

Glossary

These definitions are provided to assist the responsible person in understanding some of the technical terms used in fire safety. They are not exhaustive and more precise definitions may be available elsewhere.

Term	Definition
Access room	A room through which the only escape route from an inner room passes.
Accommodation stairway	A stairway, additional to that required for means of escape purposes, provided for the convenience of occupants.
Alterations Notice	If your premises are considered by the enforcing authority to be high risk, they may issue an Alterations Notice that requires you to inform them before making any material alterations to your premises.
Alternative escape route	Escape routes sufficiently separated by either direction and space, or by fire-resisting construction to ensure that one is still available, irrespective of the location of a fire.
Approved Document B (ADB)	Guidance issued by Government in support of the fire safety aspects of the building regulations.
As low as reasonably practicable	Is a concept where risks should continue to be reduced until you reach a point where the cost and effort to reduce the risk further would be grossly disproportionate to the benefit achieved.
Automatic fire detection system	A means of automatically detecting the products of a fire and sending a signal to a fire warning system. See 'Fire warning'.
Basement	A storey with a floor which, at some point, is more than 1,200mm below the highest level of ground adjacent to the outside walls, unless, and for escape purposes only, such area has adequate, independent and separate means of escape.
Child	Anyone who is not over compulsory school age, ie before or just after their 16th birthday.
Class 0, 1 or 3 surface spread of flame	Classes of surface spread of flame for materials needed to line the walls and ceilings of escape routes.
Combustible material	A substance that can be burned.
Compartment wall and/or floor	A fire-resisting wall or floor that separates one fire compartment from another.
Competent person	A person with enough training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them properly to assist in undertaking the preventive and protective measures.
Dangerous substance	1. A substance which, because of its physico-chemical or chemical properties and the way it is used, or is present at the

	workplace, creates a risk. 2. A substance subject to the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations 2002 (DSEAR).
Dead end	Area from which escape is possible in one direction only.
Direct distance	The shortest distance from any point within the floor area to the nearest storey exit, or fire-resisting route, ignoring walls, partitions and fixings.
Domestic premises	Premises occupied as a private dwelling, excluding those areas used in common by the occupants of more than one such dwelling.
Emergency escape lighting	Lighting provided to illuminate escape routes that will function if the normal lighting fails.
Enforcing authority	The Fire and Rescue Authority or any other authority specified in Article 25 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
Escape route	Route forming that part of the means of escape from any point in the premises to a final exit.
Evacuation lift	A lift that may be used for the evacuation of people with disabilities, or others, in a fire.
External escape stair	Stair providing an escape route, external to the building.
Fail-safe	Locking an output device with the application of power and having the device unlock when the power is removed. Also known as fail unlock, reverse action or power locked.
False alarm	A fire signal, usually from a fire warning system, resulting from a cause other than fire.
Final exit	An exit from a building where people can continue to disperse in safety and where they are no longer in danger from fire and/or smoke.
Fire compartment	A building, or part of a building, constructed to prevent the spread of fire to or from another part of the same building or an adjoining building.
Fire door	A door or shutter, together with its frame and furniture, provided for the passage of people, air or goods which, when closed, is intended to restrict the passage of fire and/or smoke to a predictable level of performance.
Firefighting lift	A lift, designed to have additional protection, with controls that enable it to be used under the direct control of the fire and rescue service when fighting a fire.
Firefighting shaft	A fire-resisting enclosure containing a firefighting stair, fire mains, firefighting lobbies and, if provided, a firefighting lift.
Firefighting stairway	See 'Firefighting shaft'.
Fire resistance	The ability of a component or construction of a building to satisfy, for a stated period of time, some or all of the appropriate criteria of

