

Foreword



Advice has been published in recent years on fire safety in a wide variety of premises such as hostels, hotels, guesthouses, nursing homes, flats and places of assembly. This Guide to fire safety in premises used for pre-school services is now added to the series of fire safety publications.

The Guide sets out general principles of safety which should be applied having regard to the individual circumstances of each premises. The recommendations in this Guide are advisory only and are not statutory requirements. However, the provisions of the Guide, if carefully applied, should minimise the occurrence of fires in these premises and the potential for fatalities, injuries and damage.

I strongly urge providers of pre-school services to study and apply the guidance contained in this publication.

Tá comhairle foilsithe sna blianta beaga anuas maidir le sábháilteacht dhóiteáin i réimse leathan de áitribh mar bhrúnna, óstáin, tithe lóistín, tithe altranais, árasáin agus áiteanna tionóla. Anois tá an Treoir seo faoi shábháilteacht dhóiteáin in áitribh a úsáidtear do sheirbhísí réamhscolaíochta curtha le sraith na bhfoilseachán faoi shábháilteacht dhóiteáin.

Leagann an Treoir amach prionsabail ghinearálta ar shábháilteacht ba chóir do chur i bhfeidhm, ag tabhairt aird ar na cúinsí éagsúla de gach áitreabh. Tá na moltaí sa Treoir seo mar chomhairle amháin agus níl bonn reachtúil ag baint leo. Ach má chloítear go cúramach le forálacha na Treorach seo, ba chóir go mbeadh ladhdú suntasach ar líon na dtinte sna háitribh seo agus ar an bpoitéinsiúil do bhásanna, do ghortaithe agus do dhamáiste.

Molaim go mór do lucht soláthar sheirbhísí réamhscolaíochta staidéar do dhéanamh ar an gcomhairle atá san fhoilseachán seo agus í do chur i bhfeidhm.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noel Dempsey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Noel Dempsey, T.D.,
Minister for the Environment and Local Government
April, 1999

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Guide

The Fire Services Act, 1981 applies to premises used for the purpose of recreation or instruction, teaching or training, and to premises used for any purpose involving access to the premises by members of the public, whether on payment or otherwise.

Part VII of the Child Care Act, 1991 provides for the supervision and inspection by health boards of pre-school services. The Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996 and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997 give effect to the provisions of Part VII of the Child Care Act, 1991. These Regulations set out various requirements to be complied with by persons carrying on pre-school services for the purpose of securing the health, safety and welfare and promoting the development of pre-school children. The Regulations apply to **pre-school services** which *"means any pre-school, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service"* which caters for children under 6 years of age and who are *"not attending a national school or a school providing an educational programme similar to a national school"*.

The Fire Services Act, 1981 therefore is interpreted as applying to all premises used for pre-school services and persons in control of these premises have general obligations with regard to fire safety under the Act.

1.2 Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this Guide is to assist persons in control of premises used for **pre-school services** in discharging their statutory responsibilities under the Fire Services Act, 1981. In particular, the Act provides that :

persons in control of these premises are required :

- to take *"all reasonable measures"* to guard against the outbreak of fire on the premises; and
- in the event of a fire occurring, to ensure *"as far as is reasonably practicable"* the safety of the children and staff on the premises.

The Guide expands on the fire safety duties contained in articles 16 and 27 of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996.

The Guide will also assist Health Board personnel carrying out inspections under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996, and fire service personnel carrying out inspections under the Fire Services Act, 1981.

While the Guide is aimed primarily at persons in control such as owners, occupiers and managers, it is also relevant to staff, parents and maintenance personnel.

1.3 Premises to which the Guide applies

The Guide applies to all premises used for **pre-school services**.

***Pre-school services** includes pre-schools, play groups, day nurseries, crèches, day-care or other similar services which cater for children (including children with disabilities) under 6 years of age and who are not attending a national school or a school providing an educational programme similar to a national school.*

1.4 Scope of the Guide

The Guide addresses fire safety in premises used for pre-school services. Fire safety in such premises is achieved by means of a combination of :

- an effective fire safety management policy (see Chapter 2); and
- the provision of adequate fire safety features in the premises (see Chapter 3).

Fire safety management policy involves an ongoing programme of measures aimed at reducing the risk of a fire occurring; and where a fire occurs the measures undertaken ensure that staff are able to respond effectively in ensuring the safety of children and others on the premises.

