



IVORFIRE

Advice on safety matters specialising in Fire Safety



www.ivorfire.com

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IVOR**FIRE**

Competent Fire Risk Assessors

Just to confirm, you're in safe hands... when dealing with and engaging **Ivorfire Safety Services Ltd** for all your fire safety needs, and here's why!

Ivorfire Safety Services only employs competent fire risk assessors. Demonstration of this is being on approved fire risk registers; like Fire Risk Assessors Certification Scheme Warrington (<http://www.warringtoncertification.com/fracs.html>), or Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) Risk Register (<http://www.ife.org.uk/frr/>). Years of experience with the former profession and being former enforcers of fire law and having substantial academic fire related qualifications, all goes to make team members at **Ivorfire Safety Services** competent for which you can rely upon, and be assured of an excellent advice.

Being ex-fire service means that team members have years of experience of seeing what fire can do, how people react to fire, and have experience of enforcing and dealing with fire safety legislation.

Putting it simply; to carry out fire risk assessments, assessors need to be competent. By having practical experience of fire, professional fire related qualifications and knowledge of fire law all goes in making **Ivorfire Safety Services** available to provide an all-round competent service.

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Guidance for regulators

The guidance for regulators document from Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) details competence as the following;

‘Competent Person’ – the Order clearly states that there are two means by which competent persons might be identified. They must have both ‘sufficient training and experience’ or alternatively they must possess ‘knowledge and other qualities’, which will in both cases, enable them to carry out the task at hand. The nature of ‘competent person’ is clearly associated with ‘competence’. The qualities present in the person must be akin to those expected of any person in that profession, and will be by definition limited by training, experience, knowledge or other qualities, in accordance with the complexity of the task at hand. It follows that as a task increases in complexity, so the expected ability of the competent person will also increase.

Displaying an awareness of the requirements does not inherently meet the requirements of the role, “...when relevant competencies are absent, it shows in the end result and this, as some cases shows, is proof enough for the courts. It sometimes hides and it is not identified until it is too late.”





The guidance associated with fire risk assessment mirrors the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and makes it clear that the level of knowledge and experience involved must be tied to the complexity of the problems to be tackled.

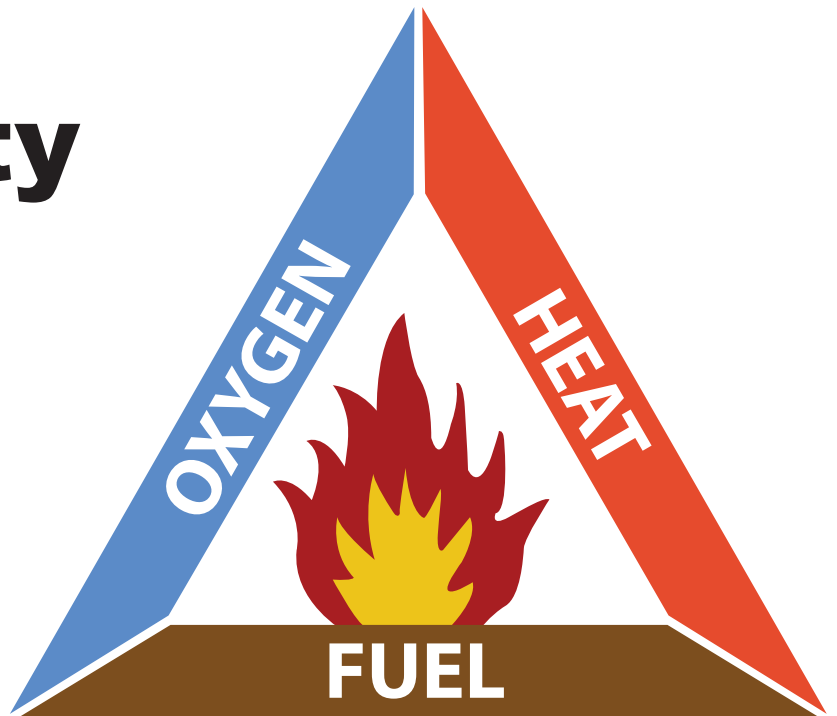
Whatever the level of ability, the competent person must be able to identify a problem, and must be suitably able to assess the relative importance of that defect in relation to the safety systems in place, to satisfy the requirements of law and the premises.

This person should be sufficiently familiar with relevant codes and standards (through experiential or formal learning, underpinning knowledge and an ability, when called upon to answer relevant questions) to be able to deal with the matter at hand e.g. carry out a fire risk assessment.

Further guidance of competence is found in Competency Criteria for Fire Risk Assessors which can be sourced on various websites; e.g. http://www.ife.org.uk/frr/Fire_Risk_Assessor_Competency_Criteria_document_21_12_11.pdf

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Fire Safety Training



The following courses are available:

1	FIRE AWARENESS TRAINING	2 ½ hours
2	FIRE AWARENESS TRAINING (Care Sector)	3 ¼ hours
3	FIRE WARDEN TRAINING	Half day (4 hours)
4	FIRE MANAGERS TRAINING	Full day (8 hours)
5	FIRE SAFETY CUSTOMISED TRAINING	2 – 5 hours



Further details are available from Ivorfire on request at 0292 033 0885 / office@ivorfire.co.uk.

