



SFRS Advice on Fire Safety

Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor

The responsibility to carry out an assessment of fire risk, review such an assessment and to take fire safety measures rests with duty holders. Duty holders, or their employees, may have the necessary training, skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their own fire safety risk assessment and guidance available on the [Scottish Government website](#) may be of assistance.

Duty holders must consider their own capabilities, circumstances, and factors such as the size and use of premises and number of persons, in respect of the fire safety risk assessment process. Whilst duty holders are often best placed to know their premises, they may not have sufficient resources, skills or experience to undertake a fire safety risk assessment themselves and can arrange for a suitably qualified or competent person or company to complete an assessment on their behalf.

This advice is provided to help Duty holders decide who should undertake a fire risk assessment so their premises comply with the applicable fire safety legislation in Scotland, namely the Fire (Scotland Act) 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. A guidance document produced by the Fire Sector Federation to assist in this process can be found [here](#).

If you are looking to contract a specialist, it can be difficult to judge the competence of companies and persons who advertise their services. The fact that a person or company is operating in the fire sector or that someone has previous fire service experience, does not mean that they are a fire safety risk assessment specialist. As with many other services, when looking for a specialist, it is your responsibility to satisfy yourself that they have the necessary qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience to assess the fire safety risk at your particular premises. You may also wish to consider whether you require a specialist who holds professional indemnity insurance.

There are some simple steps and precautions you can take to help verify the competence and suitability of a prospective fire risk assessor:

- Be satisfied that the fire risk assessor providing this service is competent to do so. We recommend you check that those providing this service have independent registration with, or certification from, a professional or certification body and that they meet the competency criteria as detailed within the [Fire Sector Federation Competency Workstream guidance](#)
- Check that they have experience of undertaking fire risk assessments for your kind of business and premises
- Request references from previous clients in premises of your type; ask these clients if they were satisfied and if any problems were later identified

Both the Scottish Government and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service recommend that duty holders who wish to contract the services of external fire safety risk assessors verify that the assessor is competent in fire risk assessment. Competence of an individual assessor can be verified by selecting the assessor from a list of competent fire risk assessors maintained by a professional body or a UKAS accredited third party certification body. Companies, including sole traders, can also be third party certificated under appropriate schemes operated by certification bodies that have, themselves, been UKAS accredited as competent to certificate against such schemes. The benefit of company certification is that the certification body monitors the quality of the certificated company's work and confirms that there is a system for management of quality within the certificated company.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has not assessed and does not endorse any individuals or companies participating in these schemes. However, participation in such schemes can offer a degree of assurance that a fire risk assessor (individual or company) has met the professional requirements of the scheme.

Generally, reviews of a risk assessment should be carried out regularly by the duty holder to ensure it remains valid. This will reinforce ownership of fire safety management and assist in the development of relevant knowledge, and of a fire safety culture. However, where significant changes to premises have occurred or if the duty holder continues to feel that they lack the time, knowledge or skills required to undertake a thorough review, it may be advisable to seek specialist advice to revisit, review and revise the initial assessment.

Appendix 1: Register Holders

This appendix is listed in alphabetical order.

The following details a list of UKAS accredited certification bodies and professional registration schemes duty holders may wish to reference:

Register Holders	UKAS Accredited Company Certification Scheme	UKAS Accredited Person Certification Scheme	Professional Body Person Registration Scheme
The BAFE 'SP205' company	✓		
IFC Certification Ltd operate the 'IFCC 0099' company scheme	✓		
Institute of Fire Prevention Officers (IFPO) This is a professional body registration scheme			✓
Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) This is a professional body registration scheme			✓
Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) This is a professional body registration scheme			✓
Warrington Certification Ltd operate a 'Fire Risk Assessors Certification Scheme (Individuals) FRACS'		✓	
Warrington Certification Ltd operate a 'Fire Risk Assessors Certification Scheme (Company) FRACS'	✓		

Further details of UKAS accredited certification bodies can be found at www.ukas.com.