Adequate fire safety features include a range of measures required to ensure that should a fire occur it will be detected at an early stage; the spread of the fire will be restricted; and that there are adequate means of escape to enable children and staff to safely evacuate the premises.

1.5 Interpretation

Users of the Guide are advised that the interpretation and application of the more technical recommendations in Chapter 3 of the Guide should be entrusted to suitably qualified and competent persons.

It is recognised that pre-school services are provided in many different building types and there will be a need for flexibility in the implementation of the Guide's recommendations in particular cases. The provisions of the document are an aid to, and not a substitute for, professional judgement and common sense.

This Guide refers to a number of technical standards and codes of practice. Users of the Guide are advised to refer to the latest edition of a standard or code, together with any published amendments.

1.6 Legal Provisions

The primary legislation relating to fire safety in buildings in Ireland is the ***Fire Services Act, 1981*** and Regulations made under this Act. In addition to specifying general obligations with regard to fire safety, the Act empowers persons authorised by a fire authority to inspect a premises for the purposes of the Act.

The ***Building Control Act, 1990*** and associated Regulations apply minimum standards to the design and construction, extensions/alterations and changes of use of existing buildings. Part B of the Building Regulations, 1997 details the fire safety requirements to be complied with. Part III of the Building Control Regulations sets out the requirements relating to the need to obtain a fire safety certificate. A fire safety certificate is required in respect of most buildings and in cases where buildings (including dwellings) undergo a change of use to a new use such as pre-schools, crèches, etc. Technical Guidance Document B (Fire Safety), which accompanies the Regulations, provides guidance on how to comply with the Part B requirements. Responsibility for complying with the building regulations rests primarily with the owners, designers and builders of buildings. Local building control authorities are responsible for overseeing compliance with the regulations and have powers of inspections and can, where necessary, undertake enforcement action to ensure compliance.

The ***Child Care Act, 1991***, the ***Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996***, the ***Child Care (Pre-School Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997*** and the ***Explanatory Guide to Requirements and Procedures for Notification and Inspection*** also contain fire safety provisions.

The ***Tobacco (Health Promotion and Protection) Regulations, 1995*** prohibits consumption of tobacco products in any part of a pre-school, crèche, play-group, day nursery or other service which caters for pre-school children.

The ***Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989*** is also relevant, in the context of a pre-school service being a place of work. Further information on this legislation is available from the Health and Safety Authority, 10 Hogan Place, Dublin 2.

Chapter 2 Fire Safety Management

2.1 Introduction

Fire safety in premises used for pre-school services is achieved by means of a combination of an effective fire safety management policy and the provision of adequate fire safety features in the premises (see Chapter 3). This Chapter deals with the fire safety management policy.

An effective fire safety management policy is required to minimise the risk of fires occurring, and where a fire or other emergency occurs to ensure that children and staff on the premises are evacuated safely and without delay (see Article 27 of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996). To implement this policy, a fire safety programme should be put in place.

A member of staff should be assigned responsibility for the implementation and overseeing of the fire safety programme.

Many of the elements in the fire safety programme relate to good house-keeping and can generally be implemented without significant cost implications. Nevertheless they form an essential component of fire safety.

2.2 Fire Safety Programme

The fire safety programme for a premises used for pre-school services should be outlined in a brief written statement and incorporate arrangements for the following :

- preventing outbreaks of fire (see Section 2.3);
- instruction and training of staff on fire prevention and fire safety procedures (see Section 2.4);
- emergency procedures and evacuation drills (see Section 2.5);
- maintenance of fire protection equipment (see Section 2.6);
- maintenance of building services (see Section 2.7);
- providing appropriate furnishings and fittings including bedding (see Section 2.8);
- availability of escape routes (see Section 2.9); and
- keeping of fire safety records (see Section 2.10).

2.3 Fire Prevention Measures

Fire prevention measures help to reduce or eliminate the risk of fires occurring. These measures should include the following :

- preventing the accumulation of waste materials;
- ensuring that electrical and gas appliances are in safe working condition;
- ensuring that upholstered seating is in good condition;
- ensuring that open-fires or portable heating appliances are not used, and that all heat emitting surfaces are suitably protected by a fixed safety guard or are thermostatically controlled to ensure safe surface temperatures;
- ensuring that waste receptacles such as dustbins should be made from non-combustible materials;
- ensuring that cooking equipment is safely used (deep-fat frying is not advisable); and
- ensuring that flammable liquids or gases are not stored inside the building.

