



Fire Sector Federation

GUIDANCE FOR THE FIRE SAFETY MANAGER

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1. Introduction

Competency Criteria for Fire Safety Managers

The role this guidance is to support the individual who has the functional responsibility to ensure the life safety of all persons who occupy, are resident or any other person who may be in the or around the building and may be affected by a fire in the building.

This primary role may extend to wider responsibilities to control the risk from fire to people, property and the environment by managing systems within the building designed to protect the building.

These functions and this guidance should always be considered alongside statutory or regulatory requirements regarding fire safety in buildings together with appropriate good practice guidance in British Standards¹ and other approved codes of practice.

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Chairman
Fire Risk Assessors Working Group

¹ In particular BS 9997:2019 Fire Risk Management Systems: Requirements with guidance for use



2. Foreword

While the cause of fire damage, injury and even death is often attributed to the failure of some physical or procedural fire prevention or protection system, it is often the case that the root cause of the failure can be traced back to an inadequate, or in some cases lack of effective management system.

Robust fire risk management should include systems of work to ensure that all fire safety statutory and regulatory requirements and general fire management arrangements are appropriate, provided by competent people, and that they are inspected, tested, and maintained properly. External and/or internal audit processes should be implemented to ensure the precautions are measured and remain suitable.

Fire risk management is continuously evolving as a discipline and in practice. An integrated or holistic approach to understanding and managing the risks posed by the threat of fire will enable an organisation to optimise its underlying processes and achieve more efficient results.

The Fire Sector Federation assumed responsibility for the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council and has published an Approved Code of Practice: A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency. The Code considers it essential that, having identified and mitigated fire risk, it is vital during the building's life that the general fire precautions to secure the safety of the occupants and resilience of the building should be maintained by a competent person.

The Federation further considers that whenever practical, all those who may deliver precautions that support fire safety critical systems and services should have individual or organisational third party accreditation or certification² and that all products should have similar certification.

While it is very unlikely that third-party certification of this nature will become mandatory under legislation, Government acknowledges the benefits of third-party certification and it is now recognised that this includes fire risk management system certification.

This document sets a standard of competency for specific roles involved in:

- i. Managing fire risk often with a Fire Safety or Health and Safety Manager, and
- ii. Auditing the fire management systems, using an internal or external auditor who may work on behalf of a third party certification body.

This guidance will be subject to review by the Fire Sector Federation, so that it can be updated to reflect current thinking and experience in the fire community. (www.firesectorfederation.co.uk)

2 Accredited obtained through an Engineering Council professional registration body or certification obtained through a UK Accreditation Serviced Certification Bodies



3. SCOPE

It is a requirement of legislation throughout the UK that a fire risk assessment is carried out in public and commercial buildings, including the common parts of most residential buildings.

However, the execution of a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment alone will not render the occupants of a building, or the building itself, safe from fire.

To underpin the assessment of fire risk, fire safety management systems are required to ensure that, for example:

- organisational policy recognises the buildings fire safety strategy and has a maintenance system that encompasses the promotion of fire prevention practices and incorporates mechanisms to sustain fire protection;
- enables and assists due diligence to be exercised when securing services and appointing contractors that impact upon the fire safety strategy and systems – to maintain or increase and not diminish the buildings fire risk performance;
- implements any significant findings from fire risk assessments ensuring they are acted upon correctly and are recorded together with any changes made to the fire safety strategy or systems; and
- educates everyone in the organisation and premises in fire prevention practices and fire protection awareness.

In so much as management systems reach into every part of an organisation, the function of fire safety management also requires a comparable distribution and adoption. Everyone from top management to the newest employee has some responsibility for the management of fire risk, as indeed they have for all risks. The nature of that responsibility, i.e. the requirement to undertake a task, and the level at which different accountability, i.e. the responsibility to monitor supervise and report upon tasks, sits is dependent on the size of the organisation and its structure.

However, this document is not a fire safety management guidebook and does not aim to explore all aspects of this broad view of fire safety management. Instead, the guide offers relevant competency criteria for the role of the fire safety manager that ultimately, may be incorporated into the forthcoming Building Safety Manager role.

In many medium and large organisations fire risk management issues are focused through a single person or a small team. In the future in some buildings this role may become part of a mandated and registered role as part of the Building Safety Manager. It is important therefore that this guide creates a platform from which the transition to Building Safety Manager is seamless.

