Fire risk assessment checklist for small premises

Walk the building with this list, including store rooms, the boiler room, loft spaces and outside. Tick what is in place. Anything not ticked is a finding: write it in the fire risk assessment with the action, who will do it and by when. Follows the five-step method in the Home Office guide for small and medium places of assembly.

Building _____ Walked by, date _____ Next review _____

1. Fire hazards: where a fire could start

- [ ] Electrical: fixed wiring inspected in the last five years, portable appliances tested, no overloaded sockets or trailing extension leads, no damaged plugs or cables
- [ ] Heating: boiler serviced, portable heaters kept clear of anything that burns, nothing stored in the boiler room
- [ ] Cooking: kitchen equipment clean, extraction clear of grease, a fire blanket by the cooker
- [ ] Smoking and naked flames: a no-smoking policy, candles and tea lights not permitted or strictly controlled, no fireworks or smoke machines without written permission
- [ ] Storage: combustible material (paper, chairs, decorations, cleaning products) stored away from heat sources and escape routes
- [ ] Arson: bins kept away from the building, outside areas lit, the building secured when empty
- [ ] Contractors and hirers: told the rules on hot work, heaters, decorations and naked flames before they start

2. People at risk: who is in the building

- [ ] Who uses the building, when, and how many at once; the most people present at any time
- [ ] People unfamiliar with the layout: hirers, visitors, audiences
- [ ] People who would need help to leave: wheelchair users, people with limited mobility or hearing, young children, older people
- [ ] Anyone working alone or in a part of the building where the alarm might not be heard
- [ ] Sleeping risk: nobody sleeps in the building, or if they do, how they would be woken

3. Means of escape: getting out

- [ ] At least two ways out of every occupied room where the numbers or the risk call for it
- [ ] Every exit opens easily from inside without a key while the building is in use; push bars where fitted work
- [ ] Escape routes kept clear: no furniture, deliveries, bins or stored items on the route or outside the doors
- [ ] Exit signs visible from every part of each room, and lit or photoluminescent where the route would be dark
- [ ] Emergency lighting fitted on escape routes and tested monthly; a full-duration test once a year
- [ ] Fire doors close fully on their own, are not wedged open, and have intact seals and strips
- [ ] External routes from exits to the assembly point are passable: gates unlocked, no parked cars, no stored material
- [ ] A travel distance to a safe place that is reasonable for the people and the risk (the guidance gives figures)

4. Detection and warning: knowing there is a fire

- [ ] A way of warning everyone in the building at once: a fire alarm system, or, in a very small single-room building, a shouted warning or a hand bell that can be heard throughout
- [ ] The alarm can be heard in every room, including toilets, kitchen and any upstairs room, with the doors shut
- [ ] Call points by each exit; the alarm is tested weekly from a different call point and the test is logged
- [ ] Smoke or heat detectors where a fire could start unseen: store rooms, boiler room, kitchen, loft spaces
- [ ] The alarm serviced by a competent person every six months, with the certificate kept

5. Fighting the fire: first aid firefighting

- [ ] Extinguishers of the right type for the risk (water or foam for general areas, CO2 for electrical, a fire blanket in the kitchen), on brackets or stands by exits
- [ ] Extinguishers checked monthly (in place, pin and seal intact, gauge in the green) and serviced yearly
- [ ] Nobody is expected to fight a fire; extinguishers are for clearing a route to an exit

6. Managing it: plan, record, inform, train, review

- [ ] A written fire emergency plan: what happens when the alarm sounds, who does what, the assembly point, who calls 999
- [ ] The fire action notice on the wall by each exit, matching the plan, with the assembly point named
- [ ] Everyone who runs the building knows the plan; hirers are given it before the event
- [ ] A fire drill at least once a year, recorded, with what went wrong and what was done
- [ ] Weekly alarm tests, monthly lighting and extinguisher checks and the annual services all logged, and the certificates kept
- [ ] A named responsible person, and a named deputy for when they are away

- [ ] This assessment reviewed every year, and after any change to the building, its use, or a fire or near miss
- [ ] The assessment, the plan and the records kept together where a fire officer or insurer can see them

Findings: what is not in place, the action, who, by when

Responsible person (name, signature, date)

Checked by a second person (name, signature, date)