2.4 Staff Training

Staff should receive instruction and training on fire prevention and fire safety procedures. This training will enable them to respond effectively in ensuring the safety of children and others on the premises in the event of a fire occurring. The instruction and training should include the following :

- undertaking the fire prevention measures indicated in Section 2.3 above;
- undertaking the emergency procedures and evacuation drills (see Section 2.5);
- using fire-fighting equipment in a safe manner (see Section 2.5);
- being aware of the fire detection and alarm facilities (see Section 3.4);
- being familiar with the fire protection equipment (see Section 2.6); and
- ensuring the availability of escape routes (see Section 2.9).

Details of all staff training should be recorded in the fire safety register for the premises (see Section 2.10).

2.5 Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Drills

If a fire or other emergency occurs in a premises it is essential that staff are able to respond effectively by alerting the fire brigade and evacuating the premises safely and without delay. Procedures should be in place to facilitate this and there should be a sufficient number of staff available at all times to carry out the procedures effectively.

The age of the children, their familiarity with the building, the accommodation of children with disabilities, and whether children are asleep on the premises, all effect the ease with which a premises can be evacuated. Any sleeping children should be given a high priority in the evacuation procedure.

An evacuation/fire drill should be carried out in the premises at regular intervals. This should preferably be done on a monthly basis and at the start of each new school year. A record should be maintained in the fire safety register of all drills carried out (see Section 2.10). The drill should include a complete evacuation of the children from the premises to a place of safety in the open air. For this purpose a pre-arranged assembly point should be designated. When the premises are evacuated, a roll call should be taken to ensure that both children and staff are accounted for. The roll book (see Article 14 of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996) should be available at the assembly point and arrangements should be made for this.

Each drill should be reviewed after it is carried out to identify any shortcomings in the emergency procedures and the procedures should be revised if necessary.

It may be possible, by the use of fire-fighting equipment such as a fire extinguisher or fire blanket (where it is safe to do so), to control or extinguish a very small fire incident, but any such intervention should not delay evacuation or calling the fire brigade.

Formalised procedures to be put in place should include :

- what to do on discovering a fire;
- what to do on hearing an alarm or other warning;
- how to conduct an evacuation of children and staff from the premises; and
- when to call the fire brigade (dial 999 or 112) and who should do this.

An example of such procedures is given in Appendix A.

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire or other emergency should be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

As far as is practicable, both children and staff should know the evacuation and other procedures to be followed in the event of a fire or other emergency.

2.6 Maintenance of Fire Protection Equipment

All fire protection equipment provided should be in good working order. Staff should be familiar with the use of such equipment. Visual inspection by a member of staff will determine that the equipment is in place and is ready to use if required. However, it is important to ensure that maintenance is carried out at the required intervals in accordance with the relevant standards. For this purpose, arrangements should be made with competent service companies.

Guidance on the provision of fire extinguishers including the type to be used and the numbers required for premises, their periodic inspection and maintenance requirements is contained in *I.S. 291 : 1986 : The Use, Siting, Inspection and Maintenance of Portable Fire Extinguishers*.

Fire alarm systems (see Section 3.4) also require to be tested regularly and maintained to ensure correct operation. Guidance on inspection and maintenance of fire alarm systems of the domestic type is contained in *BS 5839 : Part 6 : 1995 : Code of practice for the design and installation of fire detection and alarm systems in dwellings*. Self-contained smoke alarms should be tested at least monthly to ensure operation of the sounders, by the use of the test button provided on the units. All alarms should be tested at least once a year to ensure that they respond to smoke. For fire alarm systems of the non-domestic type, the relevant guidance is contained in *I.S. 3218 : 1989 : Code of Practice for Fire Detection and Alarm Systems in Buildings - System Design, Installation and Servicing*.

Details relating to the number, type, location and maintenance record of fire-fighting and other fire protection equipment should be recorded in the fire safety register for the premises (see Section 2.10).

2.7 Maintenance of Building Services

Arrangements should be made with competent service companies for periodic checking of electrical installation and appliances, gas installations and appliances and the central heating system (see Section 3.6). A record of these checks, as well as any maintenance work carried out, should be recorded in the fire safety register.

Material alterations or works to which the Building Regulations apply should be in accordance with the requirements of the building control system (see Section 1.6).

