

# LLUK

## Health & Safety - Fire Warden

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Employee Name

# How to use this Workbook

First things first, office fires are inevitable, regardless of your perspective on fire safety. This workbook explores the importance of fire wardens and why they are essential.

According to legal requirements, every building must have at least one individual accountable for fire safety. However, with the knowledge gained from this course, you won't face such a predicament.

In this workbook, you will read information, absorb it, and test your knowledge by responding to a few questions. While the content is designed for your enjoyment, the crucial aspect is that you grasp the essential information. Mastering fire warden essentials is crucial for reducing fire safety risks.

## Who is this Workbook intended to?

- Employers, business owners, landlords, building and facilities managers who are looking to shift some responsibility by appointing fire wardens.
- Existing fire wardens, people who are just about to become fire wardens or people thinking about becoming fire wardens.
- People who want to get more insight into general fire safety.

## Insights you will find in this Workbook

1. The legal guidelines when it comes to fire safety, and who's responsible.
2. The difference between a fire warden's day-to-day and emergency duties.
3. The types of fires.
4. The strengths and weaknesses of different firefighting equipment.
5. The ideal number of fire wardens to have.

# Key Information

Preventing fires is crucial, particularly in your workplace. Despite our awareness of their detrimental effects, fires unfortunately occur all too frequently.

In 2016 alone, there were 30,000 reported fires in non-dwelling buildings, resulting in over 2,000 casualties. The impact goes beyond immediate injuries, as up to 80% of businesses never fully recover from a serious fire.

Taking proactive measures to prevent fires is imperative. Regardless of personal opinions, adherence to fire safety regulations is mandatory, as maintaining a fire-safe building is a legal requirement.

The individual responsible for fire safety, known as the 'responsible person,' plays a pivotal role in ensuring compliance.

## So, who exactly is the responsible person?

If you fall into any of the following categories, the duty of maintaining fire safety in business or non-domestic premises lies with you:

- An employer
- The owner
- The landlord
- An occupier
- Anyone else with control of the premises, such as a facilities manager, building manager, managing agent, or risk assessor.

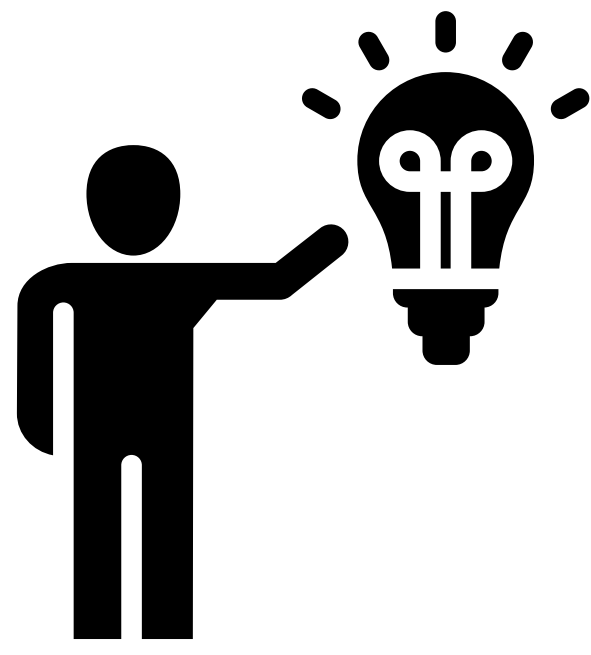
Being aware of your role in fire safety is essential for the well-being of your workplace and everyone associated with it. However, if you are one of the above named, you might want to assign some of the day-to-day fire safety responsibilities to others, allowing you to focus on your primary role.

This is where fire wardens play a crucial role. These individuals take on the responsibility of overseeing general fire risk mitigation and can act as leaders in emergency situations. However, it's essential to note that the ultimate accountability still rests with the responsible person, as they hold the primary role in ensuring fire safety.

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# Fire Wardens - Key Duties & Responsibilities

Fire warden's responsibilities are basically split into two categories:



Proactive



Reactive

The proactive duties are the ones you do every day, such as general housekeeping and other duties to minimise the risk of fires. They're usually the major parts of a fire risk assessment.

On the other hand, reactive duties come into play when the worst-case scenario unfolds and a fire occurs, or alternatively, during fire drills.

