

# **Waltham Forest Early Years Guidance**

## **Fire Safety (Emergency Evacuation) Policy Prompt Guidance**

**Early Years, Childcare & Business Development  
Service**



**Waltham Forest**

London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Early Years, Childcare & Business Development Service have written this document to help you a fire safety policy for your setting. This document is for reference only and you must adapt it to reflect the service your setting offers. To download guidance on other policies and procedures go to:

<https://thehub-beta.walthamforest.gov.uk/earlyyearpoliciesandprocedures>

**Covid-19** restrictions mean that some businesses are changing how they operate in order to stay open. This means you may need to review your Fire Risk Assessment and evacuation procedures. See below for further advise:

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-workplace/coronavirus-back-to-business/adapting-your-premises/>

### **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**

**3.54.** Providers must ensure that their premises, including overall floor space and outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided on the premises. Providers must comply with requirements of health and safety legislation (including fire safety and hygiene requirements).

#### **3.55**

Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff, and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency and must have an emergency evacuation procedure. Providers must have appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers) which is in working order. Fire exits must be clearly identifiable, and fire doors must be free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside

Whenever we say parents in this document, we mean parents and carers and whenever we say child, we mean children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND)).

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 received Parliamentary approval in June 2005 and came into force on 1 October 2006. It is the only piece of legislation for fire safety issues.

The main focus of the order is fire prevention. Fire certificates have been abolished and have no legal status. The local fire and rescue authority, the Health and Safety Executive, or other relevant local authority are still the enforcing authority.

Under the Reform Order, the 'responsible person' for the premises (your competent fire safety officer) must carry out a fire risk assessment and nominate a sufficient number of competent people (fire marshals) so the emergency procedures identified in the fire risk assessment can be put into practice.



### **What is meant by a competent person?**

As an employer, you must appoint a 'competent person' to help you meet your health and safety duties.

A competent person is not someone who simply has the competence to carry out a particular task safely. In general terms, the definition of a competent person is someone who has the necessary skills, experience and knowledge to manage health and safety. Other factors, such as attitude and physical ability, can also affect someone's competence. This will often require your nominated fire coordinator and marshals to take appropriate and suitable training to allow them to undertake the task requested of them

For more information you can visit the Department for Communities and Local Government website at [www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw) where you will find fire safety advice and an example of a fire safety risk assessment.

You must take reasonable steps to make sure children, staff and anyone else on your premises is safe in the event of a fire. You must have a clearly defined procedure for the emergency evacuation of your premises.

You are responsible for making sure they are in working order and are tested/inspected regularly.

You must nominate a competent lead fire officer. This role is basically the fire coordinator who oversees all fire safety, risk assessments, fire marshals, fire drills etc. You will then need to nominate competent fire marshals to assist you in this role. Their main responsibilities will need to be agreed by you but will generally be to know what to do in the event of an evacuation and be responsible for fire safety in their own areas. Your key person will be the lead fire officer/coordinator. You must arrange for cover for these roles when people are on leave/away from site to ensure there are competent fire lead/coordinator/marshals on site at all times.

### **Fire risk assessment**

To meet fire safety legislation, you must carry out fire risk assessments. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 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. According to the rules you must:

- Carry out a fire risk assessment to identify any possible dangers and risks.
- Act of the actions found within that FRA within the priority periods provided.
- Consider who may be especially at risk.
- Get rid of, or reduce, the risk from fire as far as is reasonably possible and provide general fire precautions to deal with any possible risk left.
- Take other measures to make sure there is protection if you use or store flammable or explosive materials.
- Create a plan to deal with any emergency and, in most cases, keep a record of your findings.
- Review your findings when necessary.

In our experience unless you are suitably trained/qualified to undertake a thorough Fire Risk Assessment, it is good practice for you to commission a suitably accredited Fire Risk Assessor to undertake at least one FRA that you can use as a template for future FRA's. In order to be competent to carry out a FRA you must have the necessary skills, experience and knowledge to complete that task. For example, are you able to interpret which internal doors should be 1/2hr or 1hr fire resistant to protect you from spread of fire? Do you know what work should be carried out to an internal fire door to make it fire resistant? An FRA is a legal document and the person who undertakes and signs that document is legally and criminally responsible for that document. Don't take chances. Commission an FRA to a suitably accredited Fire Risk Assessor. Use that document as the basis of future FRA's if you have a small business on a simple site layout. Otherwise commissions annual FRA updates. New providers will need to follow this advice as part of our FEEE process, but we would expect all existing providers to follow this advice.

### Points to consider

The way in which people respond when they discover a fire or hear a fire alarm will determine whether the fire will pose a threat to their safety. Prompt and appropriate action by staff will allow them to leave the building unharmed and can also make sure that any fire is brought under control quickly.

Although there are common elements in all fire procedures, the actual procedures used in your building will need to be tailored to that building.