Where works are being carried out on the premises, adequate fire prevention measures should be in place and care should be taken to ensure that an adequate level of fire safety is maintained during construction works, and that the works are supervised to ensure that they do not contribute/cause an outbreak of fire.

2.8 Furnishings and Fittings

Furnishings and fittings should be of a standard that they cannot be ignited easily or do not contribute to the rapid spread of fire. Items that need to be considered include upholstered seating, curtains, drapes and blinds and floor coverings. Guidance on the appropriate standards for these is contained in the Code of Practice for Fire Safety of Furnishings and Fittings in Places of Assembly published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government and available from the Government Publications Sale Office.

Beds may be ignited by flaming and/or smouldering ignition sources such as matches, cigarettes, radiant heaters or by electric blankets. As a general functional requirement, bedding materials should not easily ignite and, if ignition does occur, fire should not spread.

Particular care should be taken with decorations, especially during Christmas and other special events. The use of flammable materials (e.g. foam, straw, etc.) should be strictly controlled and flammable decorations should not be in close proximity to any possible ignition source.

2.9 Escape Routes

In the event of a fire or other emergency occurring, children and others on the premises should be able to evacuate the premises quickly and safely by way of escape routes (including corridors, hallways, stairways, exit doors, etc.) protected from fire and smoke and free from obstruction.

The following precautions should be taken in relation to all escape routes :

- escape routes are clearly indicated;
- escape routes are not obstructed and are available for use at all times;
- doors and gates across escape routes are secured in a manner that they can be easily and immediately opened;
- exit doors are capable of being readily and easily opened at all times;
- external areas at or near exits are never obstructed; and
- security arrangements for the premises do not impede or prevent the use of escape routes.

2.10 Fire Safety Records

The keeping of fire safety records (see Article 16 of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996) is an important element of the fire safety programme and for this purpose, a fire safety register for the premises should be established and maintained. The register should contain a complete record of all fire safety matters on the premises, it should be kept up to date and available for inspection if required.

The register should contain the following information :

- the name of the person/organisation providing the pre-school service;
- the name of the person responsible for operating the pre-school service;
- the name of the premises;
- the address of the premises;
- the name of the person responsible for the fire safety programme;
- the name of the person(s) responsible for calling the fire brigade;
- the number of children being catered for;
- a plan of each floor of the premises (ideally A4 or A3 size format);
- details of staff training;
- details of evacuation/fire drills;
- details of fire-fighting and other fire protection equipment; and
- details of inspections, testing and maintenance of building services.

A sample Fire Safety Register is given in Appendix A.

Chapter 3 *Fire Safety Features*

3.1 **Introduction**

As outlined in Section 1.4, fire safety is achieved by means of a combination of an effective fire safety management policy (see Chapter 2) and other features related to the premises, which are the subject of this Chapter.

This Chapter describes the principal fire safety features which are considered necessary for all premises used for pre-school services.

Some premises used for pre-school services are either built specifically for that purpose, or the premises are the subject of a material change of use or material alteration of an existing building. The fire safety requirements of Part B of the Building Regulations and associated Building Control Regulations are applicable in these cases (see Section 1.6).

Because of the range of premises that are used for pre-school services, a guide such as this can only describe the fire safety features that arise for some of the more general situations. By the nature of the areas covered, it is necessary to refer in a number of instances to some technical terms and standards, which may require further explanation and interpretation. For these reasons, individual assessment of the adequacy of the fire safety features of individual premises may be required.

3.2 **Principal Fire Safety Features**

The purpose of the fire safety features in premises used for pre-school services is to ensure that should a fire occur :

- there are adequate means of escape to enable children and staff to evacuate the premises safely (see Section 3.3);
- the fire will be detected at an early stage (see Section 3.4); and
- the fire will not develop quickly and its spread will be restricted (see Section 3.5).

To reduce the risk of accidental fires, building services such as the electrical installation, gas services and the heating system should be installed to the appropriate standards (see Section 3.6). It is also important that these building services are adequately maintained as outlined in Section 2.7.

3.3 Means of Escape

3.3.1 Introduction

The term **means of escape** relates to the physical means whereby a safe route(s) is provided for the occupants of the premises to escape to a place of safety. Means of escape includes the internal escape routes, the final exits to the outside of the building, and any external routes required to reach a place of safety.

The extent of the means of escape requirements for premises used for pre-school services depends on its size, complexity and on the number and range of children being catered for.

