



News and views from Fire & Security Consultancy Limited

## Fire Safety advice for Christmas



Would you want to climb over this lot to escape a fire?

**No, neither would we!**

That's why company bosses are being urged to put fire safety at the top of their Christmas list this year as companies are legally responsible for taking fire safety precautions at their own premises.

Fires can seriously damage a firm's output and reputation and put staff and members of the public lives at risk. The following fire safety check list is for firms to avoid a fire threatening their business this Christmas.

- Ensure fire escape routes are not blocked with extra Christmas stock.
- Be aware about storing combustible materials and flammable materials near heating elements which could cause a fire.
- Packaging, cardboard and waste paper must be securely stored outside, not near buildings, and away from potential arsonists.
- Regularly and routinely inspect fire alarms, emergency lighting, and firefighting equipment.
- Do not over load electrical sockets with extension leads or multi way adapters
- Train any seasonal staff with regard to fire safety matters in the premises.

Nationally Fire officers have discovered the above "common shortfalls" when they have carried out safety inspections at firms over the Christmas period.

A spokesman indicated that "Managers designated as responsible persons must carry out a regular review to ensure fire safety issues are identified and eradicated to increase safety to themselves, their staff and customers. This is all about protecting your staff and the public in the event of a fire and ensuring you are able to continue running your business. Many firms never recover after a serious blaze."

The RRO, applies to all commercial premises including offices and shops, and requires that a *responsible person* in the company must carry out a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment and act on its findings.

Current legislation was introduced by the Government to safeguard workplace premises from fire. Details on how companies must comply are available at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-guidance)

***If in doubt contact your local Fire and Rescue Service.***

# Fire Training

## What's The Point?

Most people are aware that they should undertake regular fire safety training and fire drills. However, sometimes these can seem like unnecessary annoyances. In this guest blog, Jon Burt from [www.fireprotectiononline.co.uk](http://www.fireprotectiononline.co.uk), explains why these precautions can often be lifesaving.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) requires all business owners to provide and manage:

- A Fire Risk Assessment
- A Fire Safety Policy
- Fire Procedures (such as evacuation)
- Staff Training
- Fire Drills

The Order also requires business owners to appoint a 'competent person'. This means a trained and knowledgeable staff member who is responsible for to carry out firefighting duties, including escape drills and overseeing maintenance of all firefighting equipment. In addition, if your business employs more than four members of staff, you must make a record of your fire safety policy, fire safety procedures and your training drills.

This may all seem daunting to a small business but there is no need to worry. There are a wide range of training opportunities available to provide expert training either at or outside the workplace.

### **Why do I, a member of staff, need fire safety training?**

Put simply, for your own safety! Equipping yourself with the necessary knowledge and training will not only enable you to escape from an emergency situation more quickly, but also ensure you can tackle small fires in the workplace and home. The best fire safety equipment available is as good as useless if nobody knows how to use it.

### **Which fire training methods are best?**

We don't all learn in the same way. Luckily there are variety of different options available.

### **External fire training courses**

This is a great way to train your staff, free from the distractions of the everyday routine. Good off-site fire training courses will combine video elements, lectures and practical hands-on experiences. Several commercial firms around the country offer such courses throughout the year.

### **Internal fire training courses**

Your business may not be able to afford either the cost or time for external training courses, so you can devise your own training from the variety of resources on offer.

### **Fire training DVDs**

There are some seriously good DVD training aids that combine video elements with some interactive questions. However, don't just buy a system, and instruct staff to sit in front of a computer screen and learn it. Show the DVDs as part of a group course/discussion and encourage participation. Combine book-based learning with a talk from a Fire Officer or similar, to broaden the delivery of knowledge.

### **Practical fire training**

When you replace your outdated fire extinguishers with new ones, keep the old fire extinguishers as these are ideal for training days, allowing staff to experience actual use of a variety of extinguishers. Just remember to try them out in areas where it is easy to clear up the mess afterwards, and safely dispose of any foam or powder.

### **Do fire drills work?**

Absolutely **YES**. Although fire drills can just seem like a welcome break from the office, they are crucial in any fire safety plan. Fire drills are excellent at flagging up any potential issues in your fire safety provision.

### **What next?**

After a fire drill ask yourself these simple questions:  
Did the alarm sound clearly in all parts of your building?  
Were the fire exit signs clearly visible to all your staff?  
Did any staff get confused or lost on the way to the assembly point?  
Did they encounter any unforeseen obstacles on their way?

The findings of any fire drill can form a valuable update to your Fire Risk Assessment, and help keep your staff both safe and vigilant.



And to end the year on a lighthearted note here are some of our favourite Christmas cracker jokes!

What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney?  
**Claustrophobia!**

What do they sing at a snowman's birthday party?  
**Freeze a jolly good fellow.**

Why does Santa have three gardens?  
**So he can 'ho ho ho'!**

What does Miley Cyrus have at Christmas?  
**Twerky!**

What do vampires sing on New Year's Eve?  
**Auld Fang Syne**

Why did Santa's helper see the doctor?  
**Because he had a low "elf" esteem!**

What happened to the man who stole an advent calendar?  
**He got 25 days!**

What kind of motorbike does Santa ride?  
**A Holly Davidson!**

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?  
**A Christmas Quacker!**

What is the best Christmas present in the world?  
**A broken drum, you just can't beat it!**

How did Scrooge win the football game?  
**The ghost of Christmas passed!**

Who delivers presents to baby sharks at Christmas?  
**Santa Jaws**

Who is Santa's favorite singer?  
**Elf-is Presley!**

What do Santa's little helpers learn at school?  
**The elf-abet!**

What did Santa say to the smoker?  
**Please don't smoke, it's bad for my elf!**

What do reindeer hang on their Christmas trees?  
**Horn-aments!**

*Wishing you all a very merry Christmas,  
and a happy and safe 2015  
from all at  
Fire & Security Consultancy Ltd.*