When it comes to fire evacuations, it's crucial to prioritise not only minimising risks to others but also ensuring your own safety. What we mean by that is it's not worth trying to fight a fire if you're going to seriously endanger yourself. Before engaging with a fire, make sure you meet specific criteria:

- You possess suitable training
- Understand the different types of fires
- You are familiar with the different types of extinguishers

This isn't just about avoiding personal injury; if you don't know what you're doing, you could potentially make a fire worse.

Specific responsibilities for reactive duties vary based on the workplace, and there are no strict guidelines defining these tasks. The next page's table could provide insights into some potential responsibilities you might encounter.

## REACTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Fighting fires, and the use of fire extinguishers, but only if safe.

Raising the alarm and calling the emergency services.

Directing staff to safe, available exit routes.

Sweeping all rooms, where safe to do so, ensuring toilets and places like walk-in cupboards are clear of people.

Ensuring hazardous manufacturing processes and machinery have been isolated.

Closing all windows in rooms and corridors, as well as all doors.

Reporting to the fire service on their arrival.

Taking part in the roll call at the assembly point.

Assisting disabled people.

Reporting to the fire service on their arrival.

## PROACTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Keeping all fire exits and routes free from obstruction at all times, checking final exits aren't blocked from the outside.

Making sure 'Break glass' call points are visible, and emergency fire action notice next to them.

Ensuring fire extinguishers are in their correct place, serviced, signed and stowed above floor level.

Making sure no rooms with a fixed source of ignition or heat are used for storing combustible materials, like paper or waste.

Cleaning smoking areas and emptying smoking receptacles on a regular basis. Controlling of flammable liquids and hazardous materials.

Carrying out electrical safety checks and portable appliance testing.

Monitoring external security & testing emergency lighting monthly

Managing any hot works, like welding or soldering, issuing hot works permits and controlling contractors.

Checking fire doors and fire alarm on a weekly basis & arranging fire drills at least once a year.

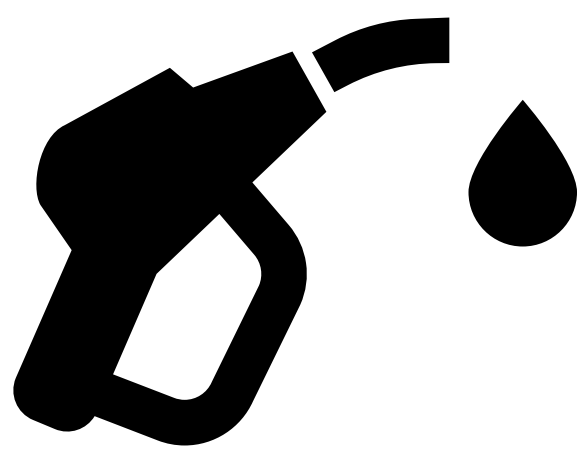
Overseeing staff fire inductions & operating exit sign surveys

# Types of Fires

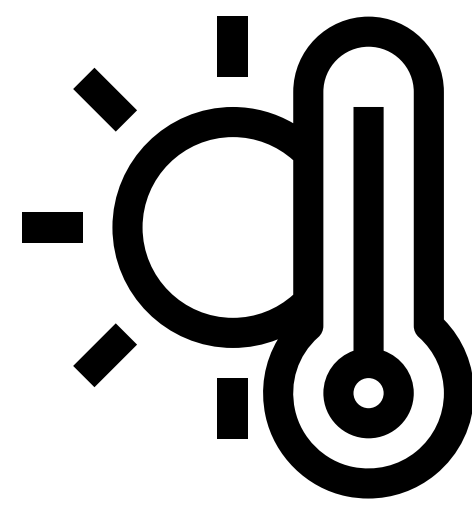
Now, let's revisit a topic we touched upon a page or so ago - different types of fires.

What exactly do we mean by different fire types?

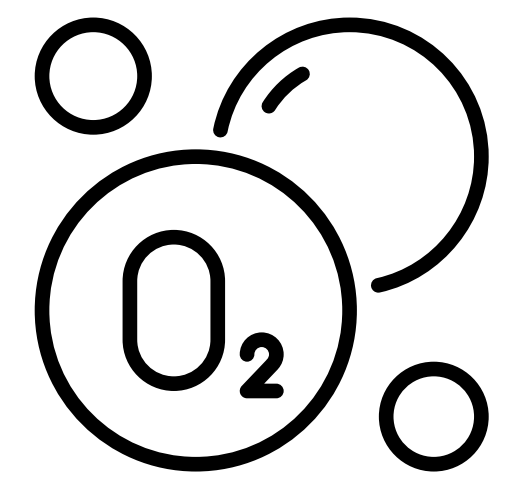
Despite their shared wobbliness, yellow hue, and heat, it's not the fires themselves that possess types; rather, it's the nature of the fuel that defines them. Understanding this essential concept requires acknowledging that fires rely on three fundamental elements to persist:



Fuel



Heat



Oxygen

So, depending on the type of fuel, there are different "classes" of fires.

