

Covid-19 Business Fire Safety CARE PREMISES



We know that this is a busy time for you all in the care sector, but it is important to continue practicing fire safety despite the ongoing coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

All businesses should review their Fire Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan considering the impact of Covid-19 on their staffing levels, operating times, business processes and evacuation arrangements.

Healthcare Premises

Staffing levels in care homes must be maintained to ensure emergency plans can be effectively managed and staff should constantly monitor the situation on their premises.

If staffing levels are affected by Covid-19, care homes should review their risk assessment and emergency plan. If there are not enough staff to support a care home's evacuation strategy, the care home should consult with their Fire Risk Assessor.

Any staged evacuation arrangements such as progressive horizontal evacuation, (PHE) which are often in place in hospitals and care homes, need to be supported by appropriate levels of staff.

If a fire does occur in your premises you must ensure the fire service is called at the earliest opportunity and inform the operator that an evacuation is in progress.

You should also consider how you will maintain distancing during an evacuation and at your assembly point.

Fire Risk Assessments

If there have been any significant changes to the way your business operates (Staff numbers/ numbers of residents or the mobility of your residents) it may be necessary to review your Fire Risk Assessment to ensure that it is current and reflects the way your business now operates. Consider changes such as working practices, stock levels, alterations made to the premises and staff numbers. It is essential that assessments are undertaken and reviewed where there are significant changes in ways of working, processes or building layout. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) must also be updated where there have been changes to Evacuation policies or the needs of the individual have changed when they will rely on staff to assist their evacuation.

Wedging of Fire Doors

We have been made aware that some premises are wedging open fire doors to reduce the number of doors staff and residents are touching. We cannot condone the wedging of fire doors; they are there to provide your escape routes with enough protection to allow you to evacuate in the event of a fire.

If there is a need for fire doors to remain open it can be achieved by installing a hold open device which will release and allow the door to close when the fire alarm sounds.

Where the hold open device is fitted to a door which is protecting a single staircase or a critical escape route the hold open device must be directly connected to the fire alarm system, hold open devices on other doors may be of the acoustic type.

For further advice:

Refer to the Government guidance document for healthcare premises
www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-healthcare-premises

The paragraph referring to automatic hold open devices begins on Page 136.

Fire Protection

Room 346 Old Block, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 8DQ, Postal Point: CH0331

Email - administration.cfs@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone - 01707 292310



Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Working to protect. Acting to save. - www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/fire