRA documents will also be accessible via the Client Portal for In-Package schools. Any issues accessing the data must be raised with [Robert.akers@derby.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.akers@derby.gov.uk)
- 4.1 The report will contain a general introduction and overview. This will be intended to explain the principles and limitations of the report, and the importance of conducting a regular review. A summary description of the building and the fire safety measures will be given, with a brief summary of the significant findings of the fire risk assessment. The report will also contain a check list and a schedule of any items requiring attendance within a stated timescale.
- 4.2 The Council (Property Projects & Technical Services) will review the FRA including the action plan. The action plan will set out the actions required by the School and/or DCC Surveyors (if in package), and with timescales within which action must be taken. The assessor's FRA and Action Plan will be sent to the school in order to record and track any actions that need to be signed off and reported back to the Council
- 4.3 The fire risks identified in this assessment are prioritised by the Assessor and summarised in the Action Plan. This Action Plan represents the significant findings of the fire risk assessment as required by Article 9 of the Fire Safety Order 2005.
- 4.4 The fire risk assessment is a live document; therefore, the responsible person must ensure that it is subject to regular review between the programmed Fire Risk Assessment dates; in particular, this must be done immediately following any significant changes, e.g. the remodelling of the working environment, changes to the pupil intake, staff employment, temporary and permanent, mobility changes of occupants, and temporary maintenance works. Further advice is available from the fire safety team.

### Action Plan

The Action Plan will be sent electronically in Excel format; this will allow duty holders to input on screen, comments and actions carried out by the school. It is not essential that a hard copy is produced but should a hard copy be preferred the sheet will be set for landscape printing. Ideally an A3 colour printer will be required to ensure all information is printable and legible.

An example of the action plan is set out on the next page.

| ASSESSOR USE ONLY |               |                 |             | FACOT (FIRE SAFETY COMPLIANCE TEAM) USE ONLY |   |           |   | SITE USE ONLY   |                 |             |                      |                 |                  |                        |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|--|---|-----------|---|---|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Asset Number      | Premit Number | Building Number | Zone Number | Location                                     | Hazard Identified   | Risk Type | Recommended Additional Risk Control Measures  | Comments  | Action Deadline | Duty Holder | Completion Signature | Completion Date | Duty Holder Type |                        |
| 353               |               |                 |             |  | The electrical installation is not routinely inspected and serviced by a competent person. The system therefore presents a potential fire hazard.   | Medium    | The installation was tested in July 2015 and found to have numerous defects making it unsatisfactory. Evidence that these issues have been resolved was not made available. It is recommended the electrical installation is inspected periodically and kept in a state of good repair by a competent person in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations and BS 7671.  | Electrical team to review and confirm all outstanding items resolved.   | 30/09/2018      |             |                      |                 |                  | Maintenance Electrical |
| 353               |               |                 |             |  | The general housekeeping in some areas was found to be unsatisfactory. Floor housekeeping presents a potential fire hazard and the risk of rapid fire development.  | Immediate | Housekeeping needs to be improved in the areas detailed below to reduce the hazard and the risk of fire: a) CS (18) Combustible items need to be removed from the areas listed below and these areas are to be kept clear of combustible material at all times. Staff should be made aware of this during fire safety training sessions: a) B10 (17)  |   | 30/09/2018      |             |                      |                 |                  | Management             |
| 353               |               |                 |             |  | Combustible material is being stored in high risk areas. This is a hazardous practice presenting a possible risk of fire and rapid fire development.  | Immediate | The following extinguishers are to be hung on an appropriate bracket that is firmly fixed to the wall, with the top of the extinguisher approximately 1 metre from floor level, or placed on a purpose built extinguisher stand: a) A44 (1)   |   | 30/09/2018      |             |                      |                 |                  | Management             |
| 353               |               |                 |             |  | A number of extinguishers were found to be insecure.  | Medium    | It is recommended that the obstructions are removed from the extinguishers listed below and they are kept free from obstruction and easily accessible at all times: a) The CO2 extinguisher in B10 was obstructed - recommend removal of the stored items to provide a clear space around the extinguisher (1,2)  |   | 30/11/2018      |             |                      |                 |                  | Maintenance Building   |
| 353               |               |                 |             |  | Portable fire extinguishers were found to be obstructed. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 clearly states that portable fire extinguishers must be easily accessible at all times.   | Immediate | It is recommended that the obstructions are removed and the call points are kept easily accessible at all times. Particular attention is to be given to the following locations: a) Several call points have display boards and other decorations very close to them - recommend these are moved away from the call points to ensure that they and the adjacent fire action notices are clearly visible for people to get to know where they are and remain easy to find in an emergency: A6, 8, 15, 18, 43 | if necessary review with fire safety manager, this should have a common sense approach, if regular staff in the room, with training and knowledge of where they are located, this is less of an issue, some areas more obstructed than others.  | 30/09/2018      |             |                      |                 |                  | Management             |
| 353               |               |                 |             |  | During the assessment it was noted that manual fire alarm call points are being obstructed.   | Immediate | It is recommended that the emergency lighting system be inspected by a competent person monthly, and annually, in accordance with the schedules set out in British Standard BS5266 and manufacturers instructions. The results of the tests should be recorded in a Fire Safety Log Book available for inspection by an enforcing authority and original documentation retained as evidence of the work completed.  | This will be reviewed with electrical engineers   | 30/09/2018      |             |                      |                 |                  | Maintenance Electrical |
| 353               |               |                 |             |  | Partition Walls - it appears that the compartmentation finishes at the suspended ceilings. The staircase enclosures have been assessed and do not provide sufficient fire protection for the safe evacuation of occupants. Note from fire safety manager stair case enclosure appears to be an error as this is a single storey building. | Medium    | This suggests that there may be an issue with the compartmentation throughout the premises including the stairwell enclosures. Note from fire safety manager staircase enclosure is an error as this is single storey building. It is therefore recommended that a full compartmentation survey is undertaken and the results reviewed along with the (not seen) fire strategy. A43 (15) & A45 (11-15).   | There are a number of alternative exits directly to the outside for this school. Whilst compartmentation will be reviewed it is less of a risk to life when there are a number of exits. Property protection and risk to fire fighters is however still considered and this will be reviewed. | 30/11/2018      |             |                      |                 |                  | Capital Works Building |

