Fire safety induction for restaurant staff: the first-shift checklist

A fire briefing for a restaurant should begin where the new starter will actually work. Walk from that station to the exits identified in the premises plan, show how the alarm is raised and identify the assembly point. Explain who calls the emergency services and how staff report anyone who may need assistance. Check the arrangements for visitors as well as colleagues. A staff member helping in a different room needs the relevant route information before service starts.

UK general staff response principles. The premises fire plan and national fire law determine local arrangements.

The practical principles

Reduce everyday fire risks

Fire needs fuel, oxygen and an ignition source. In hospitality, examples include cooking heat, electrical faults, stored packaging and waste. Keep escape routes and fire equipment accessible. Report damaged electrical items, blocked doors and unsafe waste accumulation. Fire doors help limit smoke and fire spread; use their approved closing arrangements. Start each shift knowing the nearest usable exits and where the alarm can be raised.

Act on a fire or alarm

Raise the alarm immediately when you discover a fire and follow the venue’s evacuation arrangements. Use a safe route, leave belongings behind and move to the designated assembly point. Call 999 according to the emergency arrangements; an assumption that another person called can create delay. Follow the planned assistance arrangements for people who need support. Use lifts only where the fire plan specifically designates a suitable evacuation lift.

Keep the response controlled

Tell the responsible person about missing people and their last known location. Stay outside until the authorised all-clear. Firefighting is a separate activity requiring appropriate instruction, equipment and a safe escape route; ordinary staff should prioritise raising the alarm and getting people out. Take part in local drills and report anything confusing, such as inaudible alarms or an exit blocked by a delivery.

Work through a shift scenario

Fictional exercise: a delivery is placed in the route used from the kitchen during evacuation. Ask the team to identify the obstruction, notify the responsible colleague and keep the route usable without creating a new handling risk. Then change the situation: the alarm sounds while guests are waiting to pay. Staff should follow the evacuation procedure and leave possessions and routine service tasks behind. Discuss how the team avoids sending someone back into danger to finish a task.

Avoid the common failure

A familiar entrance may be unusable during a fire. Brief the actual alternatives and arrangements for people needing assistance. Avoid treating a generic online lesson as evidence that someone knows this particular premises. Record the walk-through and revisit it when the layout or duties change.

A second situation to discuss

Fictional scenario: The alarm sounds during a wedding reception. A guest wants to collect a coat from upstairs, while a delivery trolley is narrowing the exit.

Direct the guest towards a safe exit and alert the evacuation lead to the obstruction. Follow your assigned role without entering danger. At the assembly point, pass on any information about people still inside. The coat can be recovered after the authorised all-clear.

Use a working record

Record the specific arrangements below before the briefing. Keep the wording short enough for a colleague to use during the shift. Where a field does not apply, explain why; where information is missing, assign a person to resolve it. Store personal or sensitive details in the business's approved system.

- Work area
- alarm-raising method
- evacuation routes
- assembly point
- assistance arrangements
- responsible contact
- briefing date

At the next handover, ask what changed, which action remains open and who now owns it. Close the record only when the agreed follow-up is complete. A recurring problem should inform the next briefing and the relevant operational procedure.

Check understanding

When discovering a fire, first:

Raise the alarm and follow the emergency plan Early warning and a safe response are priorities.

Where do you go after leaving?

The designated assembly point The assembly arrangement helps account for people.

Fire alarm during breakfast: what happens to the till queue?

The alarm sounds while a guest is paying. Another guest heads back towards the dining room for a coat. What should the cashier prioritise?

Compare your decision

Follow the premises' evacuation arrangements and direct people towards the designated safe route. Leave the transaction and belongings. Pass information about anyone needing assistance to the responsible team from a safe place. Follow the local arrangements for calling the emergency services.

Walk the route during induction. Ask the cashier to point out the assembly point and explain who receives a report about a guest last seen in the dining room.

Sources and scope

- Source: https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-safety-equipment-drills-and-training

- Source: https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-safety-and-evacuation-plans

Original workplace examples and suggested record. Prepared 19 October 2026. Use the current linked guidance and the venue’s procedures for operational decisions.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details