

Fire Compliance

A Quick Guide

For duty holders in Education, Healthcare, and Commercial premises (Oxfordshire & surrounding areas).

Who should use this guide?

Responsible Persons, Premises Managers, FM leads, and site owners who need a concise, sector-specific view of fire safety duties, the right cadence for checks, and when to bring in a competent assessor or installer.

The core duties (apply to all sectors)

Your legal baseline: ensure life safety by (a) preventing fire, (b) securing safe means of escape, and (c) maintaining suitable detection, warning, and firefighting measures.

In practical terms:

- Fire Risk Assessment (FRA): suitable & sufficient, kept current, acted on with a prioritised action plan.
- Alarm & Detection: design, installation, and maintenance appropriate to risk (BS 5839-1 framework).
- Emergency Routes/Exits: kept clear, signed, illuminated; doors and hardware maintained.
- Training & Drills: staff know procedures, roles, and equipment; drills logged.
- Maintenance & Records: planned preventive maintenance; defects rectified; logbook up to date.

When to re-assess (any sector):

- Building layout, staffing, processes, or materials change
- Alarm/compartimentation strategy changes (e.g., move from L3 to L2)
- After any significant incident, enforcement visit, or refurbishment
- Annually at minimum for most premises, or sooner if risk profile shifts

What “good” looks like:

- Written FRA with risk-ranked actions, owners, target dates
- An alarm category/design rationale commensurate with risk (e.g., L2/L1 for higher life-risk uses)
- Documented weekly user tests, six-monthly maintenance, and annual service reports
- A single source of truth: one logbook covering drills, tests, defects, contractors, and actions

Sector differences - Education

Duty holder: the employer/Trust governing body (or proprietor).

Typical strategy: early warning + fast evacuation; term-time occupancy peaks; vulnerable users; after-hours clubs.

Key focus: compartmentation around classrooms/corridors; protected stairways; temporary activities (DT labs, performances).

Documentation to reference: BB100 design guidance for fire safety in schools.

Sector differences - Healthcare

Duty holder: care provider/NHS Trust or practice owner.

Typical strategy: progressive horizontal evacuation (PHE), compartmentation is critical; detection tailored to clinical risk.

Key focus: sub-compartment integrity, staff response times, alarm cause & effect (staged alarms), medical gases/electrical resilience.

Documentation to reference: HTM 05-02 (design in healthcare premises).

Sector differences - Commercial & Workplaces

Duty holder: the Responsible Person (employer/owner/occupier).

Typical strategy: detect early, evacuate quickly, control ignition sources, maintain escape routes.

Key focus: layout changes (fit-outs), hot-works control, lithium-ion charging policies, storage/stock density, lone working.

Documentation to reference: GOV.UK "Fire safety in the workplace" + relevant risk assessment guide.

How Iris VBS helps

- **Fire Risk Assessment:** competent assessors, risk-prioritised action plans, sector-specific controls.
- **Design & Installation:** alarm category review (L1–L5), cause & effect for healthcare, education-appropriate zoning.
- **Maintenance & Monitoring:** planned servicing, 24/7 call-out, rapid defect resolution, compliance reporting.
- **Training & Drills:** staff briefings, drill planning, logbook setup and templates.
- **Documentation:** logbooks, inspection forms, and close-out evidence suitable for governors, CQC, and insurers.

Trigger points to contact us now:

- New building use/fit-out, change in occupancy, expansion or refurbishment
- Repeat false alarms, unclear cause & effect, or poor audibility
- Out-of-date servicing certificates, missing logbook entries, or enforcement concerns

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