

FIRE SAFETY

NAReS has reviewed the HSE guidance on fire safety in order to produce a guidance note for re-enactors. Until this extensive work is complete the following interim guidance is recommended to all NAReS members.

Interim NAReS fire safety guidance

NAReS reminds all Member Groups that activities must be risk-assessed and that Groups must liaise with the Responsible Person. The Responsible Person will usually be the premises owner or a person appointed by the premises owner with sufficient powers to ensure the safety of the venue and of the event. The Responsible Person may appoint competent assistants to help ensure the safety of the event. The members of each Group have a responsibility to comply with the instructions issued by the Responsible Person (and his/her appointed assistants) in respect of Fire Safety issues as well as general Health and Safety matters.

Further guidelines on fire risk assessment and fire precautions

The Responsible Person is under an obligation to take “general fire precautions” and, in particular, to provide adequate means to warn of a fire and to ensure that all persons legally present on the premises can be safely evacuated. Where this involves disabled persons, adequate measures must be in place to ensure their safe and timely evacuation.

If adequate measures cannot be secured by “reasonable adjustments” (e.g. moving displays so that they are accessible by surfaced pathways and to avoid steps), the Responsible Person must make arrangements to limit the number of persons who may require assistance to the resources available to effect an evacuation.

The principles of Risk Assessment apply to matters concerning fire and should be followed. Any departure from the published guidance is to be recorded, justified and shown to be reasonable in the Fire Risk Assessment. Responsibility for any such departures lies with both the Responsible Person and the person effecting the change. If the change is questioned and, in particular, where harm results as a consequence of the change, it will be for the Responsible Person, and others involved, to show that the change was not reckless or unreasonable. Failure to do so may render parties involved liable to criminal and civil action.

Fire Risk Assessments need not necessarily include all conditions pertaining to an event. Where events are organised and run according to a pre-existing plan, the Fire Risk Assessment may refer to this plan without quoting the detail – provided, of course, the plan is available if required. However, any assistants nominated by the Responsible Person are to be named, and their responsibilities detailed, for each

event. Further guidance is available, depending upon the type of venue, in the publications:

- HSE Fire Safety at Events- link
- HSE Fire Safety - link

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