People in this type of role co-ordinate the activities of senior managers, employees, contractors and others in the area of fire safety to ensure that the organisation has effective systems in place. They may be dedicated to this role, or it may be an additional role attached to an existing role such as, for example a nominated director, a facilities manager, a health and safety manager, security manager. For the purposes of this guide, such people are called **'fire safety managers'**. They sit at the centre of the fire risk management process.

The scope of this document is limited to those who fulfil the specific role relating to the management fire either as a full time role, or as one of a number of other duties.



4. COMPETENCY OF FIRE SAFETY MANAGER(S)

Senior management within organisations accountable for fire safety should appoint a fire risk manager(s) who, irrespective of other responsibilities have defined roles, responsibilities and authority with regard to fire risk management.

For small organisations a dedicated fire risk manager role may be inappropriate. The fire safety needs may be relatively simple and the fire risk management duties will often be carried out by the owner or general manager.

For medium sized organisations, the role of the fire risk manager is often combined with other duties such as health & safety, facilities management or with security risk management. It is, however, important that the organisation recognises that in appointing a fire risk manager with a combined role they are unlikely to possess all the necessary competencies in fire safety. In such an organisation, the fire safety needs may be more complex than for small enterprises and the organisation may need to seek specialist fire safety and risk assessment expertise from an external specialist third party to safeguard occupants, building infrastructure, and business continuity.

For large organisations, and certainly those with extensive estate portfolios, fire safety management will be a complex role and should whenever practicable be undertaken by a competent dedicated fire risk manager or organisation.

The extent of the fire safety management system should be proportionate to the level of risk arising from the organisation's activities and a subsequent level of assurance sought. It follows therefore, that the competency of any fire safety manager should be contextualised to the organisation's management system and reviewed as the role and responsibilities or organisation change.

Good practice should require that an organisation sets out what its fire risk management system encompasses by identifying the operational context, the required levels of management and the competency of those employed in any specific fire safety role including specifically the competence of the fire safety manager. The fire safety manager should be competent based on their skills, knowledge, experience and behaviour for the job in hand.

Organisations should:

- i. Define the individual competencies required to undertake the fire safety management role;
- ii. Identify any gap analyses and provide appropriate training to meet and maintain the defined competence;
- iii. Assess and evaluate the ongoing competency of those individuals once employed.

It is important to remember that competence in fire safety management does not necessarily depend on the possession of specific qualifications, however appropriate qualifications contribute to the demonstration of competence in areas like knowledge and understanding.



A fire safety manager may be responsible and accountable with managing the general fire precautions that support the premises' or building's fire safety strategy. This may include the risk assessment programme, the planned preventative maintenance (PPM) programme including testing and maintenance of fire detection and suppression equipment systems, training and educating others, and ensuring occupants and users of the premise can respond effectively when alerted to fire.

However, in some organisations they may not undertake these activities themselves. Senior management remain ultimately accountable as does the nominated Responsible Person³. Additionally, they may be supported by other employees and assisted by specialists and contactors.

Unless they are competent in all the necessary tasks, such as fire risk assessment, testing and maintenance or quality assurance of fire protection work, they will require assistance and support from other appointed competent persons. It is therefore essential that the fire safety manager understands their role in maintaining oversight and supervision of the fire safety management of the building or premise and can competently identify, select and appoint other competent persons to assist achievement of the required fire safety.

In general, fire safety managers need an appropriate knowledge of:

- Principles and practice of fire risk management (Appendix A1)
- The context of the organisation (Appendix A2)
- Leadership skills (Appendix A3)
- Planning (Appendix A4)
- Support (Appendix A5)
- Operation (Appendix A6)
- Performance and Evaluation (Appendix A7)

A separate knowledge criteria relates to System Audits (Appendix B)

³ Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as Amended



5. 5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT AND FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT.

It is increasingly acknowledged that the reduction of the likelihood and impact of fire in a building is not just about life safety or the risk of injury or death in the event of fire occurrence – it also encapsulates property protection, business or, mission continuity and sustainability in the face of fire.

Fire safety is used to refer to matters associated with ensuring life and property safety from fire and generally speaking, fire safety is associated with measures that must be taken to comply with mandatory standards.

Fire risk is used in this document to emphasize the wider context of protecting property, the environment, business continuity, investment and so on. Reducing fire risk will invariably enhance fire safety and so supports its delivery as well.

Accordingly, in this competency criteria the term ‘fire safety management’ encompasses both fire risk and fire safety activities.

5.2 AUDIT

Systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the specified criteria are fulfilled

NOTE An audit can be an internal audit (first party) or an external audit (second party or third party), and it can be a combined audit (combining two or more disciplines).

