



Government Departments Returning to Business as Usual

Fire Risk Assessment/Fire Strategy/Fire Policy

A fire risk assessment/fire strategy/policy review will be required as soon as possible to consider any changes that have been introduced to facilitate a transition back to work and should consider any new or revised centralised guidance issued in light of COVID-19.

Examples:

- Use of Perspex screening as a barrier.
- Revised staff instructions in the event of fire.
- Revised procedures to investigate fire alarm activations.
- The introduction of one-way systems to maintain social distancing.

All movement - including evacuation - proceeds very inefficiently under social distancing rules so it is important that everyone is made aware quickly of a confirmed fire.

Social distancing **cannot** apply for evacuation in a confirmed fire situation.

Government Departments should move towards a dispersal approach following evacuation from a building, if not already adopted.

Social distancing often cannot apply if a member of staff requires assistance under a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, consideration should be given to their attendance within the work place.

Where staff are being encouraged to stagger start/finish times, consideration should be given to the following –

- Lone working – where comprehensive fire detection is fitted to the building, lone working should be acceptable.
- Fire wardens may not be available - all staff should be instructed to encourage other people to evacuate as they leave.

All staff must be made aware of any alterations to previous procedures.

Maintenance of Systems

The maintenance of fire safety systems should have continued during the lockdown period. The responsible person should seek assurance that all equipment is in effective working order.

To assist contractors to protect their own staff alongside your employees, arrangements should be considered to provide out of hours access for maintenance.

Shared buildings

Look at your existing emergency plan to confirm that it will still work if other tenants are absent and security staff have restricted instructions due to COVID-19.

CPFSI visits during COVID-19

Inspectors will continue to investigate serious incidents and where dangerous conditions have been alleged but, will make contact in advance to confirm the social distancing measures and PPE requirements to apply.