Fire safety training is accredited by the Institution of Fire Engineers to ensure it is suitable and at the correct level for the customer



Green shoots of the fire industry

Graham Ellicott, CEO at the FIA, explains the data behind the increase in business the fire industry sector is starting to experience...

The term “green shoots of recovery” (GSOR) was apparently first coined in the economic context by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont in 1991. Since then, the term has come and gone in popularity and of course many people have talked over the last year of George Osborne’s GSOR, although many believe that could have been a misprint for GSOH.

So what is the economy doing in general, and the fire sector in particular?

At a macro-economic level, the Ernst and Young ITEM Club reports that UK GDP is set to grow by 1.4% this year, accelerating to 2.4% in 2014 and 2.6% in 2015. This growth is currently being driven by both the consumer, and housing markets. However, earnings and employment are having difficulty in keeping up with inflation, and the consumer will not be able to continuously drive the economy forward for very long without further help. Ernst and Young believe that the upturn risks running out of steam unless there is an increased contribution from exports and business investment, but are optimistic that this will occur in the foreseeable future.

When it comes to the construction sector, the Construction Products Association is anticipating growth of 19% for the £111bn construction industry by 2017. This is an upward revision by £20bn from the summer 2013 forecast, and as it recovers from its worst recession in over 35 years, the construction sector is set to enjoy growth over the next 4 years. This growth will mainly come from private housing, which is experiencing a rapid rise, and from infrastructure, which is seeing more gradual growth.

Indeed the private housing sector is now growing at such a rate that in order to stop it ‘overheating’, the Bank of England and the Treasury have agreed to scale back a scheme designed to boost cheaper mortgage loans, focusing instead on business lending.

After a severe 2012 the infrastructure sector is now recovering in general, and in particular, work on Europe’s largest construction project Crossrail, is expected to peak over the next 18 months. As a result, growth of 7.4% is forecast in 2014.

Moving downstream to fire, in comparison with the previous period, the Fire Industry Association's (FIA) Market Conditions Review reports that over the last 6 months, the sector has experienced a gradual recovery with the private sector providing most of the low levels of growth. Competition in the sector remains high as the majority of companies report a fall or no change in tender values, while at the same time their suppliers are putting up prices.

In particular:

- Nearly 3 out of 5 of the review respondents reported an increased number of orders, the majority of which came from the private sector;
- Enquiries for new business have increased, with again nearly 3 out of 5 replies confirming this with the private sector dominating;
- The market remains very competitive with just under half of the companies that supplied information reporting that tender prices have decreased, while just over 1 in 6 indicated an increase;
- Three fifths of companies surveyed indicated that suppliers' prices continue to increase, although another fifth confirmed that delivery times have not changed despite the increase;
- Of the companies that replied to the review, 9 out of 10 reported that the level of training supplied to their workforce had either remained the same or increased. Looking forward, just over half of those that replied indicate that they will be increasing levels of personnel training over the next 6 months;
- The recruitment of skilled labour and apprentices remains low, with only approximately 2 fifths of companies reporting an increase in the former and 1 fifth in the latter;
- Nearly a third of companies reported an increase in tenders that require Third Party Certification;
- Nearly 3 quarters of respondents are receiving payments in 60 days or less;
- In the last 6 months the number of FIA member companies reporting a substantial increase in enquiries was nearly 3 times that of non-members.

There were some 'telling' comments from the companies that contributed to the review notably;

"Whilst the number of enquiries seems higher and the industry is generally busier, there are still a number of fire companies that are willing to take on work at ridiculously low margins. Also, it is apparent that whilst equipment manufacturers are increasing prices, it is becoming more and more difficult to pass these costs on to the end user. I do feel however, that the quality orientated companies will increase market share and become more successful."

And;

"The main concern is trying to ensure that the construction companies that place orders with us are viable enough to ensure that we are paid in full for the work carried out. Credit checking before accepting orders has now become a normal process for us."

In summary, it looks like at long last that in the main, the economy's "green shoots of recovery" are here. Now it's up to all concerned to see that they don't wither and die!

For a copy of the FIA's Market Conditions Review click the link below:

<http://www.fia.uk.com/en/market-conditions-report/>

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Dr Robert Docherty, Chairman of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers explains various examples of evacuation strategies in compliance with Building Regulations...

The purpose of part B1 of the Building Regulations is to ensure that buildings are safe places with regard to fire and should a fire occur, there will be some provision to give people adequate warning and ensure there is sufficient time for people in the building to escape safely and without injury. These Regulations apply to all new builds, material alterations and to changes of the use of a building.

Part B is set out in terms of functional requirements and then prescribes how these can be achieved. However, these are always the minimum standards and it does take into account alternative approaches e.g. fire engineering, BS9999 etc.

Although Building Regulations set out standards for fire safety in buildings, it is always my adage that

buildings are safe from fire until you put people in them. We know what the functional requirements are and how to meet them, but once people are in the building, and there is a fire, we need to get them out quickly and safely.