5.3 AUDITOR

Person with the demonstrated personal attributes and competence to conduct a fire risk management system audit

[SOURCE: BS EN ISO 9000:2005, 3.9.9, modified]

NOTE 1 An internal auditor can come from the organisation’s own staff, however, they should not audit systems for which they are responsible.

NOTE 2 An external auditor conducts second- or third party audits, and is from outside the organisation.

5.4 CAPABILITY

The ability or skill to carry out an activity successfully

5.5 COMPETENCE

Ability to apply the skills, knowledge and experience and behaviour to achieve intended results



5.6 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Physical, procedural and managerial measures taken to reduce the likelihood of ignition occurring and/or to mitigate the consequences if ignition does occur

5.7 FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES

Measures to prevent the outbreak of fire

5.8 FIRE PROTECTION MEASURES

Design features, systems, equipment or structural measures to reduce danger to people and property if fire occurs

Note Example of such measures include means of detecting, extinguishing or containing fires

5.9 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Process of identifying fire hazards and evaluating the risks to people, property, assets and environment arising from them, taking into account the adequacy of existing fire precautions, and deciding whether or not the fire risk is acceptable without further fire precautions⁴

5.10 FIRE RISK ASSESSOR

A competent person who carries out a site inspection, audits records of testing, maintaining fire safety systems and gas, electric, staff fire and evacuation training. Gauges existing fire safety management processes. Quantifies the risk and documents the significant findings in a timely action plan within the of, a fire risk assessment document. Regularly reviews the fire risk assessment and progress taken to mitigate avoidable fire risk.

5.11 FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Should be informed by the applied design guide, meeting the minimum requirements of The Building Regulations 2010 Fire Safety ADB Volume 2 Buildings other than dwellings 2019 Regulation 38: Fire safety information, requiring design and or build team to provide:

- i) Design and construction information to ensure that the person responsible for managing the as-built premises has sufficient information relating to fire safety to enable them to manage the building effectively.
- ii) To understand and implement the fire safety strategy of the building.
- iii) To maintain any fire safety system provided in the building.
- iv) To carry out an effective fire risk assessment of the building.
- v) Essential information includes any assumptions regarding the management of the building in the design of the fire safety arrangements.
- vi) Additional information for complex buildings should be considered as this may be appropriate.

⁴The FSF contributed to reviewing the Industry recognised fire risk assessment reporting tool, suitable for most premises, available from BSI PAS 79-1:2020 - Fire risk assessment. Premises other than housing Code of practice



The strategy should be supported by the Fire and Evacuation Strategy. This may be a simple fire alert with audible and possibly visual warning, prompting a Simultaneous evacuation to safety outside. In more complex buildings this may involve Horizontal and or Vertical phased evacuation often supported by Staff alarm evacuation (often a silent alarm) or stay put (Defend in place) strategy. It must be noted that the guidance on this and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) is continuously evolving.

All of the above should be stored in a Fire Safety Building Lifetime Folder providing a golden thread, for future generations to understand the design strategy and intended use, storing the initial concept design, construction, passive and active fire protection measures, commissioning, sign off and handing over of relevant fire safety information.

5.12 FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organisation to establish policies and objectives and processes to achieve those objectives and manage fire risk

NOTE 1 A management system can address a single discipline or several disciplines.

NOTE 2 The system elements include the organisation's structure, roles and responsibilities, planning, operation, etc.

NOTE 3 The scope of a management system may include the whole of the organisation, specific and identified functions of the organisation, specific and identified sections of the organisation, or one or more functions across a group of organisations.

5.13 FIRE SAFETY MANAGER

Person nominated to monitor and control management of fire prevention and protection and the associated tasks that collectively provide a fire safety strategy.

Note Example of such measures include means of detecting, extinguishing or containing fires

5.14 FIRE PREVENTION

Strategies that are targeted wholly or primarily at eliminating the possibility of an unwanted fire occurring, or reducing the likelihood of an unwanted fire to a level as low as is reasonably practicable.

5.15 FIRE PROTECTION

Strategies using passive and active fire protection that are targeted at eliminating or reducing the immediate impact of fire through systems incorporated into buildings, vehicles etc., complemented by management systems and training.

5.16 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF FIRE RISK

An integrated or holistic approach to understanding and managing the risks posed by the threat of fire which enables an organisation to optimize its underlying processes and achieve more efficient results.

