

Background

The hall, like all non-domestic buildings, is required to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A series of guides were published to assist in the implementation of these regulations. For a village hall, the relevant guide is "Small and Medium Places of Assembly". ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) publish Information Sheet 37 – Fire safety in village halls.

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, it is a requirement to carry out a fire risk assessment, record the findings, and implement them.

For the hall, which is leased as an empty and unsupervised facility, the fire safety responsibilities of those leasing and the management committee need to be established as part of the contract of hire. The person leasing for each event will need to be clearly established and documented and their legal duties made clear to them.

A fire risk assessment**1. Identify the fire hazards.**

Potential sources of ignition:

- cooking equipment
- faulty or misused electrical equipment
- candles
- arson

Potential sources of fuel:

- storage of flammable materials
- upholstered seating
- litter
- coats in entrance foyer

Potential sources of oxygen:

- extract fans in toilets and kitchens

2. Identify people at risk

- Users of the hall, particularly those unfamiliar with the building
- children
- people with disabilities, including mobility impairment, hearing impairment and vision impairment
- people under the influence of alcohol

3. Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring

- food being cooked catching fire, on the electric stove, in the electric oven, in the microwave oven
- candles knocked over
- electrical fault
- arson
- storage of flammable materials

Evaluate the risk to people

- Should a kitchen fire occur, the immediate risk will be to the occupants of the kitchen. Good escape is possible from the kitchen. The kitchen is fire-separated from

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the rest of the building. There will be some delay before smoke or flames significantly hinder the evacuation of the building.

Reduce the risk of those hazards to as low as reasonably practicable.

- Prohibit the use of candles or naked flames in the hall, with the exception of birthday cake candles, where the risk is small.

Decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the premises if a fire does start.

- A fire detection and warning system is not required, as the building is small enough that a fire would be obvious to any occupants, who could shout a warning.
- Ensure that there are portable fire extinguishers:
 - o Water-type generally near all exits
 - o Powder or CO₂ type near the electrical consumer unit
 - o Fire blanket in the kitchen
- Ensure escape routes are designated, kept clear and have working door controls.
- Ensure emergency escape lighting is maintained.
- Ensure signs and notices are current.

4. Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

An emergency plan is required.

5. Review

The management committee is required to review the fire risk periodically.

An assessment of current building regulations

In order to assess the existing standard of fire safety in the hall, the requirements of the current building regulations will be evaluated. Fire safety is regulated through Approved Document B – Fire safety – Volume 2 – Buildings other than dwellinghouses.

Fire alarm and fire detection systems

As the building is small, with no overnight accommodation, no fire alarm system is required (1.28). It is unlikely that a person with impaired hearing would be in relative isolation in the hall, so a visual alarm system is not required (1.34).

General provisions

Doors on escape routes should be readily openable (5.10). Doors should open in direction of escape (5.14). A single step is permission (5.15). provided they are prominently marked (5.21). Doors that swing both ways need vision panels (5.17) in safety glazing (Approved Document N).

A ramp should comply with Approved Document M.

The escape route from the building should be well defined (5.31).

Escape routes need adequate lighting. Escape lighting should comply with BS 5266-1:2005 (5.36).

Every escape route should be distinctively and conspicuously marked by emergency exit signs complying with the Health and Safety (Safety signs and signals) Regulations 1996 (5.37).

From table 9, escape lighting is required for all escape routes and for any toilet with a floor area of over 8 m².

Internal fire spread (linings)

All walls and ceilings are plaster or plasterboard, and therefore comply.

Internal fire spread (structure)
Not applicable to single storey buildings.

Compartmentation
Not applicable to single storey buildings.

Construction of external walls
Not applicable to single storey buildings beyond 1000 mm from a boundary.

Vehicle access
Every part of the building is within 45 m of the street, therefore no additional provisions apply.

Summary
The hall complies with the current building regulations.