Evacuation has to be dependent on the design and use of the building, the means of escape provided, the fire warning system installed and the fire safety management regime for the building. Once a building has a completion certificate and is occupied, all these functions come under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the local fire authority is the enforcing body for this legislation.

One of the most important things to understand with evacuation is that there are a number of different strategies that can be put to use in buildings.



Regulate and evacuate

Knowledge of these is key to understanding why the means of escape and configuration of the fire warning system is important in the building stage. The evacuation strategy that is proposed for any building will only work if these elements 'fit' that strategy.

An evacuation strategy is just a way of getting people quickly to a safe place in a building and/or out of a building in an emergency. There are different strategies for different uses of a building.

There are 4 main evacuation strategies that we come across. These are:

- Simultaneous Evacuation;
- Phased Evacuation;
- Progressive Horizontal Evacuation/Zoned;

- Stay Put ('delayed', 'defend in place').

Simultaneous evacuation is where everyone leaves the building on the operation of the fire warning system. There can be 2 categories:

Single stage where the fire alarm sounds immediately throughout the building and everyone evacuates to a safe place outside and away from the building, hopefully at a pre-arranged Assembly Point;

Two stage (grace/investigation period) where the fire alarm only sounds at the main panel and/or staff call system so that it can be investigated by staff to see if there is a fire or not. The time period may vary but once it has gone over that time, with no action by staff, then the alarm will go to full alert. Included in this will also be what is commonly known as

'double knock' where if two or more detectors operate, then the system will go to full alert.

Phased evacuation is used in high rise buildings where it would be impossible or impractical to evacuate the whole building simultaneously and the building is provided with specific design features e.g:

- Stairway approach lobbied or protected or pressurised system in operation;
- Each floor is a compartment floor;
- Over 30m height must be sprinklered;
- Fire Warning System to BS5839 Part 1 Category at least L3;
- Lifts approached via protected lobby;
- Provision of an emergency voice communications system.

The idea behind this strategy is that only the fire floor will go to full alert as well as adjacent floors, normally 2 above and 1 below. This varies and can be configured in a number of ways, but the idea is that those people on the floors where the fire alarm is at full alert, evacuate their part of the building and go to the outside of the building and the Assembly Point. All other floors will go to fire alarm pre-alert which gives an indication that there is a fire in the building but not on those floors, and there is no need to evacuate at that time. However, any disabled people on those floors should start their evacuation routine according to their own Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs).

Progressive horizontal evacuation (PHE or sometime also called zoned) is designed for care homes, hospitals and the like where the nature of the use of the building makes it impossible to move users straight outside simultaneously. This strategy is based on compartmentation of the building and travel distances. The idea is that you move the people at risk from the compartment on fire through to the next horizontal compartment and then move them further so that there is at least a two-compartment separation. This can continue

throughout the whole length of the building, and if it is an upper floor, then it changes to vertical evacuation, through a protected staircase to the floor below, and then start the horizontal movement again on that floor.

Stay put (defend in place or delayed) is used for flats, apartments, sheltered housing and extra care. This strategy has attracted much debate over the last few years, even down to the semantics of the name to 'soften' the meaning, but it still actually means the same. This strategy is based on the flats/apartments etc being a 1 hour fire resistant shell, and the communal areas that provide the means of escape from the building being protected routes.

A stay put strategy is when a fire occurs within a flat and the occupants alert others within the flat to make their way out of the building, and call the fire and rescue service. If a fire starts in the communal areas, anyone in these areas should make their way out of the building and call the fire and rescue service. This does not mean that those not directly involved and who wish to leave the building should be prevented from doing so. It also doesn't stop those evacuating a flat that is on fire, from alerting their neighbours so that they can also escape if they feel threatened.

With a stay put strategy, the most important factor is that the flats/apartments themselves are fitted with some form of fire detection whilst it is not essential or desirable to have a fire warning system in the communal areas unless there is a special case, or the property is for sheltered/extra care housing.

[Dr Robert Docherty](#)
Chairman

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IVOR FIRE

*Let's prepare you
so you never
have one!*



Are you in need of professional, competent, fire safety advice?

Our small team of dedicated staff can satisfy all your fire safety needs, including:

- Advice on building regulations dealing with Fire Safety Information, Regulation 38 including the new Welsh regulations.
- Fire Safety design, for building services including fire extinguishers & sprinklers.
- Fire Safety Management for all types of buildings and specialising in Care Sector including, policies, procedures, and fire safety arrangements.
- Fire strategy advice & evacuation plans.
- Fire Safety training for all your staff (which is accredited by IFE).
- And of course...

Fire risk assessments, audits & reviews!

Ivorfire Safety Services Ltd can provide Fire and Fire Safety advice based on sound practical experience from:

- Former Fire Safety and Fire Service staff who have experience of dealing with fire.
- Previous Fire Safety legislation enforcers, with excellent awareness & knowledge of fire regulations.
- Fire Risk registered and degree qualified Staff, that are competent and have excellent knowledge of fire.

Feel free to give **Shaun or Steve** a call today to see how we can help you:

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