**Schools’ guide to additional checks for fire precautions**

The publication by HM Government named ‘Fire Risk Assessment: Educational Premises’ can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-educational-premises> . This document is a valuable resource for anyone managing the risks of fire within their educational establishment. The items below are detailed within Part Two of the document from page 41 onwards. Please take some time to go through the full document with the person responsible for the checks. Ensure you carry out a periodic whole premises review to be assured that all areas are covered.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What should I check for?** | **The risk of arson (page 42)** | **Housekeeping, storage, and hazards in escape routes (page 43 onwards)** | **Provision for those who are less mobile / have disabilities (page 53)** | **Building works and alterations (page 48)** | **Electrical safety (page 47)** | **Smoking (page 48)** | **Equipment and machinery (page 46)** | **Dangerous substances (e.g., petrol for mowers, CoSHH items for cleaning, medical oxygen cannisters etc – page 45 onwards)** |
| **How often should I be checking?** | Daily | Daily | Reviews of a PEEP should occur when the individual’s needs change | When you have significant changes to your building | PATesting yearly, visual checks before each use and as recommended by your Property Advisor or H&S Advisor | **All schools should be non-smoking sites.** However, it is acknowledged that covert smoking is likely to occur and therefore checks on known smoking areas made. | Visual checks before each use – professional checks as per manufacturer / installer guidance – see note below | Daily to ensure correct storage and labelling is clear. |
| **Who can carry out these checks?** | Premises responsible person (PRP); caretaker; headteacher; cleaner – any member of staff who is fully aware of the topic and risk | Premises responsible person (PRP); caretaker; headteacher; cleaner – any member of staff who is fully aware of the topic and risk – teachers in their own classrooms | The person who wrote the PEEP in conjunction with the individual concerned (or their carer) | PRP / Property Maintenance Company for forward planning | PATesting should be arranged via the PRP and diarised each year. Any staff can carry out a simple visual check of electrical items in their use – see note below. | Premises responsible person (PRP); caretaker; headteacher; cleaner – any member of staff who is fully aware of the topic and risk | Person responsible for the use of the item – science / DT / art teachers, maintenance personnel or caretakers, cleaners. | The people who use these substances are best placed to check them, and access to the safety data sheets should be open to all. |
| **What should I be looking for?** | The note and link below gives good advice on those areas which may be at risk from arson and what to check. | Combustible materials near an ignition source, covered heaters, hazardous substances in direct sunlight (i.e., window sills), etc | Safe egress of all persons from the premises. The note below sends you to a PEEP guidance note. | Check your premises for changes in evacuation routes, design or fabric of the building etc | There is guidance on visual checks for electrical items at the link below. | Be vigilant for signs of smoking – spent matches, cigarette butts etc. Ensure that there is nothing alight and consult Senior Leaders of the school to eradicate smoking. | Receive guidance from safety data sheets and manufacturers. There are HSE documents which will aid this visual check. Ensure power sources are also checked. | Not to be placed near heat sources (and in some cases, light sources). Appropriate storage – usually metal, locked cabinets. |
| **Should I record the results of the check?** | Be guided by the foreseeability of the hazard in question, but it is always best practice to record that checks have been carried out so that evidence can be sought in the event of an incident. With some of the topics above, you will receive ‘competent person’ records of such checks, but often, in-house checks do not get ‘ticked off’. It may be useful to either add these items to your fire log book / fire file or to have a separate book which can be carried around and used for daily checks – do not forget the signature of the person recording, and date of the check. | | | | | | | |

**Notes and reminders:**

* Methods to reduce the risk of arson can be found at Part Two, Section One of the ‘**Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Educational Premises’** document at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14887/fsra-educational-premises.pdf>
* Notes on **housekeeping** and the storage of anything in buildings can also be found at the link above.
* A **PEEP is a ‘Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan’.** Information on PEEPs can be found at: <https://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety-wellbeing/fire-precaution-information>
* Information on whether your **building is going to have significant alterations** can either be sought from the PRP or from your Property Advisor. It is wise to plan ahead and if possible, work with relevant others to ensure easy evacuations of all staff, pupils and visitors from your school.
* **Electrical safety visual checks** information can be found at: <https://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety-wellbeing/fire-precaution-information>
* There should be a complete **ban of smoking** on all school premises.
* **Machinery checks** are often inspected for the safety of the actual mechanism of the item, and Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) requires compliance. However, the HSE state that: “*The purpose of an inspection is to identify whether work equipment can be operated, adjusted and maintained safely – with any deterioration detected and remedied before it results in a health and safety risk… in many cases, a quick visual check before use will be sufficient. However, inspection is necessary for any equipment where significant risks to health and safety may arise from* ***incorrect installation, reinstallation, deterioration*** *or any other circumstances. The need for inspection and inspection frequencies should be determined through risk assessment.”* High Schools will more likely have such equipment within DT, science or art classrooms, but it is likely ALL schools have some form of machinery in use by caretakers or cleaners. Further HSE information on this topic can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/inspection.htm>
* **CoSHH products** should be supplied with their own material safety data sheets (MSDS) and risk assessments so that you understand the hazards they may present. The fire service may also want to know about them being on your premises. **Oxygen cylinder storage** will need to be labelled. Further guidance on this topic can be sourced from Nina Bickerton – Suffolk (maintained) Schools’ Health and Safety Advisor.