



Fire Protection Association

THE UK'S NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY ORGANISATION

Guidance for employers, building owners and managers on your responsibilities under the

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Provides advice on:

- Who is responsible
- What you are responsible for
- How to fulfil your responsibilities



Foreword

This booklet has been designed to assist employers, building owners and users and others with control over parts of a premises by providing introductory guidance on the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It covers the steps that are necessary to complete a sufficient fire risk assessment that may be used by a wide range of businesses.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

This new piece of legislation came into force on 1 October 2006 and repeals or amends over 70 pieces of legislation, including the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997.

The most notable developments since this legislation was introduced are:

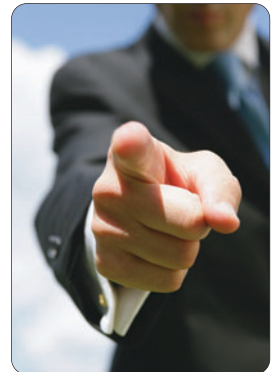
- Fire certificates will no longer have legal status
- The focus of the Fire Safety Order is on risk assessment. This builds on the approach to fire safety established by the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997
- Local fire authorities are responsible for enforcing the Order, for most types of premises. They will have new powers to enforce the legislation and issue fines, or even close down businesses, if it is deemed not to apply.

Who is responsible?

The Fire Safety Order places responsibility for complying with the requirements on the 'responsible person' who could be, for example:

- The employer for those parts of the premises that staff and visitors may go to
- The occupier, such as the self-employed or voluntary organisations if they have control over the premises (or part of)
- The managing agent or owner for shared parts of premises or shared fire safety facilities such as sprinklers or fire detection systems
- Any other person who may have some control over part of the premises

In most instances it will be obvious who the responsible person is, however, in some circumstances responsibility may lie with a number of people.



Principal requirements

- Carry out a fire risk assessment of the premises
- Consider those who may be especially at risk
- Remove or reduce identified risks as far as reasonably practicable
- Provide appropriate fire precautions to deal with any remaining identified risks and ensure they are maintained
- Take appropriate precautions associated with the use and/or storage of flammable or explosive materials
- Develop an emergency plan to deal with any emergency
- Provide information to employees, other employers, the self employed and parents/guardians of young persons on the results of the fire risk assessment and emergency procedures
- Keep appropriate records
- Train staff
- Review the risk assessment, precautions and plans when necessary

Applicable premises

The Fire Safety Order applies to virtually all premises with the exception of private homes including individual flats in a block or house.

Examples of the types of premises to which the order applies include:

- Offices and shops
- Factories and warehouses
- Hotels and hostels
- Educational establishments including schools
- Places of worship, sports centres and other community premises
- Hospitals and care homes
- The shared areas of properties common to several households
- Theatres, cinemas and similar premises
- Restaurants, pubs and clubs
- Tents and marquees
- Transport premises and facilities



Businesses with fewer than five employees need not record their risk assessment, although it is good practice to do so.

A set of 11 Government guidance documents have been developed to help businesses with the new fire safety law, and provide advice on carrying out a fire risk assessment and identifying the general fire precautions you need to have in place.

Each guide is available from the FPA for £12 per copy.



The Fire Risk Assessment

The Fire Safety Order requires the responsible person in every workplace to make ‘a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which staff and visitors are exposed. If five or more people are employed, or the premises are licensed or subject to an alterations notice, then the assessment must be recorded.

A fire risk assessment is required for each premises to help minimise the possibility that the premises, or activities carried out within it, might create harm to people working there, visiting, or in adjacent premises. It should also aim to help prevent and reduce harm to the environment.

In the vast majority of cases, conducting a risk assessment will be a relatively straightforward and simple task that may be carried out by the responsible person, or a person nominated by him, such as a consultant.

In larger workplaces, different areas may represent quite different levels of risk. In such cases, it will be more appropriate to undertake individual risk assessments for each area rather than a single risk assessment for the whole of the workplace.

A premises fire risk assessment and subsequent follow-up actions should aim to identify, and isolate where possible, ignition sources and fuel.

In addition, since there will always be a residual risk, equipment or construction can be used to either suppress the fire or contain the spread, by effectively helping remove the third and final essential element for fire – air.