In the event of a fire, sleeping children and infants require assistance for evacuation, whereas older children can be evacuated under supervision with minimal assistance. Special consideration is also required for the safe evacuation of children with disabilities.

Early detection of a fire is essential to ensure that safe evacuation and other emergency procedures take place as quickly as possible. A fire alarm system (see Section 3.4) is required to give early warning of an outbreak of fire so that the escape routes can be safely used before conditions develop to a stage where they may become unusable due to smoke and fire.

3.3.2 Escape Routes

Escape routes may be by way of a door leading directly to a place of safety outside the premises, or may be by way of a hallway, a corridor, or a stairway in the case of an upper storey. All escape routes must lead to a place of safety in the open air at ground floor level.

If a fire occurs on the premises, the escape routes should not be threatened at the early stages, while the evacuation is taking place. An exit door leading directly to the outside provides the most effective and safest means of escape. Where a direct exit is not possible, an escape route which will not be rendered unusable in the early stages of a fire will also be satisfactory. If there is only one escape route from a room or area this should not be through another room, because a fire in the outer room would make this single escape route unusable.

Escape routes should meet certain criteria in relation to travel distance, availability of alternative escape routes, protection from fire, etc., and these are outlined in the following paragraphs.

3.3.3 Travel Distance

To enable evacuation of the premises to be completed before the escape routes are endangered by fire and smoke, the distance to be travelled on an escape route before reaching a place of safety should be limited. The extent of this limitation depends on :

- whether children are active, sleeping or are infants; and
- whether there is a single escape route or there are alternative escape routes available (see Section 3.3.4).

The appropriate travel distance limits for premises used for pre-school services are indicated in Table 3.3.3.

Table 3.3.3		
Limitations on Travel Distance		
	Maximum Travel Distance (metres)	
Available Escape Routes	Active Children	Sleeping Children, Infants
Single Escape Route	18 m	10 m
Alternative Escape Routes	45 m	20 m

3.3.4 Alternative Escape Routes

As a general principle, there should be alternative escape routes from premises used for pre-school services. However, it may not be possible to provide alternative escape routes from all individual rooms or areas in the premises.

Alternative escape routes are required where the travel distance for a single escape route indicated in Table 3.3.3 is exceeded or where the number of children in any room/area exceeds 20.

In general, alternative escape routes can be readily provided from ground floor premises. These routes may be by way of an exit door directly to the outside of the premises, through a hallway, or by way of a corridor which is protected from fire and smoke by fire resisting construction.

Where any basement or lower-ground floor areas are part of a premises used for pre-school services, these areas should be provided with alternative escape routes by means of independent protected escape stairways, or directly to the outside in the case of lower-ground storeys.

Upper storeys of premises used for pre-school services require alternative escape routes by way of protected escape stairways, suitably located to observe the limitations on travel distance outlined in Table 3.3.3. However a single escape route from an upper storey is acceptable in the case of :

- (a) a premises with a single protected escape stairway which meets the conditions outlined below; or
- (b) a dwelling house used to provide the childminder category of pre-school services outlined below.

A **single protected escape stairway** is acceptable where all the following conditions are met :

- the premises consists of a ground floor storey and one upper storey at the first floor level;
- not more than 20 children (who are not sleeping) are accommodated on the upper storey;
- the travel distance to the escape stairway does not exceed the limitation on travel distance for single escape routes (see Table 3.3.3);
- the protected escape stairway is in accordance with the requirements of Section 3.3.5; and
- a fire alarm system which complies with the recommendations outlined in Section 3.4.3 is provided.

A **dwelling house** with a single escape stairway is acceptable where all the following conditions are met :

- the dwelling house is used to provide the childminder category of pre-school services [The childminder category is where childminders look after children in the childminder's own home. *"A childminder looks after children (no more than 6 children including her own who are aged under 6 years of age and no more than 3 of these should be under 1 year of age) in the childminder's own home."];*

- in the case of a two storey dwelling house, the stairway is enclosed by means of storey-height construction, which need not be fire resisting, and discharges directly to the open air at ground level; where the stairway is not enclosed, the pre-school service should be restricted to the ground storey;
- in the case of a three storey dwelling house, the stairway is a protected stairway in accordance with the requirements of Section 3.3.5; and
- a fire alarm system which complies with the recommendations outlined in Section 3.4.2 is provided.

