



Risk Bulletin

ARSON: KNOW THE RISKS

All premises are potential targets for arson. However, some are particularly vulnerable such as schools, unoccupied buildings, places of worship, newspaper premises, farms, and animal research establishments.

Risk assessment

An arson risk assessment should be carried out by a competent person as part of an overall fire risk assessment, as required under fire safety legislation. The assessment should be formally documented and reviewed periodically.

Tips on storing hazardous items

1. Waste materials should be removed at the end of each working day, or more frequently as necessary
2. All waste materials should be held securely in bins or skips at least 10m from the building and at least 2m from the site perimeter
3. Where a 10m space is not achievable, waste should be held in lockable metal containers located as far away from doors, windows, canopies or overhanging roofs as possible
4. If plastic wheeled bins are used, ensure they are located away from doors, windows to prevent movement by potential arsonists
5. External storage of timber pallets, plastic crates and other combustibles should be kept to a minimum and located a minimum of 10m from buildings and structures
6. Hazardous materials such as flammable liquids and gases should be located in secure storage facilities and petrol and diesel pumps immobilised



Security measures

Security decisions should be driven by the arson risk assessment and should also incorporate any specific requirements of insurers.

Security measures may include:

- Perimeter security fencing
- Physical protection to buildings
- Intruder alarm with remote signalling to an alarm receiving centre
- Security lighting
- Remotely monitored CCTV
- Manned guarding
- Access control

Key security should be strictly controlled and the building fabric should be maintained in good repair. For example:

- Gaps beneath external doors should be kept as small as possible and sealed
- Letterboxes should be fitted internally with metal receptacles
- Unused letter boxes should be permanently sealed



Staff precautions

Employees should be made aware of the risk of arson and encouraged to challenge any strangers on the premises and report suspicious behaviour. Care should also be taken in the recruitment of staff, with references taken and verified. All contractors working on the premises should be adequately supervised.

Closedown procedures

Effective closedown procedures are key to controlling arson, fire and theft risks.

Arrangements should include an inspection of all areas prior to closure each day to ensure that waste materials have been removed; flammable liquids and gases have been locked away. Staff and visitors have left the building and all fire and security protection systems are operative.

FIRE FACTS: KNOW THE RISKS

1. 529,000 incidents and fires attended by fire and rescue services in 2015/16 - 31% were fires
2. 12% increase in total deliberate incidents and fires attended between 2014/15 to 2015/16
3. 3% increase in fires attended between 2014/15 to 2015/16 in 'other buildings' not classed as dwellings
4. Most frequently recorded time of day for fire incidents in 2015/16 was between 7-8pm

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-great-britain>

