

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service



**Do you own a business with
sleeping accommodation above it?**

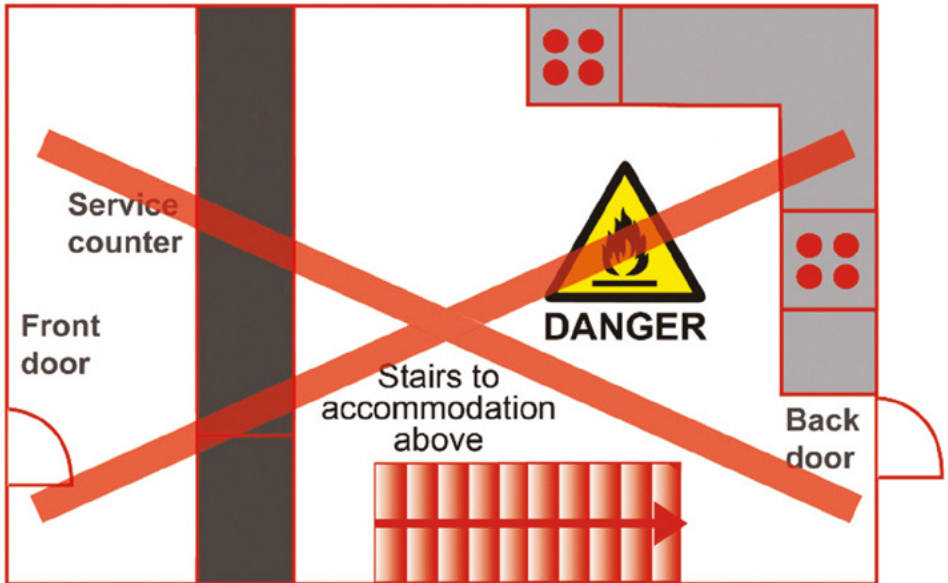
If so...fire safety law applies to you.



Does anyone sleep above the business?

Fire safety is especially important where people may be asleep in rooms or flats above a business and their access is by a single, open or unprotected staircase through the main public or kitchen area.

The floor plan illustrated below shows a **dangerous** layout.



There have been a number of fires in businesses such as fast food outlets, takeaways, cafes and restaurants where upper floors are being used for sleeping accommodation. These fires often result in significant financial loss, with a high risk of injury and even death. It is particularly important to consider and put in place the right fire safety arrangements to protect not only the lives of you, your family, employees and customers, but also your property and your business.

In many cases it has come to light that people are sleeping in rooms or flats above the business, often accessed by a single unprotected staircase from the main public or kitchen area of the building. Often these exit routes are also blocked with combustibles materials, and experience has shown that people living on upper floors find it difficult to evacuate quickly and safely in an emergency unless a safe exit route is available.

What must I do to comply with the law?

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 means you are legally responsible for taking steps to protect the people using your premises from the risk of fire and where necessary, you must improve your fire safety measures to ensure everyone can safely escape in case of fire.

Carry out a Fire Risk Assessment

A Fire Risk Assessment is a thorough look at your premises and the people who are likely to use them. It should consider the risk of fire breaking out and what measures you need to put in place to prevent it and keep people safe.



Get out, stay out and call the fire service



Plan an escape route and be prepared

Follow the 5 key steps

- Identify the hazards - sources of ignition and sources of fuel.
- Identify people at risk.
- Evaluate, remove, reduce or protect from risk.
- Record, plan, inform, instruct and train.
- Review your Fire Risk Assessment regularly.

Following your Fire Risk Assessment you may need to:

- Record the significant findings - see top tip below
- Fit a suitable alarm to provide early warning in case of fire
- Enclose escape routes with fire resisting construction to ensure all exit routes are safe
- Provide information to relevant persons.

Top tip - if you employ five or more people (including any who work part time), are licenced or have an Alteration Notice in force, the law says you must keep a written record of (five key steps) your significant findings. However, even if this does not apply to you, keeping a record of the significant findings will save you time and money when you come to review and update your assessment.



What happens if I don't do a Fire Risk Assessment?

Put simply you are more likely to have a fire and less likely to recover from one. You may also put people at risk and be prosecuted.

Did you know the Fire Service may inspect your premises as part of our responsibility to enforce fire safety law?

If we feel you need to improve your fire safety we would normally first offer advice, but in serious cases we may take formal enforcement action and in some cases close, or place restrictions on your business or sleeping accommodation, until it is safe to open again.

The short time you invest in carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment and making improvements could protect the lives of your employees, customers or family members and ensure your business remains open.

Don't let this happen to you!

After pleading guilty to eight breaches of Fire Safety Legislation following a routine fire safety inspection, a Sunderland restaurant owner was given a prison sentence of four months for each offence to run concurrently, suspended for 15 months and ordered to pay approximately £5,000 in fines and costs.

We are happy to provide free fire safety advice. If you would like advice on fire safety matters you can contact us in the following ways:

Telephone
+44 (0) 191 444 1500

Website
www.twfire.gov.uk/community-safety/business

Fire Safety Department

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