3.3.5 Protected Escape Stairways

Protected escape stairways are stairways which are protected from the effects of fire in the adjacent accommodation by means of fire resisting construction. All such stairways should lead directly to a place of safety outside the building at the ground floor level.

Fire resisting construction is generally specified by reference to a time (in minutes) in a standard fire resistance test i.e. when tested to *BS 476 : Fire tests on building materials and structures : Parts 20 to 24*. The minimum fire resistance requirements for the enclosure to a protected stairway and for protected corridors should be 30 minutes. Fire doors to protected stairways should have appropriate cold smoke seals and be fitted with self-closing devices.

3.3.6 Windows

Windows do not form part of the means of escape from a premises. However it is advisable, as a secondary provision and wherever practicable, that habitable rooms in premises used for pre-school services i.e. any room other than a kitchen, utility room, store room, bathroom, or toilet, have a window which is suitable for escape or rescue. The opening section of the window should be approximately 850 mm high and 500 mm wide and the bottom of the opening should be between 800 mm and 1100 mm above the floor.

It will be appreciated that windows can also present a risk to children and that protection against falling from windows is required. However such provisions should not prevent the supervised use of windows as a secondary means of escape or for rescue, should such actions be considered necessary.

3.3.7 Provisions for Children with Disabilities

The evacuation of children with disabilities, such as impaired mobility, sight or hearing, requires special consideration. Guidance on the provision of means of escape for disabled persons is contained in *BS 5588: Part 8: 1988: Code of practice for means of escape for disabled people*. The principles outlined in this standard are based on the provision of refuge areas and the management of evacuation.

3.4 Fire Alarms

3.4.1 Introduction

A fire alarm system is required in every premises used for pre-school services to give early warning of an outbreak of fire and to ensure that the escape routes can be safely used.

A fire alarm is comprised of a number of components, such as detectors, bells, wiring and control mechanism. Some fire alarm systems, such as those based on self-contained units (see Section 3.4.2) have some of these components combined. The extent and type of system required depend on the size and complexity of the premises.

For single storey premises where less than 20 children are accommodated, a fire alarm system based on self-contained units will be sufficient (see Section 3.4.2), while larger and multi-storey premises will generally require a more comprehensive system (see Section 3.4.3). Dwelling houses used for the childminder category of pre-school services (see Section 3.3.4) should have a fire alarm system based on self-contained units.

3.4.2 Self-Contained Fire Alarm Systems

A fire alarm system based on self-contained units should be provided in accordance with *BS 5839 : Part 6 : 1995 : Code of practice for the design and installation of fire detection and alarm systems in dwellings*.

This standard refers to different grades of systems and types of fire detection and alarm systems which can provide varying levels of protection. The grade of system (grades A to F) principally concerns the nature of detector and alarm units employed while the types of fire detection and alarm systems (types LD1 to LD3) relates to the extent of the detector coverage provided by the system.

For premises used for pre-school services, the grade of system should be at least Grade D; this grade is based on the provision of one or more mains-powered smoke alarms (smoke detector and alarm sounder in a self-contained unit), each provided with an

integral standby power supply. It should be noted that Grade F systems, which are based on battery-powered smoke alarms, are considered to be inadequate for such premises.

For premises used for pre-school services, the type of fire detection and alarm system should meet the minimum requirements for an LD2 system. The LD2 system incorporates suitably located and interconnected Grade D detectors in all circulation areas that form part of the escape routes and in all rooms or areas, such as kitchens and living rooms, that could present a high fire risk. However, depending on the size of the premises and the particular circumstances, a higher level of protection may be required.

3.4.3 Other Fire Alarm Systems

A fire alarm system in accordance with the recommendations of *I.S. 3218 : 1989 : Code of Practice for Fire Detection and Alarm Systems for Buildings - System Design, Installation and Servicing* should be provided in the following situations :

- a single storey premises where more than 20 children are accommodated; and
- a multi-storey premises, except in the case of a dwelling house used for the childminder category of pre-school services (see Section 3.3.4).

Fire alarm systems based on *I.S. 3218* incorporate manual call points for raising the alarm, alarm sounders, automatic detection of smoke/heat by suitably located detectors, control and indicating equipment, and cabling. The fire alarm system employed should meet the requirements for a type L2 life safety system, as defined in *I.S. 3218*.

