



COVID-19 – Protection – Risk Based Desktop Appraisal

1 April 2020

Risk Based desktop approach to considering fire risk in premises

The information contained within this document is of a temporary nature in response to the current Covid-19 situation, to support Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in their approach to Protection activities to ensure the public are safe in event of fire.

This note is specifically targeted to allow FRSs to assess the risk from fire in a premises via a telephone/desktop approach to keep attendance at premises to a minimum. It is designed to assist FRS in taking a risk-based approach to all Protection activity in accordance with the 'NFCC Strategic Intention COVID-19 – Protection' document dated 19 March 2020.

This information note is intended for the use of trained full-time fire safety personnel, in applying professional judgement when considering premises risk in event of fire.

This is only proposed until such time as normal audit and inspection activity can resume.

Proposal for desktop approach

It is proposed FRSs use the principles of a professional qualitative judgement on the adequacy of fire safety approaches, detailed in the Chief Fire Officers (CFOA) Short Audit guidance which can be located [here](#). Although this is generally for low risk premises, in this current climate this could be adapted for any premises. Whilst it is acknowledged FRSs will not be carrying out a short audit, the principles and framework the guidance provides in supporting a managed/guided conversation to assess tolerable risk (page 13) should be applied.

Many FRSs already use the short audit process or are familiar with, and have a knowledge of, its guiding principles. To record this interaction, FRSs can use existing short audit recording processes or their own suitable proforma.

FRSs that do not currently use the short audit process and do not have systems or recording mechanisms in place who wish to follow these principles should contact the NFCC Building Safety Programme Team at BuildingSafetyTeam@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk.

Sections of note include the questions to consider (page 10) and the first of the recording proforma (page 19) which is considered appropriate for this use. It is up to individual FRSs to decide if they wish to use the second proforma.

FRSs should assess the risk that premises present through factors such as their size, height, use, occupancy profile and existing fire safety measures. It is essential as many sources of information are investigated and obtained to allow the consideration of risk to be as accurately informed as possible.

FRSs should also consider sources of information such as:

- Any information the responsible person and/or premises owner/occupier could provide electronically e.g. fire risk assessment, maintenance records etc.
- Any previous history information the service has on the premises.
- Any information from other sources e.g. Local Authority, Care Quality Commission etc.

Where FRSs do contact premises during this time every effort should be made to provide them with advice and support to mitigate the risk of fire.