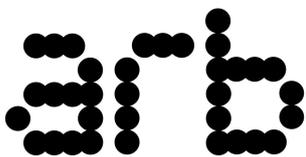


ARB Competence Guidelines:

Fire & Life Safety Design



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Introduction

Fire and life safety design is of central importance to the services architects provide. Clients and users are entitled to expect that all architects will have the competence to prepare and execute designs that will maintain their safety and wellbeing, regardless of the type or scale of the project. Designing for fire and life safety includes understanding and managing the risks involved – regardless of scale and use – and managing these competently.

What is 'competence'?

Competence is the combination of skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours that enable a person to carry out a defined task to an acceptable standard.

Standard 2.4 of the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice provides that architects are expected to keep their knowledge and skills relevant to their professional work up to date and be aware of the content of any guidelines issued by ARB.

Who do these guidelines apply to?

All architects are subject to the provisions of the Architects Code of Conduct and Practice, and should be competent to carry out the tasks they are engaged to do. We do however recognise that competence requirements change depending on an architect's job role and the context of their work. We also recognise that competence develops over time, and that an architect may work 'competently' at many different levels, either at different stages of their career, or depending on the nature of the work they are carrying out.

What you need to do

It is essential that you remain current with developments in the profession, the construction industry and the wider environment in which you work.

What you will need to do to maintain your competence will vary in relation to your role, current degree of competence, and career progression. A good place to start will be to consider the competency standards architects should meet in respect of fire and life safety design, and reflect on how these relate to your professional circumstances.

Once you have identified your development needs you should undertake learning in the way that best suits you. This can be done in a variety of ways, but such development will have at its core an informal learning through the challenges and opportunities of working life, and interaction with colleagues, clients, and professionals from other disciplines. This may be supplemented by structured activities such as training events, courses, distance learning programmes and private study.

It is important that you record the development activity you have undertaken. This will allow you to demonstrate that you have dealt with your learning needs, and identify areas for further development.

Resources

The resources available that contribute to keeping current are constantly changing. Professional and commercial organisations provide targeted, structured training and CPD events. Architects should keep up-to-date with changes in legislation, professional and statutory duties by reference to relevant online resources from professional and statutory bodies.

ARB does not recommend any particular learning route or resource, but you can find further information on educational tools and resources on our website [here](#).

Competence guidelines on fire and life safety design

A. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

You should:

- FA1. Understand that ensuring the health and safety of building constructors, users and the public outweighs any other obligations you may have
- FA2. Acknowledge the limits of your competence and only ever practice within those limits, unless under appropriate supervision or with suitable expert assistance
- FA3. Challenge the behaviour of others and draw attention to dangers where they may put the health and safety of others at risk

B. MANAGING RISK

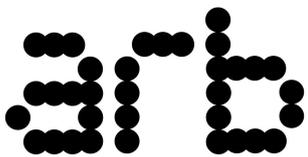
You should:

- FB1. Understand the principles of risk management methodology and be able to apply health and safety to the holistic design processes
- FB2. Maintain an awareness & understanding of the key elements of relevant regulations and secondary legislation relating to health and safety including fire and structural safety
- FB3. Understand how to design in accordance with Building Regulations, Approved Documents and CDM Regulations and other relevant safety legislation
- FB4. Understand construction and site hazards in the context of personal access, construction activities and design risk management
- FB5. Understand the role of an architect, and what fire and life safety information must be provided by the design-team to contractors, sub-contractors, building owners, managers and users
- FB6. Where appropriate, review and co-ordinate the designs of other members of the design team and ensure that they have understood what further information is required, if any
- FB7. Where appropriate seek expert advice on matters outside your own competence, and keep others informed of it

C. FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY DESIGN

You should:

- FC1. Understand the principles of fire and smoke generation and their spread
- FC2. Be able to design, detail and specify in a way that protects users of buildings and the public from fire and the spread of smoke.
- FC3. Be able to design buildings with appropriately safe means of escape
- FC4. Be able to design appropriate access to buildings and facilities for emergency services
- FC5. Understand the qualities of the products you specify in respect of fire performance, and record how they will perform as part of a construction system
- FC6. Be able to design to protect building users from hazards and risks during construction, use and maintenance



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