When writing your procedures, you must also take into account the nature of the activities in the building, as well as the availability of staff to respond to emergencies and to fulfil the roles required by the procedures.

- Think about how you display the essential elements of the fire procedure on fire instruction notices such as evacuation procedures, routes and assembly points?
- How do you ensure that staff have a copy of the procedures as part of their induction training?
- How do you ensure fire doors are kept fire closed at all times (unless they are doors which automatically close when the alarm is sounded) to prevent the spread of the fire and/or toxic smoke?
- Do you know which internal doors should be fire resistant? A Fire Risk Assessment undertaken by a suitably accredited fire engineer will inform you which doors must be fire resistant and what remedial actions you may need to complete.
- How do you make sure fire doors are free of obstructions?
- How do you monitor and keep corridors, landings, stairways and escape routes clear at all times of anything that is likely to cause a fire or accident, or slow down evacuation in an emergency? Everyday objects, such as a box of toys left in an escape corridor, can get in the way during an emergency evacuation.
- Do you follow all legal requirements and safe working practices when storing, using and getting rid of hazardous materials?



- Have you ensured that you have a personal emergency evacuation procedure for every person who has a disability, which may affect his or her ability to recognise that an emergency is taking place or to evacuate a building unaided? This procedure will be specific to the individual's needs and abilities.

### **Emergency evacuation procedure**

As each setting and building is unique you will need to put together your own fire evacuation procedure.

The basic fire procedure should address the following:

- what to do when you discover a fire
- what to do when you hear the fire alarm or evacuation signal.

The basic procedure should then expand as necessary to address the following:

- what the people with special duties should do
- how you are going to evacuate children or adults with special needs or disabilities.

You should carry out a fire drill regularly and record, monitor and review what happens. How often do you carry out an emergency evacuation drill and where is it recorded?

Some other points to consider are:

- where you keep the register, how it is accessed and by who
- do you keep an emergency evacuation box/bag near the emergency exit, which would include blankets, nappies, first aid kit and so on?
- not collecting personal belongings
- not using a lift
- think about the youngest children and babies, and how staff will be deployed to evacuate them. Do you need any special equipment?
- closing all doors and windows, if it is safe to do so, and who will do this
- turning off all electrical equipment, if it is safe to do so, and who will do this
- not going back into a building unless it is safe to do so
- the ages and grouping of the children.
- how do you access emergency contact details for parents, staff etc?

You will need to highlight your nominated fire marshal and their responsibilities and duties. You should make sure your nominated fire marshal has completed appropriate training.

### **Training**

The requirement is to have a responsible person for fire safety who (if necessary) are trained for the role. St Johns Ambulance offer fire marshal training and also has a fire marshal calculator so businesses can calculate how many fire marshals they need for the type of premises they have. Go to [www.sja.org.uk](http://www.sja.org.uk) and search for fire marshal calculator.

Other staff must know what to do in the event of a fire so you could include training in your inductions and have regular fire drills.

## **Fire safety equipment**

You will need to make a note of who is responsible for updating and monitoring the fire safety equipment, e.g. fire extinguishers and fire blankets, in the building. This could be your nominated fire safety officer (FSO) or a certain member of your committee.

## **Who is responsible?**

Under the order, anyone who has control of premises or anyone who has a degree of control over certain areas or systems may be a responsible person. Your responsible person, along with the rest of your staff, should carry out risk assessments in relation to fire safety. These should be highlighted to all staff, including the committee where applicable.

## **There are five steps to fire risk assessment:**

### **Step 1 – Identify the fire hazard**

For example, how could a fire start? What could burn?

### **Step 2 – Identify people at risk**

For example, employees, visitors to the premises, and anyone who may be particularly vulnerable such as children, the elderly and disabled people.

### **Step 3 – Evaluate, remove or reduce and protect from risk**

Think about what you have found in steps 1 and 2 and remove and reduce any risks to protect people and premises.

### **Step 4 – Record, plan, inform, instruct and train**

Keep a record of the risks you have identified and what actions you have taken to reduce or remove them. Make a clear plan of how to prevent fires and, should a fire start, how you will keep people safe. Make sure your staff know what to do in the event of a fire and if necessary that they are trained for their roles. Do you have designated routes out of your building? What are they? You could include a sketch or map as part of your policy.

### **Step 5 – Review**

Regularly review your risk assessment to make sure it remains up to date and reflects any changes that may have happened. For example, if you change the layout of your rooms or how you use each room.

## **Useful resources and websites**

- 5 Steps to fire risk assessment document: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-5-step-checklist>
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 A Short Guide to Making Your Premises Safe From Fire: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/regulatoryreformfire](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/regulatoryreformfire)
- HM Government – fire safety risk assessment, educational premises and a short guide to making your premises safe from fire: [www.fireservice.co.uk](http://www.fireservice.co.uk)
- <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-workplace/coronavirus-back-to-business/>