The assessment will therefore take into account the:

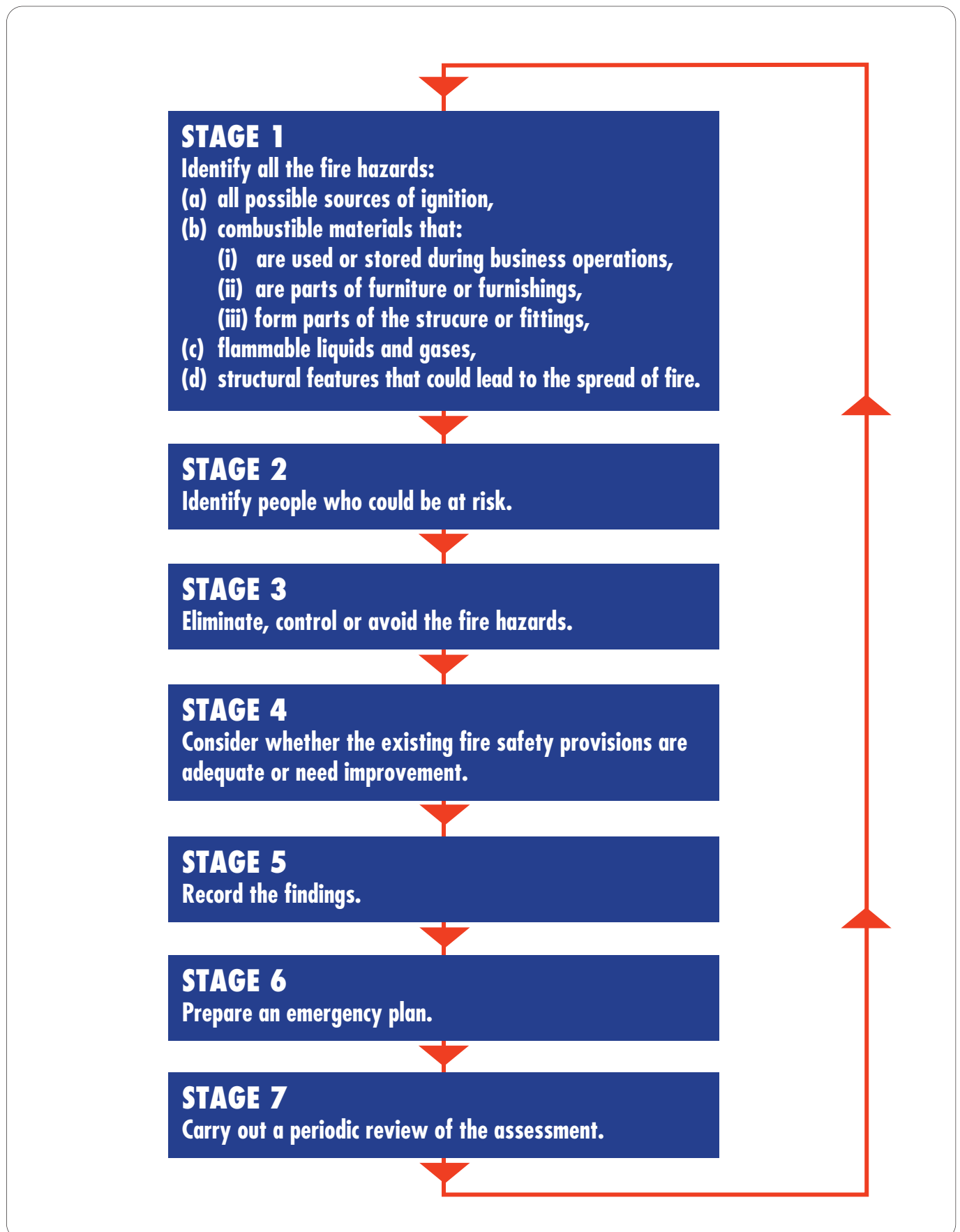
- type of work being undertaken;
- materials used or stored;
- contents of the workplace, including furniture and fittings;
- construction of the workplace, separating walls and internal linings;
- premises overall layout and size; and
- employees, visitors and contractors in the workplace and their ability to respond or the support they might require in an emergency.