## 5 Likely Outcomes from Action Plan

### Management Issues, Maintenance Repair & Capital Investment

5.0 The risk priorities and Action Plan will be the most important aspects of the FRA. The significant findings of the fire risk assessment, and a prioritised Action Plan, must be implemented in order to eliminate or control the identified fire risks. This is likely to cover three principal areas of action:

5.1 **School Management Issues** - where appropriate, the report is likely to include management actions which have been identified as fire risks – this will be the schools' responsibility to address and could include items such as fire safety training of staff (ensuring all staff, including temporary and parttime staff are included) and fire drills, blocked fire escape routes and storage of combustible materials. In these examples, the school would need to take prompt action, for example, by clearing corridors if blocked, and confirm in writing what action has been taken.

#### Responsible Person

As the Responsible Person in control of the premises, it is their duty to ensure that all relevant parties are acting on these items. The Fire Safety Team will follow up on outstanding actions; however, until these are signed off as completed, the risk must be mitigated.

5.2 **Maintenance issues** – the report may identify small maintenance works which are required, for example repairs to fire doors or closers. These will be the school's responsibility to address through either:

- The Council's Maintenance Package (***for schools purchasing the package***). These actions will be allocated to the relevant building/electrical/mechanical surveyor to action as part of the DCC review of the FRA. The surveyor who will discuss the remedial actions and likely cost with the school business manager. The school should monitor these actions and discuss progress with their DCC surveyor.