Class A – Fires that involve solid or organic materials, such as wood, plastics, paper, textiles, or coal.

Class B – Fires that involve flammable liquids, such as gasoline, petroleum oil, paint, or diesel.

Class C – Fires that involve flammable gases, such as propane, butane, or methane.

Class D – Fires that involve combustible metals, such as magnesium, lithium, sodium, potassium, titanium, or aluminium.

Class F – Fires that involve cooking oils and fats, such as those used in deep-fat fryers.

# Types of Fire Extinguishers

When it comes to tackling these fires, extinguishers are one of your best weapons.

Extinguishers work by forming a barrier between the fuel, the oxygen or the heat that fires need to survive. Different extinguishers contain different materials, which form different barriers. Because of this, each class of fire requires a different type of extinguisher. The table below will show you in detail which type of fire extinguisher is best against which class of fire, and which one will make certain classes of fire worse.

Extinguisher Content	Label Design	Effective Against	Ineffective Against
Water	White Text	Wood, cloth, coal, plastics, paper, textiles and other solid materials	Any other fire types
Powder	Blue rectangle	Solid materials, liquid, gas and chemical fires	Chip pan and fat fires, as well as metal fires
Foam	Cream rectangle	Solid materials and liquid fires	Gas, metal, electrical, chip pan and fat fires
CO2	Black rectangle	Liquid and electrical fires	Gas, metal, chip pan and fat fires
Water chemical	Yellow rectangle	Cooking fat and oil fires.	Any other fire types

It's the responsible person's job to ensure that extinguishers are kept in good working order. If you do decide that it's safe to tackle a fire, there are two things you need to work out first:

1. The class of the fire you're fighting
2. What extinguisher is best to use

Once that's done, feel free to fight the fire, but ONLY if safe to do so.

# Fire Warden Tips

Understanding the role of fire wardens is crucial. Recognizing the necessity for their presence and comprehending their responsibilities are key aspects.

## What comes next?

Let's initiate the process. Determining the required number is an important consideration.

To ascertain the appropriate count, several factors come into play. The size of the building and the number of occupants are primary considerations.

Naturally, larger structures may necessitate multiple wardens, while smaller offices could manage with just one. A general guideline might be one warden per floor, but it's essential to evaluate your specific circumstances as no two premises are identical.

It's advisable to have more fire wardens than fewer. This ensures coverage, especially during periods when some wardens might be on vacation or dealing with illness.

Once you've made the necessary decisions, you can confidently allow the fire wardens to fulfill their responsibilities.

# Test your Knowledge

A lot of the fire warden stuff is a common sense. However, common sense is one of the first things to go out the window in an emergency. Here are a few simple questions to help everything stick & feel free to look back through the workbook for the answers.

Q1. Who is ultimately responsible for fire wardens?

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Q2. What is the difference between a fire warden's proactive and reactive duties?

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Q3. What are the three things a fire needs to survive?

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Q4. Why do you need to know what material each extinguisher contains?

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If you remember one thing from this workbook, let it be this: While fire wardens are essential, they're not an infallible shield against fires. Everyone needs to chip in and do their bit to help out fire wardens, and ultimately the responsible person, to help keep premises and people safe.

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# Fire Warden Takeaways

Fires are serious. Obviously.

To minimise risk, the highest-ranking person, like the business or building owner, has to carry out a range of fire safety activities.

They might choose to get some fire wardens in to help them.

Fire Warden's responsibilities are broken down into what you do before there's a fire (proactive), and what you do when there is a fire (reactive).

Both are there to minimise fire risks. Either by trying to stop them from happening, or keeping people safe when they do.

Importantly, only take any fire-fighting action if it's 100% safe to do so.

If you do decide that it's safe to tackle a fire, there are two things you need to work out first:

1. The class of the fire you're fighting
2. What extinguisher is best to use

Once that's done, feel free to fight the fire, but (and we can't stress this enough) ONLY if safe to do so.