

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
Fire Safety Legislation Advice Note 001

Fire Safety Audit Process

Version 1 - 18 December 2019

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) is the enforcing authority for fire safety duties as detailed by The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

When a premises has been selected for audit, a fire safety inspector will make contact to arrange a suitable date within 2 to 3 weeks and explain the process and what documentation will be required. A letter will be sent to confirm the date and provide the necessary detail. If a complaint has been received, premises may be visited without prior arrangement.

The audit is generally carried out as follows:

Step 1 - A desktop review of:

- Premises occupancy, size, layout, firefighting systems, etc.
- Fire risk assessment significant findings.
- Fire precautions log book.
- Fire alarm installation, commissioning, and servicing records.
- Fire alarm test records.
- Emergency lighting installation, commissioning, and service records.
- Emergency lighting test records.
- Installation, commissioning and service records for: fire extinguishers, firefighting equipment, suppression systems, sprinkler systems, dry/wet risers, smoke control systems, fire dampers, firefighting lifts, electronic hold open devices, PAT testing, fixed wire installation tests, fire hydrants, ring mains.
- Fire policy.
- Effective emergency plan, where appropriate.
- Records of staff training.
- Records of fire drills.

Step 2 - An inspection of the premises:

- Starting at the top floor and working downwards, or at the furthest point and working backwards.
- A visual inspection of: detector heads, fire doors, escape routes are clear and floors are in good condition, firefighting equipment, wall surface coverings, check final exit doors by opening them, external routes lead to place of safety, fire doors, automatic fire doors close correctly, fire exit signs are visible, compartmentation is maintained, fire alarm panel is healthy, dry/wet riser inlets, outlets and signage.
- If there is doubt about the condition of a fire alarm system or the test certificate provided, the officer will ask for the alarm system to be tested.
- Talking to members of staff to confirm their level of fire safety awareness.

Step 3 - A summary of the outcome:

- The overall standard will be described with the positives highlighted.
- A summary of any contraventions will be described.
- The outcome will be explained as one of 5 outcomes:
 - Level 1 - Broadly Compliant
 - Level 2 - Notice of Deficiencies
 - Level 3 - Action Plan
 - Level 4 - Enforcement Notice
 - Level 5 - Enforcement Notice (Fast Track)
- An outcome letter will be sent by post or email and a follow up inspection will be arranged as necessary.
- Where the risk to life is so serious, a Prohibition Notice may be served.

For any queries please contact:

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