Further information on how to conduct a comprehensive fire risk assessment of your business can be found in our best-selling publication *Fire Risk Management in the Workplace*. It provides invaluable guidance to help keep your business safe from fire and comply with the Fire Safety Order.

Available from the FPA at only £15.



The seven-step risk assessment process



Step 1: Identify the fire hazards

Identifying hazards entails noting readily combustible materials or highly flammable substances. These would include such things as rubbish, quantities of stored paper, paints and thinners, flammable solvents, solvent-based adhesives, flammable gases, combustible plastic foams, large areas of bare hardboard, highly flammable and/or reactive chemicals, or any other sources of fuel.

It also entails noting sources of heat such as flames or sparks from processes, sources of frictional heat, ovens, incinerators, oil- or gas-fired equipment or heaters, matches and lighters, ducts or flues, light bulbs close to combustible materials, electrical leads, any electrical equipment, faulty wiring, portable

heaters, and any other sources of ignition.

Structural features that would constitute hazards and should therefore be identified would include such things as ducts and flues, unstopped holes that have been cut into fire walls for the provision of services, such as cables and pipes, large areas of timber boards, open roof spaces, excessively long escape routes and so on.



Step 2: Identify the people at risk



People who could be at risk in a fire, include those who may be asleep in the workplace, those present in large numbers, those who are unfamiliar with the layout of the workplace and the exit routes, those who may be exposed to a

particular or specific fire risk, and those who have impaired sight, hearing, or mobility.

You should also note any people who would be unable to react quickly enough or are unaware of the danger of fire because they work in remote areas, because they have learning difficulties, or because they are unaware of fire risks.

Step 3: Remove or reduce the fire hazards

On completion of step 2, those hazards that remain should be given a risk category as part of an evaluation of the whole workplace. This may be done by first looking at individual parts of the premises or the activities carried out. Three useful risk categories are:

- **low:** where there is hardly any risk from fire, few combustible materials, no highly flammable substances, and virtually no sources of heat;
- **normal:** where there are sufficient quantities of combustible materials and sources of

heat to be of greater than low fire risk but where a fire would be likely to remain confined, or to spread slowly; and

- **high:** where there is a serious risk to life from fire, there are substantial quantities of combustible materials, there are any highly flammable substances, or there exists the likelihood of the rapid spread of fire, heat, or smoke.

Step 4: Consider whether existing fire safety provisions are adequate or need improving

This step involves deciding whether the existing fire safety measures are adequate or are in need of improvement. Possible improvements would include such steps as the:



- reduction of evacuation times and escape route lengths;
- provision of additional escape routes;
- improved early warning fire alarm system with additional detectors and alarms;
- installation of more fire alarm call points;
- provision of more fire signs;
- construction of more, or improved, separation walls and barriers zoning the premises;
- installation of a sprinkler system;
- institution of improved fire safety training programmes; and
- appointment of fire wardens.

The objective following an evaluation of risk is to drive it down from high to as low as is reasonably practicable.

The removal or reduction of hazards can have enormous benefits insofar as, at the end of the process, a much safer working environment will have been produced. Consider whether each of the hazards that have been identified and evaluated in the earlier steps, can be removed, reduced, replaced, separated, protected, repaired, or cleaned.

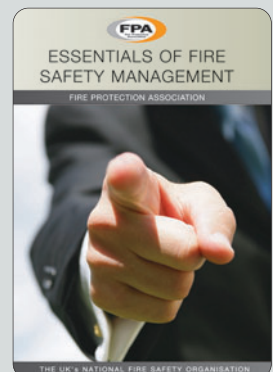
One could, for example, remove excessive amounts of combustible materials, reduce the area of combustible wall linings, replace tungsten filament bulbs with fluorescent fittings and solvent-based adhesives with water-based pastes, separate sources of heat from combustible materials, protect electrical equipment with thermostats, residual current devices and correctly-rated fuses, repair torn upholstered furniture, or clean dirty flues and ducts. Fire detection and suppression measures should also be reviewed.

It should also be decided at this stage whether any of these removals or reductions are to be undertaken immediately, in the medium term, or in the long term.



