



Example of a fire precautions checklist

This checklist is a basic, general approach to fire precautions in the workplace, and the key issues that need to be covered. It is not intended as a comprehensive technical document, but is more than adequate for most cases. You can use this checklist as a basis for your inspection of the institution's fire precautions in October, following the introduction of the new Regulatory structure.

The checklist combines a number of different approaches and activities for the inspection, and ensures that reps who use it don't just walk around the workplace with a clipboard. Some of the points are simple observation, some require you to ask the employer for information and to inspect records, and some require you to talk to members and ask questions. This gives you the opportunity to ask questions about other potential problems, and raise other issues with members as you go.

The checklist questions are written so that the 'Yes' column indicates a satisfactory answer, and the 'No' column shows unsatisfactory answers. So at the end of the inspection, it is easy to see which things you need to put into your report – just look for ticks in the No column.

When you have completed your inspection, don't forget to submit a report to the employer raising issues that need to be addressed. Follow-up your report to make sure appropriate action is taken where this is necessary. The report should contain matters that you wish the employer to address. Don't use the report to say that the workplace is safe – that's not its purpose. If you don't find anything you want to take up, simply record the fact that you have completed an inspection, and there is nothing you wish to raise as a result.

It is always worth asking your employer's safety officer/advisor for a copy of any checklist(s) they use, as the checklist approach is often used by the experts. Your employer has a duty to give you such facilities and assistance as you may reasonably require under Regulation 4A(2) of the Safety Representatives & Safety Committee Regulations. Access to employer checklists is a perfectly reasonable request for assistance to help you undertake safety reps activity.

Please send us electronic copies of any checklists you discover or develop for workplace inspections, particularly those in specialist areas like laboratories and workshops. We will put them on the new Health & Safety website so that all UCU safety reps can benefit by using them.

Basic Fire Precautions Checklist

Checklist Questions	Yes	No	Comments
The Fire Risk Assessment			
1) Has the fire risk assessment been done?			
2) Was UCU consulted on the assessment findings?			
3) Was UCU consulted on the control measures to be put in place following the assessment?			
4) Have you received a copy of the assessment?			
Fire Hazards			
1) Are flammable materials correctly stored?			
2) Is all electrical equipment correctly wired and earthed?			
3) Is all wiring & equipment in good condition?			
4) Are electric heaters clear of flammable material?			
5) Are accumulations of flammable material regularly cleared away?			
6) Is all dust regularly removed from around motors and moving machinery?			
7) Are all moving machinery parts, motors, bearings, rollers etc. free of "hot spots"? Photocopiers correctly sited?			
8) Are smoking refuges provided with ashtrays and bins?			
Fire Fighting Equipment			
1) Is all equipment checked annually and dated?			
2) Is fire fighting equipment appropriate for the location and use?			
3) Is all equipment clearly marked for designated use?			
4) Is all equipment in good order, clean and properly stored?			
5) If present, is the sprinkler system regularly checked?			
Fire Alarms			
1) Is the Fire Alarm system regularly checked?			
2) Are maintenance checks recorded?			
3) Are alarm call points clearly marked?			
4) Is the system tested weekly from different points, and tests recorded?			
5) Is the alarm audible everywhere in the workplace?			
6) Do members know how to sound the alarm?			
7) Do members know where the nearest alarm call point is?			
Members with disabilities			
1) Is suitable provision made for people with mobility and other disabilities?			
2) Are visual alarm signals in place where necessary?			

Checklist Questions	Yes	No	Comments
Fire Exits			
1) Are all Fire Exits clearly signed?			
2) Is the route to the nearest exit clearly indicated?			
3) Do all parts of the floor have direct access to a Fire Exit?			
4) Are all exits clear of obstruction and not locked?			
5) Do all exits open in the direction of escape?			
6) Are exits clear of obstruction on the outside?			
7) Are protected stairways clear of materials and equipment, and properly sealed against smoke leakage?			
8) Is the emergency lighting system regularly checked?			
9) Are lighting checks recorded?			
10) Do members know the way to their nearest fire exit?			
Organisation and Procedures			
1) Have competent staff been designated to take responsibility for fire emergencies?			
2) Do all members know who the designated person is?			
3) Has the designated person been adequately trained?			
4) Are there designated and signed assembly points?			
5) Do all members know their designated assembly point?			
6) Are there notices posted informing members what to do in the event of a fire?			
7) Do contractors know the procedures?			
8) Are all visitors properly informed about fire procedures?			
Notices and Signs			
1) Do all signs conform to the current Regulations?			
2) Are signs clearly displayed?			
3) Are Exit Signs illuminated in the event of power failure?			
4) Do all members understand the signs?			
Training for Members			
1) Are regular fire drills held? At least once, preferably twice a year			
2) Is the frequency of training adequate?			
3) Is there a logbook for recording training?			
4) Do all members know the way to their assembly point?			
5) Do members know what to do if they discover a fire?			
6) Do members understand the extinguisher colour coding?			
7) Do members consider their training has been adequate?			
8) Are the lifts interlocked with the alarm, or do members know not to use them?			