



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

## FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTE

# Fire Safety Precautions For Childcare Facilities That Are Places Of Work

Number:

# GN03

The London Fire Commissioner (the Commissioner) is the fire and rescue authority for London. The Commissioner is responsible for enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (The Order) in London.

This Guidance Note gives advice for childcare providers on fire safety standards.

This Note is one of a series produced by the Commissioner to provide advice on various aspects of fire safety. If you require any further guidance on the advice given or require advice on another topic please contact your local borough Fire and Community Safety Centre or visit our web site at <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk>

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This guidance note has been prepared with the objective of informing and educating childcare providers about the fire safety standards that Fire Safety Officers or OFSTED inspectors will expect providers to achieve. In addition to the advice contained in this note the Department for Education (DfE) publishes welfare requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Paragraph 3.54 onwards of these requirements, Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment, includes some fire safety advice. Copies may be obtained from both the DfE and OfSTED.
- 1.2 It is in the interests of both childcare providers and their clients that a high standard of fire safety is maintained in childcare facilities. This does not necessarily mean that onerous fire safety measures need be taken but that those measures need to be adequate and appropriate. In order to do this an adequate assessment of the risks from fire in the premises needs to be made. Once identified, the risks should ideally be removed or reduced to an acceptable level. Sufficient and suitable arrangements for early detection of fire should be in place and once the alarm is raised safe evacuation will depend upon a well-rehearsed emergency plan. There should also be adequate arrangements in place for maintaining fire safety equipment and for training staff in emergency procedures.

## 2 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The premises you use for your childcare facility will be subject to fire safety requirements under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order). This legislation requires that you carry out an 'Assessment of your Risks from Fire' and take adequate fire safety precautions.
- 2.2 The Commissioner's Fire Safety Guidance Note No.66 outlines the actions required by responsible persons to comply with the Order. In particular, the Guidance Note provides advice on the requirement to carry out a 'Fire Risk Assessment' and formulate an 'Emergency Plan'. It should be read in conjunction with the appropriate Home Office Guide for the premises (see section 4 Bibliography). If your childcare facility forms part of a larger premises, or the premises are used for different purposes at different times, you will need to co-ordinate your planning with other users/occupiers. In this regard ask to see any existing fire risk assessment and emergency plan for the premises and, if available, consider how it relates to your childcare facility.
- 2.3 As the premises are licensed, regardless of size and number of people working, you will need to record the findings of your Fire Risk Assessment.
- 2.4 The Fire Safety Officer and/or OFSTED inspector will need to see and discuss with you the 'Fire Risk Assessment' and 'Emergency Plan' for your childcare facility.
- 2.5 Where a 'Fire Risk Assessment' already exists for the premises it should be reviewed. This review should focus on the issues that relate to the childcare provision including the following:
- (a) **The location of the childcare facility within the building.** Ideally, it should be situated on the ground floor with an exit direct to the outside of the building. Where this is not possible it should be as near to the ground floor as possible.
  - (b) **The layout of the childcare facility.** This should be conducive to safe escape with any cooking or heating facility being sited remote from exits.
  - (c) **Means of Escape.** There should be adequate means of escape from the childcare facility. Fire doors protecting the escape routes should be effectively self-closing and fire resisting. Doors across escape routes and at exits should be easily opened without the need for a key. Escape routes should be free from obstruction and adequately lit. There should be adequate signage indicating escape routes and particularly alternative routes.

- (d) **Early detection and warning of fire.** Additional automatic fire detection may be required to ensure adequate early detection and warning of fire. If a two stage fire alarm is installed the evacuation of the children should commence on the first stage alert.
- (e) **Emergency plan and evacuation strategy.** Sufficient numbers of trained staff should be available to enable a safe and efficient evacuation, taking into account the need to assist or carry children. Parents should be advised of the procedures including the location of the assembly point.
- (f) **Staff training.** This should include knowing the location of, and how to use, any fire extinguisher or fire blanket provided. The importance of keeping fire doors shut. The means of raising the alarm, the evacuation plan, external assembly point and how to call the fire brigade. There should be an induction process for new staff and regular training and drills for all staff.
- (g) **Fire Safety Procedures and Notices.** There should be written procedures and notices providing information to staff and visitors about emergency plans.

### 3 OVERNIGHT CARE

3.1 Fire risks are potentially greater at night when people are asleep. In addition to the items mentioned above, you will therefore need to ensure that:

- There is adequate automatic fire detection to ensure early detection of a fire including coverage of the areas used for overnight care and the escape routes from it.
- Means of escape can be safely used at all times. Remember, loose items such as shoes and bags should also be kept out of the way of the Means of Escape. Additionally, Emergency Escape Lighting and signage may be required.
- There is an adequate balance between security and safety. Exits routes including windows and doors can be easily opened in an emergency.
- Each member of staff should have a clear understanding of the emergency procedures and their own responsibilities.
- A night time routine should be followed ensuring that gas and electrical appliances are turned off and that all smoking materials are safely extinguished. All fire doors should be closed including any that have hold open devices.
- Sufficient trained staff are available to ensure a safe and efficient evacuation taking into account the need to assist or carry children.

#### 4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

4.1 Childminders should be advised that further information or advice may be sought from the local Fire Safety Office or our website: [www.london-fire.gov.uk](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk)

4.2 Further guidance may be obtained from the following publications:

AVAILABLE FROM	TITLE
OFSTED Website: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted</a>	Are you ready for your inspection?  Conducting Early Years inspections.  Framework for the regulation of those on the Early Years and Childcare Registers.
The Department for Education  <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs">http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs</a>	Web Based downloadable EYFS pack and resources

<p>The Stationery Office (Mail, Telephone, Fax &amp; Internet Orders)</p>	<p>Fire safety in offices and shops ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 815 0</p>
<p>TSO Orders/Post Cash Dept PO Box 29 Norwich NR3 1GN</p>	<p>Fire safety in factories and warehouses ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 816 7</p>
<p>Telephone: 0870 600 5522 Fax orders: 0870 600 5533 Web: <a href="http://www.tso.co.uk">www.tso.co.uk</a></p>	<p>Fire safety in premises providing sleeping accommodation ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 817 4</p>
	<p>Fire safety in residential care premises ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 818 1</p>
	<p>Fire safety in educational premises ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 819 8</p>
	<p>Fire safety in small and medium places of assembly ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 820 4</p>
	<p>Fire safety in large places of assembly ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 821 1</p>
	<p>Fire safety in theatres and cinemas ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 822 8</p>
	<p>Fire safety at outdoor events ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 823 5</p>
	<p>Fire safety in healthcare premises ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 824 2</p>
	<p>Fire safety in the transport network ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 825 9</p>
	<p>Fire safety in animal premises and stables ISBN - 978 1 85112 884 6</p>
	<p>Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Means of Escape for Disabled People ISBN: 978 1 85112 873 7</p>

The "Fire Safety" guides listed above may also be downloaded free of charge from the Fire Safety Law at

[www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities](http://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities)

The above details are current at the time of preparation of this Guidance Note (see date at foot of last page)