Essentials of Fire Safety Management is a comprehensive full colour guide that will help businesses understand the implications of the Fire Safety Order and how to achieve compliance through effective fire safety management. Included throughout are practical advice sections which explain how to comply with the law. These also describe additional property protection measures which will ensure that if a fire does occur it will be contained, keeping disruption to a minimum.

Available from the FPA at only £34.95



Step 5: Record the findings

This entails accurately recording the findings of the fire risk assessment. Such a record should include the significant hazards found to be present, details of any staff who are especially at risk, the actions taken to lower the risk, and the date on which the assessment was made. Keeping a record helps to ensure you can:

- control hazards by acting decisively on the information found during the assessment and routine checks;
- show that you understand the need for risk reduction and have taken time to meet your legal responsibilities;
- demonstrate that you have spoken to staff, suppliers, and visitors and acted to control risks; and
- deal with risk in a way that may benefit visitors, staff, you and your company by managing all major hazards.

Records should include any government guidance, trade codes, and specific occupational safety information that has been followed or used in the assessment and risk reduction process. This is to show that you have used the best information available to you and have followed good practice or suppliers' instructions on the use of equipment or materials.

The use of drawings, like those issued to occupiers of premises previously holding a fire certificate under the Fire Precautions Act 1971, that show essential detail of escape routes, fire warning, firefighting equipment and alarm and detection systems are an ideal way of providing managers and fire wardens with a visible and easily understood record that can be quickly checked and monitored.

Technical assistance from the FPA



The FPA can also offer technical advice and guidance to companies who feel they need help in meeting the requirements of the Fire Safety Order.

The FPA offers a range of fire advisory services. It has a team of highly trained fire risk assessors who can undertake affordable fire risk assessments to help employers satisfy the new fire safety legislation.

FPA fire advisory services include:

- **Fire risk assessments**

Both specific and general, depending on your needs. Ranging from Life safety fire risk assessments to Property protection assessments. Full fire risk assessments will help customers to address both life safety and property protection issues.

- **Fire safety audits**

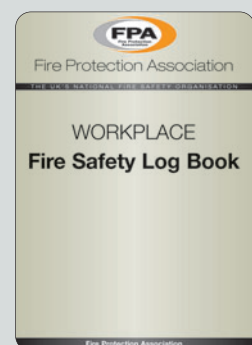
The FPA can conduct an independent, impartial and thorough audit of your existing fire precautions or fire safety manual, adding value to your fire safety management system.

The FPA also offers fire investigation and fire safety consultancy services.

For further information download or request a copy of the FPA's Fire Advisory Services brochure

The FPA's *Workplace Fire Safety Log Book* is a sturdy A4 binder that contains record sheets to enable employers to keep an accumulating record of their fire safety actions, including staff training, means of escape, fire detection and alarm systems, fire extinguishers and inspections by authorities.

Available from the FPA for £74.50 plus VAT



Step 6: Make an emergency plan

The next step is to prepare an emergency plan; the primary purpose of which is to ensure that staff and visitors are aware of what to do in the event that there is a fire and can evacuate the premises safely.

It is good practice to keep a record of the emergency plan and provide copies to all staff. It should provide the details for a fire action notice which should be displayed in suitable locations around the premises – normally next to fire alarm call points.

In larger or complex premises, the emergency plan is likely to be more detailed and should be compiled following discussion with other occupants of the premises (in, for example, shopping centres) or those with control over aspects of the building, so that a single emergency plan applicable to all can be agreed and implemented.

The responsible person must ensure that employees are provided with adequate safety training which will include the details of the requirements of the emergency plan. Employers may also wish to appoint safety assistants, where appropriate, to assist in implementing evacuation procedures. Attendance at a fire warden training course would fulfil this requirement.

Business owners will also be aware of the need to develop plans which ensure the viability of an organisation after an incident such as a fire. These plans are often called disaster recovery or business continuity plans.

As an introduction to the plan there should be explicit statements on:

- its purpose, specific actions to be taken and the time sequence;

- senior management's commitment;
- the risk to the business covered;
- key arrangements and the teams who will take emergency action; and
- the recovery process that will be followed.

