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# Arson Precautions

## INTRODUCTION

Arson has been a blight on local communities for a considerable time having in the main an economic loss to people, businesses, communities and Local Authorities. In 2017/18, the Fire & Rescue Services across the UK attended 213,782 fire incidents, of which over 50% have been attributed to arson. The estimated economic cost attributed to arson for 2017/18 is £1.49bn.

An arson attack can have a catastrophic effect on a business resulting in damage to or destruction of the premises and subsequent interruption to the business and possible loss of customers. The potential for long term damage to the business should not be underestimated. Arson should be an issue of the greatest concern for those charged with looking after the welfare and viability of any organisation.

## PROACTIVE ACTION NOW IS BETTER THAN REACTIVE ACTION WHEN IT'S TOO LATE

Most of the precautions provided in this guide are little more than common sense and good business practice.



### PRECAUTIONS

The owner/occupier of every workplace has a legal responsibility (under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 or Fire (Scotland) Act 2005) to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment. Arson should always be considered as part of this assessment giving thought to the:

- Location of the property – surrounding areas, history of vandalism.
- Vulnerability of secluded or out of sight areas.
- Types of people using or visiting the buildings.
- External storage of combustibles – raw materials, flammable liquids or gases, waste, etc.
- Adequacy of existing security to the site and buildings.
- Adequacy of existing fire safety measures.
- ◆ Deter access to the site by erecting perimeter security fencing or permanent bollards to prevent vehicle access (fly-tipping).
- ◆ Ensure all doors and windows are suitably secured with good quality locks, gaps under doors are as narrow as possible and letterboxes are fitted with an enclosed metal box on the inside.
- ◆ Ensure the buildings are protected by an intruder alarm system installed and maintained by a UKAS accredited intruder alarm company.
- ◆ Ensure any vegetation is well cut back to prevent the buildings becoming secluded or in dry conditions providing fuel for a fire.
- ◆ Install good quality external lighting.
- ◆ Consider the installation of a CCTV system with remote monitoring.
- ◆ Ensure all outbuildings are properly secured.
- ◆ Prevent access to lower/flat roofs.
- ◆ Maintain good external housekeeping standards by ensuring:
  - All waste is swept up regularly and stored in lidded non-combustible containers. Do not allow containers to overflow.
  - All waste containers, idle pallets, flammable liquids and gases, combustible goods and vehicles/trailer units are stored a minimum of 5 metres from any building. Where this is not possible, containers should be secured out of business hours.
- ◆ Provide staff with arson awareness training.
- ◆ Ensure keys are returned by ex-employees and any intruder alarm codes are changed and any other setting/unsetting devices are returned or blocked from the system.

### FURTHER GUIDANCE

**Arson Prevention Bureau** [www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk](http://www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk)

**Government Fire Safety Guidance** - [www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw) (England & Wales)  
or [www.firelawscotland.org](http://www.firelawscotland.org) (Scotland)

**Health & Safety Executive** [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)