



Affiliated To Bowls England

BOWLS OXFORDSHIRE

Responsibilities for Fire Safety
Draft Policy Paper No: DP12

Responsibilities for Fire Safety

1. What are the Fire Safety Laws?

As with most health and safety laws and regulations, fire safety laws were introduced to reduce damage, injuries and deaths.

Relevant 21st century regulations which are relevant to Bowls Clubs include:

- **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** – introduced in October 2006 in England & Wales
- **The Building Regulations 2010** – Approved Documents Series
- A new Fire Safety Act is to be introduced in October 2023.

2. Have a 'responsible person'

Effective fire safety has always relied upon responsible and competent people and that has not changed. However, it is now crucially important that those deemed 'Responsible' self-impose risk assessment techniques rather than await direction.

Risk assessments templates are an available resource on the internet. Once risks have been identified, the responsible person needs to relay this information to all members. It is everyone's responsibility to act sensibly and help to maintain fire safety measures.

Fire safety in the workplace is **outlined in further detail by the government**. This information should be read and understood by your responsible person. In this respect all volunteers at Bowls Clubs have the same protective rights as a paid employee. They also have responsibilities for protecting guests or contractors working on site. Bowls Clubs are categorised as "small businesses" for fire safety purposes and those with licensed bars may have additional requirements, for example - Emergency Lighting.

3. Perform Fire Risk Assessments

Critical to the assessment and safety of fire procedures within your clubs, fire risk assessments need to be completed regularly and upon any changes to the layout or structure of your premises. They require a competent responsible person to carry out the assessment and will include:

- Determining escape routes
 - These routes and exits must remain available and unobstructed. Alternatives should also be laid out. These routes then need to be protected by fire separators such as fire doors. An assembly place also

needs to be determined as well as appropriate signs and emergency lighting.

- Providing means of a warning
 - At a small club, a shouted warning of fire may be acceptable if it can be heard from any part of the clubhouse. The addition of a hand bell may assist in getting people's attention.
 - In a larger club where sound may not reach all parts or if there is frequently background noise, there needs to be a mains operated fire alarm; a klaxon, an air horn or a whistle depending on the size of the premises. This needs to be tested regularly. The warning needs to be loud in order to get the attention of the assembly.
- Providing means of fighting the fire
 - Fire extinguishers should be available around the site. The allocated responsible person should be able to provide rudimentary training to all members and volunteers. This would include the education that different materials require different types of extinguishers. Paper and cloth require a water extinguisher; flammable liquids require dry powder and/or foam extinguishers; electrical fires require CO₂ extinguishers.
- If you have a license to sell alcohol, the license may require you to illuminate fire exits and to provide emergency exits so that occupants can use escape routes safely if a power cut occurs (which is frequently the case when a fire occurs).

In order to keep your premises fire safe, you must follow these legal requirements: Follow fire safety law; Delegate fire safety duties; perform fire risk assessments; create a tailored fire safety plan.

The fire safety plan should be simple and relevant for the specific club and must include an evacuation plan. In addition the Fire procedures need to be displayed where everyone can see them. In a smaller clubhouse this may be on the notice-board, but on larger premises these will normally be situated alongside all fire exits.

Members with hearing or mobility impairments may need assistance to evacuate the building safely in the event of a fire. This is foreseeable, so needs to feature within your fire plan.

It is a legal requirement to provide fire extinguishers to control a fire discovered in its' early stages. To do this, enough people need to be trained in how to use these extinguishers. This should be the responsibility of the "Responsible Person" to ensure sufficient members are competent to use a fire extinguisher safely.

A fire risk assessment is a legal obligation, although this only needs to be in writing if you employ 5 or more persons (however, volunteers at a club have the same status as employees when considering safety precautions). You will probably find it helpful to keep a record of the significant findings of your fire risk assessment even if you are not required to do so.

WHAT IS A FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT?

A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at your premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises.

The aims of the fire risk assessment are:

- To identify the fire hazards.
 - To reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable.
 - To decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your premises if a fire does start.
- The term 'where necessary' relates to when deciding what fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary you will need to take account of this definition, as some things are statutory duties and others are identified to decrease the risks.

The terms 'hazard' and 'risk' are used throughout all fire safety guides and it is important that you have a clear understanding of how these should be used.

- **Hazard:** anything that has the potential to cause harm.
- **Risk:** the chance of that harm occurring.

If your club's "Responsible Person" does not have the necessary competence to do a fire risk assessment, you may wish to contact one of many people in the local area that can provide professional assistance.

All club members have a responsibility to co-operate fully with your fire plan and other safety requirements and procedures. This mainly requires common sense, but irresponsible behaviour or foolish acts within the club could jeopardise members' safety.

What should be included in a fire safety plan?

Your fire safety plan should include how to reduce risks and report any hazards, as well as documenting a clear evacuation plan.

Here's an idea of what an evacuation plan should show:

- A clear passageway to all escape routes
- Clearly marked escape routes
- Emergency lighting (if required)
- Training for all members

- A safe meeting point for members that evacuate
- Someone must call 999 for the Fire & Rescue Service and meet them on arrival.
- You must be able to account for everyone known to have been in the building when the alarm is raised.
- Making sure your premises is a safe place to occupy, for members and visitors