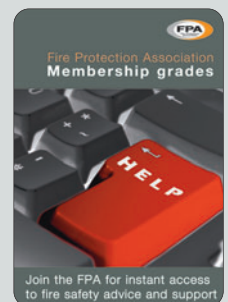
The plan's implementation section must clearly state when and the how the plan will operate and who has authority to take decisions. The plan must be capable of operating under all conditions, whether that is with no-one on the premises or with all the employees at work. It is important to decide:

- when and how to activate the plan;
- who has responsibility for plan initiation;
- evacuation and safety information;
- the authority given and to whom to carry out detailed parts of the plan;
- where the operational centre is to be situated for key staff and communications, both on and off site;
- what is the method of alerting key people inside and outside normal hours; and
- specialist contacts to help with emergency action and assist in recovery.

The objective is to have to hand, and therefore duplicated and not stored only in the premises, contacts and procedures that can be used at any time to help reduce the impact of a fire on people and the business.

The Fire Protection Association offers three grades of membership – bronze, silver and gold. These provide increasing levels of benefits including exclusive online access to a range of FPA publications and annual credit for use in purchasing FPA documents, training courses or consultancy services.

For further information download or request a copy of the FPA's Membership leaflet



Step 7: Arrange to regularly review the assessment



The review step is crucial in keeping the whole assessment and management of the risk process alive. You will have to decide how often individual elements of your assessment should be reviewed. Every assessment should be checked annually at least, if only to confirm there has been no change in circumstances. Some aspects, for example exit routes, will require much more regular re-assessments and spot checks.

How frequently you review depends on issues that affect the people and the premises, and the review is usually highly dependent upon the business undertaken and the possibility of introducing new hazards. Obvious changes like the introduction of new materials or equipment into the workplace, or building alterations and extensions should be automatic triggers for re-assessments. Less obvious may be gradual changes in experienced staff, or older equipment requiring higher levels of maintenance. In storage areas, or premises that may appear to be low risk, care is required to identify the hazards presented if goods are brought in from external suppliers or customers, for example.

Near-misses should always be reported and accidents be thoroughly investigated to see if repeat incidents can be prevented. A note should be recorded of the re-assessment date and any major findings and improvements.

FPA Training

The FPA offers an extensive range of training courses to support employers and help them to meet the requirements of the Fire Safety Order. Courses cover subject areas including:

- Fire safety management;
- Fire risk assessment;
- Fire and building design;
- Fire extinguisher maintenance
- Sprinkler systems;
- Fire detection, alarms and emergency lighting; and
- National Occupational Standards in fire safety and higher level courses in fire engineering.

Courses offer a variety of levels of learning from the *Basic Fire Safety Awareness* and *Fire Safety for Fire Wardens* to the more in-depth *CFPA Europe Diploma in Fire Prevention* and *National Occupational Standards*.

The FPA also offers a range of courses on fire risk assessment techniques, from the *Introduction to fire risk assessment*, to the ever-popular *Fire risk assessment and maintenance of fire systems for facilities managers*.

For more information download or request a copy of the FPA's 2007 Training Prospectus.

Training DVDs and videos

The FPA offers an extensive range of videos and DVDs on fire safety and health and safety topics. Titles include:

- *Extinguishing fires at work*
- *The role of the fire warden*
- *Fire risk assessment at work*

For more information download or request a copy of the FPA's 2007 Publications Catalogue.



ENQUIRY FORM

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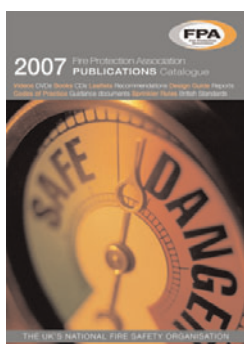
We hope you have found this guidance booklet extremely useful in explaining your responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order. However, if you require further assistance in ensuring your business does comply then the FPA can help in a number of ways.

We offer a range of training courses that can be delivered on an open or customised basis. We also provide the UK's most comprehensive range of publications and training aids. Alternatively, our network of risk assessors can visit your premises and undertake a fire risk assessment for your business.

AUTHORITATIVE ADVICE AND INFORMATION AT HIGHLY COMPETITIVE PRICES

If there are particular areas where you feel your business could benefit from receiving expert advice from the FPA then please send back the enquiry form today.

Publications



Please send me the 2007 Publications Catalogue

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Fire Advisory Services



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