3.5 Fire Separation and Internal Linings

3.5.1 Fire Separation

Certain areas in premises such as store rooms, laundries and kitchens present an increased risk of fire. Should a fire occur in these areas, it is important that its spread is restricted, especially at the initial stages when early warning and implementation of emergency procedures are required. It is important that the fire alarm system for the premises (see Section 3.4) is capable of detecting a fire in these high risk areas.

A pre-school service may be provided in a premises attached to a dwelling house or may be part of a larger premises with a number of different uses and occupancies. Should a fire occur in these other areas, it is important that it will be detected at an early stage and that it will not spread quickly to the premises used for pre-school services. The fire alarm system used should be capable of detecting such an outbreak of fire.

The principal method of restricting the spread of fire between different parts of a building is for certain floors, walls and doors to have an appropriate level of fire resistance. These include the elements of construction which separate different uses/occupancies and any high risk areas from the part of the premises used for pre-school services. The floors between different storeys within the building also require fire resistance. The minimum fire resistance requirements for such elements of construction is 30 minutes, but a higher level of performance may be required in some situations. However, a dwelling house used for the childminder category of pre-school services (see Section 3.3.4) may not require any special provisions in this context.

The requirements for fire separation and fire resistance for elements of construction generally require individual assessment, depending on the particular circumstances. Guidance on fire resistance performance of elements of structure, doors and other forms of construction is contained in Technical Guidance Document B (Fire Safety) to the Building Regulations, 1997.

3.5.2 Internal Linings

The internal walls and ceilings of a building can influence the spread and severity of a fire. For this reason, controls are required on the combustibility and surface spread of flame characteristics of these lining materials. Guidance on these matters is contained in Technical Guidance Document B (Fire Safety) to the Building Regulations, 1997.

It is recommended that the standards contained in Technical Guidance Document B (Fire Safety) apply to all premises used for pre-school services. It is important that materials are not added to the surfaces of walls and ceilings that would alter their required fire performance.

3.6 Building Services

3.6.1 Introduction

Building services such as electrical, gas and heating are potential sources of fire, and equipment associated with them should be installed and maintained in accordance with the relevant standards and codes of practice.

3.6.2 Electrical Services

Fire can be caused by defective or inadequate electrical installations or by the use of defective electrical equipment. The electrical installation comprising wiring, sockets, switches, distribution boards and other equipment should be in accordance with the *National Rules for Electrical Installations (ET 101)* published by the Electro-Technical Council of Ireland.

Electrical appliances should conform with a standard appropriate at the time of manufacture such as the relevant parts of *I.S. 205 : Part 1 : 1980 : Safety of household and similar electrical appliances (General Requirements)*. Commercial electrical catering equipment should comply with the relevant parts of *BS 5784 : Safety of electrical commercial catering equipment*.

Where pre-school services (except the childminder category of pre-school services referred to in Section 3.3.4) are provided during the hours of darkness suitable emergency lighting should be provided in accordance with *I.S. 3217 : 1989 : Code of Practice for Emergency Lighting*.

3.6.3 Gas Installations

All gas installations, storage tanks, pipe lines, gas burning flues and other equipment should be installed, fitted and maintained in accordance with the appropriate standards, including *I.S. 813 : 1996 : Domestic Gas Installations*.

3.6.4 Heating

Heating appliances and open fires are a potential source of ignition. Open fires are not recommended in premises used for pre-school services and an appropriate central heating system is desirable. Portable heating appliances of any type are not suitable for these premises. Individual heating appliances, where provided, should be fixed in position and should be of a type which does not have an exposed flame or heating element which could provide an ignition source. All heat emitting surfaces should be suitably protected by a fixed safety guard or are thermostatically controlled to ensure safe surface temperatures. All heating appliances and installations should be in safe working order and be properly maintained.

Guidance on the installation of heat-producing appliances, including provisions for adequate air supplies, flues, protection of buildings, etc., is contained in Technical Guidance Document J (Heat Producing Appliances) to the Building Regulations, 1997.

The Fire Safety Register should contain the following :

- Details of Premises;
- Emergency and Evacuation Procedures;
- Evacuation/Fire Drills;
- Staff Training;
- Fire-Fighting Equipment;
- Fire Alarm Systems;
- Fire Doors;
- Emergency Lighting; and
- Building Services.