NOTE: Different sources define the terms 'strategy' and 'policy' in different ways. For consistency, this document recommends the following explanation of the terms:

- The plan of action devised by management to achieve the goals they set forward is termed as the strategy of a company.
- Broad ideas or official line taken by a company are termed as its policy.
- There can be different strategies to achieve the goals set by a company following the policy guidelines though the policy is a long term concept that remains the same in a constant manner.
- Strategy can be labelled as plan of action while the policy is a guideline that is to be kept in mind all the time

5.17 SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Person or group of people accountable who direct and control an organisation at the highest level

NOTE 1 Top management has the power to delegate authority and provide resources within the organisation.

NOTE 2 If the scope of the management system covers only part of an organisation then top management refers to those who direct and control that part of the organisation.



ANNEXE

Appendix A

A1 Principles and practice of fire safety management

The fire safety manager will:

- Understand the nature and extent of primary compliance drivers such as life safety, property protection, mission/business continuity, environmental considerations and reputational risks within the context of the organisation.
- Understand the basic legal framework and the roles and powers of enforcement agencies
- Understand the basic principles of combustion, fire growth and fire spread.
- Understand the primary causes of fire, sources of fuel, sources of ignition and oxygen.
- Understand the basic control measures used to mitigate the risk posed by the threat of fire.
- Understand the basic principles of fire protection in buildings, e.g. early warning and means of escape, compartmentation and fire service access provision. Passive and active fire protection systems.
- Understand the difference between strategy, policy, process and procedure.
- Be aware of the importance of maintaining fire risk information and the extent of information required at premises level and organisation level.
- Understand the principles and practice of fire risk assessment and coordinate regular reviews by competent persons.
- Coordinate Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) of fire protection and power systems within the infrastructure.
- Understand the principles of due diligence as they apply to obtaining quotations for work, appointing contractors, selecting suppliers, executing work and record keeping.

A2 Context of the organisation

The fire safety manager will:

- Understand the internal and external issues that are relevant to the organisation.
- Understand the needs of all stakeholders and other interested parties.
- Have a good understanding of the applicability, principles, objectives, and intent of legislation so far as premises under their control fall within their jurisdiction.
- Know the boundaries of his jurisdiction and the scope of the fire risk management system under his control.

A3 Leadership

The fire safety manager will:

- Understand the importance of aligning fire prevention and protection objectives with the broader objectives of the organisation.
- Understand the resource requirements for maintaining governance of fire risk.
- Know how to define roles and responsibilities.
- Recognise one's own fire safety limitation and seek appropriate assistance in-house or by outsourcing to a competent engineer, assessor, or technician.



A4 Planning

The fire safety manager will:

- Understand the importance of setting SMART objectives.
- Be able to demonstrate how to create SMART objectives
- Consider introducing a suitable communications tool like S-BAR situation, background, assessment, recommendation⁵.

A5 Support

The fire safety manager will:

- Understand the importance of gaining and maintaining competencies in fire risk management.
- Have an appropriate knowledge of the identity and status of those with responsibilities and duties in relation to fire risk.
- Have good communication skills and use them to effectively engage with internal and external stakeholders.
- Understand the importance of documented information at organisation and premises level.
- Establish an effective fire risk management training and development strategy

A6 Operation

The fire safety manager will:

- Understand the issues relating to the control of work onsite in so far as it affects fire risk management.
- Consider the impact of any works to neighbouring premises and review plan accordingly.
- Understand any statutory or manufacturers requirements for testing and maintaining fire prevention and protection systems to ensure they operate correctly.
- Understand the need for an effective fire risk assessment programme.
- Understand the importance of appointing competent fire risk assessors and where to seek competency in this area.
- Have the knowledge and skills to communicate with all stakeholders in the event of an incident.
- Understand the need to establish and effect a response in the event of an emergency.
- Have (where appropriate) a working knowledge of fire legislation, Building Regulations, British, European, and international Standards and Codes of Practice.

⁵ <https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/2162/sbar-communication-tool.pdf>



Appendix 7 Performance evaluation and improvement

The fire safety manager will:

- Understand what needs to be monitored and measured and how to interpret results.
- Establish an effective monitoring programme
- Have the competence and resources to conduct internal audits.
- Understand what information needs to be conveyed during management reviews.
- Understand how to report and act upon non-conformities or corrective actions as necessary to the organisations fire risk management system and top management team to secure funds..

Appendix B

Confidence in the fire safety management system audit process and the ability to achieve its objectives depends on the competence of those individuals who are involved in planning and conducting fire risk management audits. The depth of competence required in this area depends on the complexity of the fire risk management system. The greatest depth of competence would be expected from a person who specialises in the audit of fire risk management systems as an external auditor.

