



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTE

Number:

**Fire Safety Guidance for Organisers of small scale events
under the Licensing Act 2003: Temporary Event Notices**

GN73

This Guidance Note provides some basic fire safety advice to those planning, organising or running an event under the authority of a "Temporary Event Notice" issued under the Licensing Act 2003.

This Note is one of a series produced by the Authority 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 the London Fire Brigade web site at <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk>

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Licensing Act 2003 makes provision for the carrying on of licensable activities under the authority of a "Temporary Event Notice". The Licensing Act places limits on the number and duration of temporary events as well as a limit on the total numbers of people that can be present (499 or less). If your event is intended to accommodate 500 or more people you will need to apply for a premises licence. The Licensing Authority for your borough has responsibility for temporary event notices and premises licences and can provide further advice about them.
- 1.2 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order) places responsibility for ensuring that the event is safe from fire on the person who has control of the premises. The Order requires that the responsible person has carried out a fire risk assessment and acted upon any significant findings to reduce the risk. Further information about the Order and the action required can be obtained from the government website www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities.
- 1.3 Information is also available from LFEPA Fire Safety Guidance Note 66 (see bibliography).

Fire Safety

- 1.4 This guidance provides some basic fire safety advice to those planning, organising or running an event. Depending on the size and nature of your event you should think about the following:
- (i) The location of your venue: Is it suitable for your event?
 - (ii) Fire hazards: Where and how could a fire start?
 - (iii) People who might be at risk: Who might be affected by a fire?
 - (iv) Emergency Planning: What will you do if a fire happens?

2 LOCATION

- 2.1 The first and most important consideration is to think about where the event will be held and what limitations on the number of people this will have:
- **Buildings normally used for public events: (e.g. Club, pub, community hall)** will usually have been designed with suitable and sufficient means of escape. If there is a premises licence, and/or a fire risk assessment, ask to see these and take account of any limitations that they impose, especially on the numbers of people that can safely be accommodated. If there is no premises licence consider if you should apply to your licensing authority for a licence.
 - **Buildings not normally used for public events: (e.g. shop, office, residential building)** these will require much more careful thought as they are likely to have fewer exit routes. In general having more than one exit route leading directly to safety will always be preferable. Buildings OR rooms with only one exit will usually be unsuitable for more than 60 people and may not even be safe for this many.
 - **Temporary structures (e.g. Tents, marquees etc.)** in addition to the fire hazards below in paragraph 3.1, you should also consider:
 - **Choosing a safe place to put the structure:**
 - That allows adequate means of escape to a place of safety.
 - That allows access for the emergency services, their vehicles and equipment.

➤ **The fabric structure could cause rapid fire spread unless:**

- The structure is made of flame retardant materials and designed and erected so that it does not easily collapse when exposed to a fire.

2.2 LFEPA Fire Safety Guidance Note 23: Tented structures, provides further advice (see bibliography).

3 FIRE HAZARDS

3.1 Where and how could a fire start? No one plans to have a fire but, taking some basic precautions can help you to reduce the risks. Remember that, the easiest way to reduce risk is by not introducing hazards in the first place. Have a look around your venue and think about these risks:

- **Smoking:** Careless disposal of smoking materials causes many fires. The ban on smoking indoors may mean that people smoke out of sight. Consider providing designated external smoking areas, with sufficient sturdy ashtrays so that smokers can minimise the risk.,
- **Heating equipment:** Central heating systems and radiators are generally safe. Other heating equipment, for example, stoves, electric or gas fires and any other temporary heaters should be securely fixed in position and have a fireguard. Any portable heaters should be located away from the exits and anything that might catch light, such as clothing, curtains and furniture.
- **Cooking equipment:** Fixed permanent cooking equipment will usually be safer, particularly when it is located in a kitchen. Great care should be taken with any temporary cooking equipment and it should be located away from the exits and anything that might catch light, such as clothing, curtains and furniture. Open fires and Bar-B-Q's should never be used indoors. Never leave any cooking unattended.
- **Lighting:** Any temporary lighting should be properly installed. The use of non-electric lighting (candles, oil lamps, etc) introduces a significant risk and should be avoided.
- **Special effects:** The use of special effects such as fireworks and other pyrotechnics is an obvious and significant risk. They should not be used inside any structure unless a competent person who has been adequately trained has carried out a thorough risk assessment.
- **Stage, scenery and equipment:** Any temporary stage, scenery or electrical equipment should be arranged so that it does not create a fire hazard or obstruct escape routes.
- **Arson:** Deliberate fire setting is a significant risk especially in out of sight areas such as cloakrooms and storerooms and also where rubbish is stored. Removing rubbish regularly and restricting access to these areas will reduce the risk.

3.2 Fire fighting equipment may help to stop a small fire from spreading. Position suitable fire extinguishers near to identified fire hazards. LFEPA Fire Safety Guidance Note 8: Hand held portable firefighting equipment, provides further advice (see bibliography).

4 PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE AT RISK

4.1 You should think about the number of people and their location in relation to where a fire might start. A sensible approach is to imagine that a fire has started in each of your identified fire hazard locations (see section above on fire hazards). Now consider:

- How quickly will the fire and associated heat and smoke spread? Would removing or relocating the hazard reduce the risk?
- Keeping any fire and smoke control doors closed will help contain heat and smoke.
- How will people be alerted to the fire? Is there a working fire alarm?

- If the location of the outbreak is not easily observed, a fire detection and alarm system will reduce the risk.
- How will people make their escape? You should walk each escape route to make sure that it is not obstructed and leads to safety. Make sure that all exit doors can be easily opened without a key.
- How will people know where to go? Are emergency exits indicated by signs and are they adequately lit?
- How will people with disabilities make their escape? Who will provide any assistance that may be required?

5 EMERGENCY PLANNING

5.1 What will you do if a fire happens? You should think about:

- Action on discovering a fire. Warn others immediately, use the fire alarm if there is one.
- If possible close the door to the room on fire.
- On hearing the fire warning start evacuating immediately.
- Stop any performance, turn off any loud music, and turn on all lighting.
- Dial 999 and alert the fire service, meet them when they arrive and tell them what has happened.
- Provide assistance to people that require it.
- Allocate specific responsibilities to appropriate people
- Provide training and information to others involved in planning and organising your event.

5.2 Carrying on an event under the authority of a Temporary Event Notice does not remove you from your obligations and responsibilities under other legislation including Fire Safety Law.

6 ROLE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

- We provide fire safety advice to the people of London.
- We visit premises and events to help ensure that people are safe from fire.
- Where necessary we gather information and take appropriate action to enforce fire safety law.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

7.1 Further guidance may be obtained from the following publications:

AVAILABLE FROM	TITLE
HSE Publications: http://www.hse.gov.uk/	1. Five steps to risk assessment
HSE Books PO Box 1999 Sudbury Suffolk CO10 0JY Telephone: 01787 884148	2. The event safety guide

<p>Free to download from: www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities OR Fire Safety Guides, PO Box 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB Tel: 0870 830 7099 Please quote the ISBN No when ordering</p>	<p>Entry Level Guide: 'A short guide to making your premises safe from fire' Guide 6: Small and medium places of assembly (ISBN: 978 1 85112 820 4) Guide 7: Large places of assembly (ISBN: 978 1 85112 821 1) Guide 8: Theatres and cinemas (ISBN: 978 1 85112 822 8) Guide 9: Open air events and venues (ISBN: 978 1 85112 823 5)</p>
<p>Local LFEPa Borough Fire and Community Safety Centre</p>	<p>LFEPa Fire Safety Guidance Note 8: Hand held portable firefighting equipment. LFEPa Fire Safety Guidance Note 23: Tented structures. LFEPa Fire Safety Guidance Note 66: Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.</p>

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