

Arson advice



Guidance from Surrey Fire & Rescue Service

It is the aim of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, working with others, to make Surrey a safer place to live, work and do business.

Fire is but one of a spectrum of risks faced by businesses and the community today. We aim to work in partnership with communities to ensure resilience. The management of fire risk and the development of business continuity plans can add value to our communities.

www.surrey-fire.gov.uk

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Arson – Attacks on Business

Background Information



Every week there are 3,500 fires started deliberately causing 50 injuries and 2 deaths at a cost to society of at least £25million. Arson results in significant losses for industrial and commercial buildings in terms of lost production, market share and customer goodwill, on average 80% of businesses affected by a major incident close within a month.

The management of fire risk not only ensures compliance with legislation but linked to business continuity planning contributes to the overall resilience of your business. Make sure that you consider the threat of arson in your fire risk assessment. Further advice can be obtained from your local Fire Safety Officer or the Government website:

www.communities.gov.uk/fire/arsonreduction/

Responsibility

The owner or employer in every workplace has a legal responsibility under the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005 for carrying out a fire risk assessment. This includes identifying the risk of arson and acting to reduce it as highlighted within this assessment.

Fires are also started inside the premises - by people who may be mentally ill, by extremists or even by a member of staff with some kind of grudge. How easily could a fire be started or an incendiary device be concealed? It is a fact that most of the arson fires affecting shops and stores are lit outside. The culprits are often vandals with no other motive than to cause trouble. They light fires with anything readily to hand - waste, packaging, rubbish in open skips and plastic trays. How easily could it happen?



Deal With the Waste and Rubbish Threat

No packaging, waste or rubbish should be left to accumulate anywhere on the premises or immediately outside. Packaging, waste and rubbish should be removed regularly to a safe storage area. Safe storage means metal bins with closed lids, preferably locked away in their own compartment. Arrange regular/frequent collection of refuse/waste by a local authority or contractor.

Make the Premises as Arson Proof as Possible

Have there previously been small fires in the shop or store? Have you heard of fires occurring locally? If so, tell the Police and be particularly vigilant. Small fires are all too often a warning sign of worse to come.

- Limit as far as possible the number of entrances in use (but do not block fire exits!).
- Keep a watch on what is going on. It pays in larger establishments to have a security guard on duty at main entrances. In smaller businesses you and your staff should practise vigilance.
- As part of staff training, remind all employees of the arson threat and ask them to report any suspicious behaviour by customers (or staff!).
- Ensure that doors and windows are in good repair and that locks are working.
- Gaps under doors to the street should be as narrow as possible - this will prevent items such as lighted paper being pushed under them.
- If there is a letter box, it should have a metal container fitted on the inside (to contain any fires from lighted rags or paper).
- Keep a list of people holding keys to the premises, and chase any keys that are missing.
- Identify possible entry routes for intruders - via yards, up drainpipes or even flat roofs. What can be done to prevent access?
- Special danger areas are storage and warehousing. There should be a rule that access is only available to authorised members of staff.

