



RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDE

ARSON

Introduction

Arson is the biggest single cause of fire in the UK. Over 30,000 buildings are set alight deliberately every year costing £300m. Vandalism by children is the biggest cause but revenge by disgruntled staff or former staff and fires set to cover a crime are common.

What can I do to deter arsonists (and thieves) and protect my premises?

Firstly, have a look around your premises to see if there are obvious areas where an arsonist could strike – protect these and any other vulnerable areas using the advice given below.

- **Protect the perimeter** of your property using security fencing and strong gates with substantial padlocks.
- **Deter entry to the building** by fitting
 - **Physical security on doors** – external doors (other than fire exits) should be fitted with mortice deadlocks meeting British Standard BS3621 or an equivalent mortice deadlock. All doors (except the one you use to finally exit the building) should also be fitted with two internal key-operated bolts.
 - **Key-operated window locks** – should be fitted to all accessible windows unless they are designated as a fire escape.
- **In addition, consider**
 - **Steel linings to doors** and steel grilles or bars to windows.
 - **An intruder alarm** – a well-designed and maintained alarm can be a deterrent to intruders as well as providing early notice of a break-in. We recommend that you protect your property with an intruder alarm installed and maintained under contract by an NSI (National Security Inspectorate) or SSAIB (Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board) approved installer. The external sounder should be positioned to be visible from the street as this can act as a deterrent to a potential intruder.
 - **An automatic fire alarm** – ensure that the installation meets British Standard BS5839 – Fire Detection and Alarms for Buildings Part 1 and that there is signalling to an off-site Alarm Receiving Centre approved by the NSI (National Security Inspectorate) or LPC (Loss Prevention Council).
 - **CCTV** – Consider fitting a CCTV system with recording facilities that can imprint the date and time - this will increase its chances of being acceptable as evidence in court.

How can I reduce the opportunity for starting a fire?

- When your premises are closed for business ensure all doors and windows are locked (including those on sheds and outbuildings) and all security devices are brought into use.
- Lock away all flammable liquids or gases in secure cabinets or secure areas.
- Store waste in enclosed skips and lock them at the end of the working day. Keep them 10 metres from your building or as far as possible if this is not practical – never store them against the exterior walls of the building or close to doors or windows to minimise the chance of fire spreading. If there is no suitable external storage, consider using a secure area within the building.
- At the end of the working day ensure all staff and visitors have left the premises, waste has been removed and all security systems are operative.

Need to know more about this topic?

Other useful sources of information are

The Arson Prevention Bureau www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk

The Arson Reduction Forum www.crimereduction.gov.uk/arson2

IMPORTANT

The information set out in this document constitutes a set of general guidelines and should not be construed or relied upon as specialist advice. Therefore **MORE TH>N** accepts no responsibility towards any person relying upon these Risk Management Guidelines nor accepts any liability whatsoever for the accuracy of data supplied by another party or the consequences of reliance upon it.