Details of Premises

Name of Person/Organisation providing the Pre-School Service _____

Name of Person responsible for operating the Pre-School Service _____

Name of Premises _____

Address of Premises

Name of Person responsible for the Fire Safety Programme _____

Name of Person(s) responsible for calling the Fire Brigade _____

Telephone Number of Premises _____

Number of Children being catered for _____

Plan of Premises

A plan of each floor of the premises should be included in the Fire Safety Register. The plan should ideally be in A4 or A3 size format.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

Discovering a fire

What to do ?

- Raise the alarm by (give details)
- Phone the fire brigade from the nearest phone (dial 112 or 999) giving the following details :

Name of the Premises _____

Address of the Premises _____

Location of the Premises _____

Nature of the Fire _____

On hearing an alarm or other warning

What to do ?

- Instructions will be given by the person in charge of each room/area.
- Form a single file, leave the room and go directly to the Assembly Point at _____
- Conduct a roll-call

Remember

- **Do not return for anything that you may have forgotten.**
- **Do not stop to collect personal belongings.**
- **Do not open a door if you suspect a fire on the other side.**
- **Do not re-enter the building until advised to do so by the fire brigade.**

Evacuation/Fire Drills

Date of Drill	Time of Drill	Description of Drill (including names of participating staff)	Comments

Staff Training

Name of Staff Member	Training Details	Date of Training

Fire-Fighting Equipment

Type	Location	Description of Inspection and Maintenance Work	Date and Signature

Fire Alarm Systems

System Description

Name of Installer

(Attach completion certificates, if available)

Location of Equipment	Description of Inspection and Maintenance Work	Date and Signature

Fire Doors

Location	Self-Closing Device	Inspection Details	Date Inspected and Signature

Emergency Lighting
(Attach completion certificates, if available)

Description	Location of Emergency Lighting Fittings	Description of Inspection and Maintenance Work	Date and Signature

Building Services
Electrical Installation, Gas Installation and Heating System
(Attached completion certificates, if available)

Description	Description of Inspection and Maintenance Work	Date and Signature

Fire Services Act, 1981

Code of Practice for the Management of Fire Safety in Places of Assembly

Code of Practice for Fire Safety of Furnishings and Fittings in Places of Assembly

Building Control Act, 1990

Building Regulations, 1997

Building Control Regulations, 1997

Technical Guidance Document B (Fire Safety) to the Building Regulations, 1997

Technical Guidance Document J (Heat Producing Appliances) to the Building Regulations, 1997

Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996

Child Care (Pre-School Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997

Tobacco (Health Promotion and Protection) Regulations, 1995

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989

The above list of publications are available from the Government Publications Sale Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

National Rules for Electrical Installations (ET101) (2nd Edition, 1991) - *available from the Electro-Technical Council of Ireland, Parnell Avenue, Harolds Cross, Dublin 12.*

Irish Standards - *available from the Standards Sales Office, National Standards Authority of Ireland, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.*

British Standards - *available from Customer Services, British Standards Institution, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4BR, England.*

National Standards Authority of Ireland (Irish Standards)

I.S. 205	Safety of Household and Similar Electrical Appliances Part 1 :1980 General Requirements
I.S. 291 : 1986	The Use, Siting, Inspection and Maintenance of Portable Fire Extinguishers
I.S. 813 : 1996	Domestic Gas Installations
I.S. 3217 : 1989	Code of Practice for Emergency Lighting
I.S. 3218 : 1989	Code of Practice for Fire Detection and Alarm Systems for Buildings - System Design, Installation and Servicing

British Standards Institution (British Standards)

BS 476 :	Fire tests on building materials and structures
Part 6 : 1989	Method of test for fire propagation for products
Part 20 : 1987	Method for determination of the fire resistance of elements of construction (general principles)
Part 21 : 1987	Methods for determination of the fire resistance of loadbearing elements of construction
Part 22 : 1987	Methods for determination of the fire resistance of non-loadbearing elements of construction
Part 23 : 1987	Methods for determination of the contribution of components to the fire resistance of a structure
Part 24 : 1987	Method for determination of the fire resistance of ventilation ducts
BS 5588	Fire precautions in the design, construction and use of buildings
Part 8 : 1988	Code of practice for means of escape for disabled people
BS 5839 :	Fire detection and alarm systems for buildings
Part 1 : 1988	Code of practice for system design, installation and servicing
Part 6 : 1995	Code of practice for the design and installation of fire detection and alarm systems in dwellings
BS 5784	Safety of electrical commercial catering equipment