#### Maintenance Issues

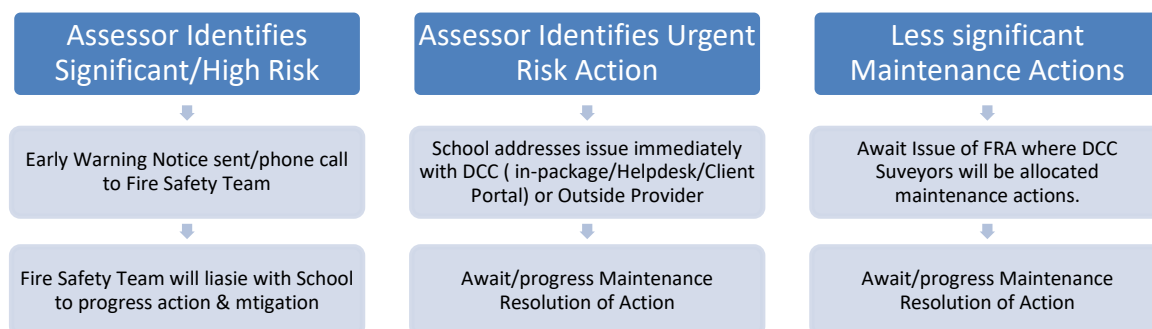
If you are made aware of any urgent maintenance issues by the Assessor, please submit maintenance requests on the portal stating that this is FRA Survey work and requesting this is noted on the job order. For any other maintenance actions, you should await the issue of the FRA, where these tasks will have been allocated to DCC surveyors

- Non-Council Maintenance Package Schools must arrange such work through their appointed Professional Adviser to address the action points from the assessment.
- It is important that you inform DCC when actions have been completed.

#### Urgent matters

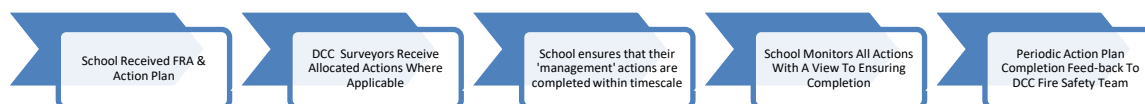
Where any of the risks are noted as 'significant' and / or 'urgent' the assessor must inform the Responsible person and the DCC Fire Safety Team by way of an 'Early Warning Notice'

## Management & Maintenance Repair - recap:



**5.3 Significant Capital Implications** – where there is a significant amount of work required to address major building related implications, these will be considered for prioritisation from the Council's School Capital Programme (for VA Schools, such items would need to be discussed with the School's Diocese, as part of the LCVAP programme). This will also be subject to a review of the school's Devolved Formula Capital balances. If the Council or the school are not in a position to complete major capital works within the time period, then the school will need to put interim measures in place.

In summary:



## 6 School Governing Body and Head Teacher Responsibility

6.0 School Governing Bodies and Headteachers are responsible for ensuring the Action Plan has been managed sufficiently within given timescales. After successfully completing the measures recommended, the Responsible Person (Head Teacher or nominated competent person) should sign off the recommendations detailed within the action plan and indicate the date that the actions were completed.

6.1 The school will then be responsible for returning the completed action plan by the required date to the DCC fire safety team In-box:  
[Firesafetyteam@derby.gov.uk](mailto:Firesafetyteam@derby.gov.uk)

6.2 If a school action plan has not been returned by the required deadline, or is returned with action points which have not been completed within the required dates, Property Projects & Technical Services will assess the risk presented and may visit the school site to inspect action plan progress. If, following inspection, action plan items are still outstanding Property Projects & Technical Services may deem it necessary to issue a Safety Notice requiring written confirmation of the completion of the outstanding items within a specified number of days.

- 6.3 If Property Projects & Technical Services do not receive written confirmation that the outstanding items, subject to the above Notice, have been completed within the specified date, details will then be passed to the School Organisation and Provision Team, Peoples Services. School Organisation and Provision will then raise the matter formally with the Governing Body as a safeguarding/health and safety matter.

## 7 Contact Details

- 7.0 For any technical, practical or administrative queries please contact:

DCC Fire Safety Team In-box  
[FireSafetyTeam@derby.gov.uk](mailto:FireSafetyTeam@derby.gov.uk)

Phillip Knight  
Fire Safety Service Manager  
0778 836 3943

Karen Walker-Andrew  
Principal Fire Surveyor  
01332 647914

Anneka Sloman  
Technical Support Officer  
01332 640208

- 7.1 If there are any general queries in relation to this programme, or the school capital programme, please contact:

Phillip Knight  
Fire Safety Service Manager  
Property Projects and Technical Services  
0778 836 3943  
[Phillip.knight@derby.gov.uk](mailto:Phillip.knight@derby.gov.uk)

Steve Allwood  
Principal Asset Officer  
School Organisation and Provision  
01332 642731  
[steve.allwood@derby.gov.uk](mailto:steve.allwood@derby.gov.uk)