Competence in this area of fire risk management should be evaluated through a process that considers personal behaviour and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills gained through education, work experience, auditor training and audit experience. This process should take into consideration the needs of the audit programme and its objectives.

Preferably fire risk management system auditors and/or their audit teams will include competent fire risk assessors, and those with the knowledge and skills of a competent fire risk manager.

In addition the fire risk management system auditor should have knowledge and skills in the areas outlined below:

B.1 General

In deciding the appropriate knowledge and skills required of the auditor, the following should be considered:

- The size, nature and complexity of the organisation to be audited;
- The objectives and extent of the audit programme;
- The role of the audit process in the management system of the auditee;
- The complexity of the fire risk management system to be audited;

B.2 Personal behaviour

Auditors should possess the necessary qualities to enable them to act in accordance with the principles of auditing as described in BS EN ISO 19011:2011 – Guidelines for auditing management systems and international standards ISO/IEC 17021:1–Certification of Management Systems and ISO/IEC 17065 – Certification of Products Processes and Services. Auditors should exhibit professional behaviour during the performance of audit activities, including being:

- Ethical, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet;
- Open-minded, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view;
- Diplomatic, i.e. tactful in dealing with people;
- Observant, i.e. actively observing physical surroundings and activities;
- Perceptive, i.e. aware of and able to understand situations;
- Versatile, i.e. able and readily adapt to different situations;
- Tenacious, i.e. persistent and focused on achieving objectives;
- Decisive, i.e. able to reach timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis;
- Self-reliant, i.e. able to act and function independently whilst interacting effectively with others;
- Acting with fortitude, i.e. able to act responsibly and ethically, even though these actions may not always be popular and may sometimes result in disagreement or confrontation;
- Open to improvement, i.e. willing to learn from situations, and striving for better audit results;
- Culturally sensitive, i.e. observant and respectful to the culture of the auditee;
- Collaborative, i.e. effectively interacting with others, including audit team members and the auditees' personnel.

B.3 Audit principles, procedures and methods

Knowledge and skills in this area enable the auditor to apply the appropriate principles, procedures and methods to different audits, and to ensure that audits are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner. An auditor should be able to do the following:

- Apply audit principles, procedures and methods;
- Plan and organize the work effectively;
- Conduct the audit within the agreed time schedule;
- Prioritize and focus on matters of significance;
- Collect information through effective interviewing, listening, observing and reviewing documents, records and data;
- Understand and consider the experts opinions;
- Understand the appropriateness and consequences of using sampling techniques;
- Verify the relevance and accuracy of collected information;
- Confirm the sufficiency and appropriateness of audit evidence to support audit findings and conclusions;
- Assess those factors that may affect the reliability of the audit findings and conclusions;
- Use the a formal system of workplace documentation to record audit activities;
- Document audit findings and prepare appropriate audit reports;
- Maintain the confidentiality and security of information, data, documents and records;
- Communicate effectively, orally and in writing (either personally, or through the use of interpreters and translators);
- Understand the types of risks associated with auditing.

B.4 Fire safety management system and other reference documents

Knowledge and skills in this area enable the auditor to comprehend the audit scope and apply audit criteria, and should follow by way of example PAS79: 2013:

- Fire risk management system specification or other documents used as audit criteria;
- The application of management system standards by the auditee and other organisations, as appropriate;
- Interaction between the components of the management system;
- Recognizing the hierarchy of reference documents;
- Application of the reference documents to different audit situations.

B.5 Organisational context

Knowledge and skills in this area enable the auditor to comprehend the auditee's structure, business and management practices, and should cover the following:

- Organisational types, governance, size, structure, functions and relationships
- General business and management concepts, processes and related terminology, including planning, budgeting and management of personnel;
- Cultural and social aspects of the auditee.

B.5 Organisational context

Knowledge and skills in this area enable the auditor to comprehend the auditee's structure, business and management practices, and should cover the following:

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- General business and management concepts, processes and related terminology, including planning, budgeting and management of personnel;
- Cultural and social aspects of the auditee.

B.6 Applicable legal and contractual requirements and other requirements that apply to the auditee

Knowledge and skills in this area enable the auditor to be aware of, and work within, the organisations legal and contractual requirements. Knowledge and skills specific to the jurisdiction or to the auditee's activities and products should cover the following:

- Laws and regulations and their governing agencies;
- Basic legal terminology
- Contracting and liability.