	<p>relevant standards. (Generally described as 30 minutes fire-resisting or 60 minutes fire-resisting.)</p> <p>See BS EN 1363-1, BS 476-7 and associated standards for further information.</p>
Fire safety manager	<p>A nominated person with responsibility for carrying out day-to-day management of fire safety.</p> <p>(This may or may not be the same as the 'Responsible Person'.)</p>
Fire safety strategy	<p>A number of planned and co-ordinated arrangements designed to reduce the risk of fire and to ensure the safety of people if there is a fire.</p>
Fire stopping	<p>A seal provided to close an imperfection of fit or design tolerance between elements or components, to restrict the passage of fire and smoke.</p>
Fire warning system	<p>A means of alerting people to the existence of a fire. (See 'Automatic fire detection system'.)</p>
Flammable material	<p>Easily ignited and capable of burning rapidly.</p>
Highly flammable	<p>Generally liquids with a flashpoint of below 21°C. The Chemicals Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply Regulations 2002 (CHIP) give more detailed guidance.)</p>
Hazardous substance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See Dangerous substance. 2. A substance subject to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
Inner room	<p>A room from which escape is possible only by passing through another room (the access room).</p>
Licensed premises	<p>Any premises that require a licence under any statute to undertake trade or conduct business activities.</p>
Material change	<p>An alteration to the premises, process or service which significantly affects the level of risk to people from fire in those premises.</p>
Means of escape	<p>Route(s) provided to ensure safe egress from the premises or other locations to a place of total safety.</p>
Phased evacuation	<p>A system of evacuation in which different parts of the premises are evacuated in a controlled sequence of phases, those parts of the premises expected to be at greatest risk being evacuated first.</p>
Place of reasonable safety	<p>A place within a building or structure where, for a limited period of time, people will have some protection from the effects of fire and smoke. This place, usually a corridor or stairway, will normally have a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance and allow people to continue their escape to a place of total safety.</p>
Place of total safety	<p>A place, away from the premises, in which people are at no immediate danger from the effects of a fire.</p>
Premises	<p>Any place, such as a building and the immediate land bounded by any enclosure of it, any tent, moveable or temporary structure or any installation or workplace.</p>

Protected lobby	A fire-resisting enclosure providing access to an escape stairway via two sets of fire doors and into which no room opens other than toilets and lifts.
Protected stairway	A stairway which is adequately protected from the rest of the building by fire-resisting construction.
Protected route	An escape route which is adequately protected from the rest of the building by a fire-resisting construction.
Refuge	A place of reasonable safety in which a disabled person and others who may need assistance may rest or wait for assistance before reaching a place of total safety. It should lead directly to a fire-resisting escape route.
Responsible person	The person ultimately responsible for fire safety as defined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
Relevant persons	Any person lawfully on the premises and any person in the immediate vicinity, but does not include firefighters carrying out firefighting duties.
Self-closing device	A device that is capable of closing the door from any angle and against any latch fitted to the door.
Significant finding	A feature of the premises, from which the fire hazards and persons at risk are identified. The actions you have taken or will take to remove or reduce the chance of a fire occurring or the spread of fire and smoke. The actions people need to take in case of fire. The necessary information, instruction and training needed and how it will be given.
Smoke alarm	Device contained within one housing all the components, except possibly the energy source, for detecting smoke and giving an audible alarm.
Staged fire alarms	A fire warning which can be given in two or more stages for different purposes within a given area (ie notifying staff, stand-by to evacuate, full evacuation).
Storey exit	A final exit or a doorway giving direct access into a protected stairway, firefighting lobby, or external escape route.
Travel distance	The actual distance to be travelled by a person from any point within the floor area to the nearest storey exit or final exit, having regard to the layout of walls, partitions and fixings.
Vision panel	A transparent panel in a wall or door of an inner room enabling the occupant to become aware of a fire in the access area during the early stages.
Way guidance	Low mounted luminous tracks positioned on escape routes in combination with exit indicators, exit marking and intermediate direction indicators along the route, provided for use when the supply to the normal lighting fails, which do not rely on an electrical supply for their luminous output.
Where necessary	The Order requires that fire precautions (such as firefighting equipment, fire detection and warning, and emergency routes and

	<p>exits) should be provided (and maintained) 'where necessary'. This means that the fire precautions you must provide (and maintain) are those which are needed to reasonably protect relevant persons from risks to them in case of fire. This will be determined by the findings of your risk assessment including the preventative measures you have or will have taken. In practice, it is very unlikely that a properly conducted fire risk assessment which takes into account all the matters relevant for the safety of persons in case of fire, will conclude that no fire precautions (including maintenance) are necessary.</p>
<p>Young person</p>	<p>(a) A person aged 16 years from the date on which he attains that age until, and including, 31 August which next follows that date. (b) A person aged 16 years and over who is undertaking a course of full-time education at a school or college which is not advanced education. (c) A person aged 16 years and over who is undertaking approved training that is not provided through a contract of employment.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraphs (b) and (c) the person: (a) shall have commenced the course of full-time education or approved training before attaining the age of 19 years; and (b) shall not have attained the age of 20 years.</p>