

1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006. The rules cover all non-domestic premises in England and Wales including **churches, church halls** and other meeting places. The new law makes it the responsibility of those persons or bodies who have some level of control in premises to ensure the safety of all people who use the premises, and in the immediate vicinity, by taking reasonable steps to reduce the risk of fire and ensure that people can safely escape if there is a fire. Fire certificates will no longer apply. To comply with the order, the body responsible for the premises must make sure a fire-risk assessment (see below) is carried out, although the tasks can be performed by some other competent person or body. However, the responsibility, in law, for meeting the order cannot be delegated.

2 There is a difference from previous legislation in that everyone who might be on the premises must be considered, whether they are employees, visitors or members of the public. Particular attention should be paid to people who may have a disability or anyone who may need special help. The order specifies that the responsible body must manage any fire-risk in the premises. Fire authorities no longer issue fire certificates and those previously in force will have no legal status.

### **3 Fire safety risk assessment**

#### **Identify fire hazards:**

- identify ignition sources;
- identify fuel sources;
- identify oxygen sources.

#### **Identify people at risk:**

- in and around the premises;
- those especially at risk.

#### **Evaluate, remove or reduce and protect from risk:**

- evaluate risk of fire starting;
- evaluate risk to people;
- remove/reduce fire hazards;
- remove/reduce risk to people;
- protect people by providing fire precautions.

#### **Record, plan, inform, instruct and train:**

- record major findings and action taken;
- discuss and work with other responsible people;
- prepare emergency plan;
- inform and instruct the relevant people;
- provide training.

#### **Review:**

- review assessment regularly;
- make changes as necessary.

The guide can be downloaded free from <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

For smaller premises (under 300 attendees): "Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Small and Medium Places of Assembly" – ISBN: 978 1 85122 4: