

*LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE*

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| **ARSON VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS OF BUILDINGS** |
| **INTRODUCTION**  Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on 23 March 2020, it is imperative that people living and working in the built environment are safe, and are kept safe, regardless of the current COVID-19 lockdown conditions. Currently there is no relaxation of fire safety legislation and it is the responsibility of the Responsible Person to ensure they are testing and maintaining all fire safety measures to maintain a safe premises, although it is acknowledged that a pragmatic approach to achieve compliance may be required.  Arson is a criminal act which can lead to devastating consequences. Arson in schools is more common than some may think. In the UK there is an estimate of between 1400-1800 school fires each year, with 75% of these thought to be caused on purpose.  Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) is fully committed to providing a safer environment to all our communities and we are well aware of the impact a fire involving public buildings can have in reducing community cohesion. No building is immune from the threat of arson; therefore as a service we will promote the completion of an Arson vulnerability assessment on public buildings within Lancashire.  **AIM**  The main focus of the assessments will be for the responsible person to use their experience and knowledge of how and where these types of fires occur. This will enable them to conduct Arson Vulnerability Assessments on the building including external access to the building. The conclusions of the Arson Vulnerability Assessments will also contribute to the reduction of unauthorised access by persons who may be causing a disturbance or committing anti-social behaviour.  **GENERAL POINTS**  There are lots of ways you can deter and prevent unauthorised access to the school property:   * Staff living on site or next to the school means there is a constant monitor on the premises. * External doors and windows should have a thief resistant locking system. * Intruder alarms should be fitted, and all appropriate people should receive notification in the event of an emergency, including the security providers. * Liaising with neighbours and local schemes such as Neighbourhood watch. * CCTV should be fitted near all entrance points, plus hidden areas of the premises. * There should be an end of day procedure to ensure all exits are closed, locked and alarms are set.   Reduce the opportunity for a fire to be started  Good maintenance should be kept on site so that there are minimal things that can be used to set fire to or ignite a fire with:   * All rubbish/ recycling bins should be stored in a secure location at least 8 metres away from the building. * They should all be kept in a container made from fire resistant materials and locked. Other storage areas such as sheds should also be kept at least 8 metres away from the building to prevent spread. * All pipework should be hidden or protected. * Electric and gas metres should be in a secure environment. * Any mobile buildings should be filled at the bottom to avoid a fire being started underneath. * The school and immediate surrounding areas should be checked regularly to ensure there is nothing that could be used to start a fire.   Reduce the extent of potential fire damage  An uncontrolled fire can lead to devastating damage for the school. For example, losing school records, artefacts, notes, pupil exam work and certificates that have all been collected for many years. If a fire were to break out there needs to be a plan to minimise damage:   * Install an automatic fire detection system. * [Compartmentation](mhtml:file://\\ls031\CIFS_VDIRedirFolders\b0211\Desktop\Building%20&%20Schools%20Arson\How%20to%20minimise%20the%20risk%20of%20arson%20in%20schools%20%20Fireco.mht!https://fireco.uk/why-is-compartmentation-so-important/) (the building is built in different fire-resistant compartments). * Install and regularly check fire safety equipment e.g. fire doors, sprinkler systems and extinguishers. * Keep all property of high value in a secure location where the contents will be protected and can be retrieved. * All staff should be fire trained, there should be appointed fire marshals, and there should be someone responsible for checking all fire safety in the building. * It is important to consider these points to ensure that your school building, its content and its people are safe from the risk of arson.   If these points are put into action, it could help to reduce the overall amount of school fires and prevent the devastating damage that a fire can cause |

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| **GUIDANCE FOR ARSON VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS**  **4 POINT ACTION PLAN** |
| The checklist below will give you the opportunity to identify any risks and put interim measures in place to reduce Arson. The list is not exhaustive and should you require any further information then please contact the following:  [BSA@lancsfirerescue.org.uk](mailto:BSA@lancsfirerescue.org.uk)   * **Deter unauthorised entry**    + **Restricted access to site by means of security fencing etc**   + **Use of warning signs**   + **Use of neighbourhood watch/patrollers**   + **Good lighting (sodium is better at illuminating large areas and is cheaper to run)**   + **Random security patrols** * **Prevent unauthorised access into the building** * **Alcoves and recesses gated or illuminated** * **Doors and windows (laminated / toughened or shuttered or timber steel sheeting) – maintained with adequate security especially those out of view** * **Roof lights – access to roofs restricted, internal grill bars external boarding etc** * **CCTV use** * **Reduce the opportunity for an arsonist to start a fire** * **Remove combustible materials** * **Secure refuse containers and contain in a secure compound or secure with a padlock and chain no less than 8m from the building** * **CBM and PCSO’s aware of empty property to provide visual presence when in the area** * **Reduce the scope for potential fire damage** * **Are combustible items positioned clear of buildings should fire occur** * **During demolition renovation/building work are fire risks identified and reduced** * **Services and ducts into building are adequately stopped** |

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| **ARSON VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT**  **SITE SURVEY** | | | |
| Is the site easily accessible to the public, and is trespassing a potential problem. E.g. not a secure site, is it bounded by a substantial fence (2m in height) with lockable access | **Observations** | **Recommendations** |
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| Are all parts of the building perimeter overlooked by surrounding houses |  |  |
| Is the external perimeter of the building (doors/windows/roofs) vulnerable to intruders e.g. recessed doorways may need gates fitting etc |  |  |
| Is combustible waste placed in a secure bin or bin store sited away from building and regularly emptied |  |  |
| Are buildings and other vulnerable areas sufficiently illuminated |  |  |
| Is the building monitored by CCTV (local shops or dedicated local authority cameras) |  |  |

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| **ARSON VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT**  **SITE SURVEY CONTINUED** | | |
| Are there any signs of ownership to enable advice to be given | **Observations** | **Recommendations** |
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| Is the building fitted with an intruder alarm (monitored or unmonitored) |  |  |
| Is the building patrolled e.g. PCSO`s External Security Company. |  |  |

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| **ARSON VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT**  **HISTORY** | | |
| Is there past history or evidence of vandalism | **Observations** | **Recommendations** |
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| Have the Fire Service attended previous fires at the building or the immediate area |  |  |
| Is there evidence of attempted entry into building by unauthorised people |  |  |
| Evidence of drug or alcohol use in close proximity |  |  |
| * + - **Any past incidents of hostilities towards the establishment** |  |  |

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| **Responsible Persons Additional Comments** |