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# EVACUATION STRATEGY

A GUIDE TO YOUR  
EVACUATION PLAN DURING  
TIMES OF REDUCED STAFF



**Trust Churches Fire** with your evacuation strategy.  
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# FIRE SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

Evacuating the premises safely and effectively is paramount in the event of a fire and the procedure should be familiar to all employees and visitors. During Covid-19, fire drills are still an important part of any successful emergency evacuation procedure; they test how effective your evacuation plan is and can help you highlight any aspects of your fire provisions which prove to be ineffective.

The responsible person(s) should be able to show that all personnel are aware of what to do in case of fire. It is also important to take into consideration the need for Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) should you have any employees in the office working on their own and how these will be managed and supported as part of your overall evacuation strategy and fire risk assessment.

Each member of staff should undergo a fire drill annually and an adequate number of trained fire wardens and deputies must be employed. During Covid-19, with staff likely to be on unusual shift patterns, it is the employer/responsible person's legal obligation under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that all employees are provided with adequate fire safety training and that you have a sufficient number of competent persons to assist and look after the fire safety of the premises. These people must be appropriately trained, have sufficient knowledge and be aware of their responsibilities. If your office is partially or fully open, it is important that you have enough fire wardens operating during this time.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A FIRE WARDEN?

Fire wardens are appointed by the Responsible Person and are expected to be competent, have suitable training to carry out their duties and a full understanding of the fire evacuation strategy of the building. Their duties are one of the most important contributions to fire safety in every business and help to maintain a safe environment.

## HOW MANY FIRE WARDENS DO YOU NEED?

The Responsible Person or detailed fire risk assessment should determine how many fire wardens are needed, based on the size of the building and taking into consideration staff holiday and sick leave.

In normal risk premises, a minimum of two wardens per floor are required.

With expected reductions in staff numbers due to self-isolation and sickness, it is important to remember that all shifts must be adequately covered, so you may have to nominate additional fire wardens to ensure there are enough for each shift. For higher risk premises, such as care homes, more fire wardens are required. This should be outlined in your fire risk assessment.



## DUTIES OF A FIRE WARDEN

Day-to-day fire wardens can check the following:

- ◆ Fire doors are undamaged and not wedged open. If they are wedged open, remove the wedges and report to the Responsible Person.
- ◆ Emergency escape routes are clearly signed.
- ◆ Fire exits and escape routes are not blocked, including external routes up to the assembly point.
- ◆ Firefighting equipment, e.g. fire extinguishers and fire blankets, are stored correctly and not missing or damaged.
- ◆ Emergency lighting is working.
- ◆ Rubbish is safely stored away and not overflowing.
- ◆ Sockets are not overloaded and electrical equipment does not have frayed wiring.
- ◆ Involvement in fire drills at least once a year.
- ◆ Fire safety training on induction for all new staff.
- ◆ Ensure everyone is familiar with the evacuation procedure.
- ◆ Make sure fire alarms are tested weekly.
- ◆ Ensure the fire alarm can be heard in all areas of the premises.
- ◆ Check smoke detectors have not been covered especially during building works.

Whilst this may seem like a lot of work, in reality this can be done as part of their normal job just by being a little more observant. Any problems or defects need to be reported to the Premises Fire Officer or line management.

The best fire protection is people. With increased risk due to insufficient staff available to carry out processes safely

or to spot a fire in the building, it is paramount that all employees receive adequate fire safety training.

If you are unsure on your evacuation strategy during this time, get in touch today to discuss your emergency plan and our fire safety training and fire drill service.



**Get in touch with Churches Fire** for further advice on your evacuation strategy and our fire safety training. Contact us on **0370 608 4350** today.

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