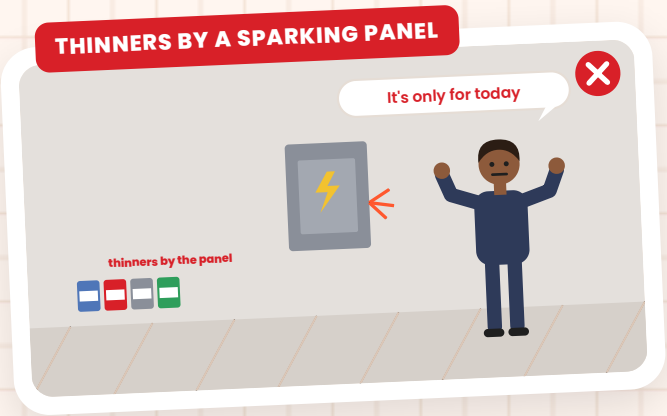
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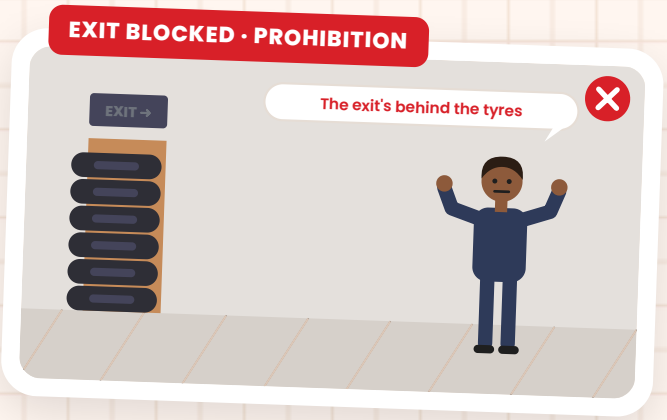
Edition 1 · United Kingdom · 2026

• UNLIMITED FINES · 2 YEARS PRISON Showroom, workshop, paint shop, stores & EV bays

Fire Safety Compliance Guidebook for Automotive Companies

Fire risk assessments, flammables, escape routes, alarms, training and EV batteries: what the fire service checks, **and why a blocked exit is a criminal offence.**





Unlimited
fines for fire safety breaches, plus up to **2 years in prison**.

£25K
median fine for organisations prosecuted (2023–2025).

£362K
largest recent fine: 38 breaches at one site.

6 standards | 18 checkpoints | Fire Safety Order 2005 · DSEAR | Right way / wrong way | Ideal fix time

2021 Fire Safety Act → **2022** Building Safety Act changes → **2026** EV fire risk rising → **The responsible person is you.**

WHY THIS GUIDEBOOK EXISTS

Paint, fuel, tyres, batteries. Every dealer is a fire risk.

Under the **Fire Safety Order**, the employer or occupier is the **responsible person**. Breaches are criminal: unlimited fines and up to 2 years in prison. Fire services can close all or part of a building immediately with a prohibition notice.

This guidebook covers the 6 fire standards that matter most at a dealership.

WHERE FIRE RISK SITS

Assessment
Whole-site written FRA
FIR-01

Flammables
Paint, thinners, fuel
FIR-02

Escape
Routes and exits
FIR-03

Warning
Alarms and lighting
FIR-04

People
Extinguishers, training, drills
FIR-05

EVs
Damaged batteries
FIR-06

WHO ENFORCES IT

Fire & Rescue
Local fire service
Audits, notices, prosecutions

HSE
DSEAR
Dangerous substances at work

Insurers
Property insurers
Cover conditions and claims

Courts
Magistrates and Crown Court
Unlimited fines, prison

WHO IT'S FOR

Dealer principals & directors
Know who the responsible person is.

Facilities & workshop managers
Keep routes, storage and tests in order.

Auditors
Walk the site like a fire safety officer.

CRIMINAL, NOT ADMINISTRATIVE

One blocked exit. An unlimited fine.

Fire safety breaches are prosecuted in the criminal courts. The median organisation fine in recent years was **£25,000**, with prosecution costs on top, and the largest reached **£362,000**.

THE PENALTY LADDER

LEVEL 1
Notice
Enforcement notice: fix within the deadline.

LEVEL 2
Prohibition
Building or area closed immediately.

LEVEL 3
Unlimited
Fine in magistrates' or Crown Court.

LEVEL 4
2 years
Prison for the responsible person.

REAL CASES FROM US AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESSES

WHO	RESULT	WHAT HAPPENED
Hotel operator (2 companies) Crown Court · 2021	**£362,000** 38 charges	Fire safety breaches including breaching a prohibition notice.
Organisations prosecuted 2023–2025	**£25,000** median fine	Range £100 to £500,000, plus costs.
Individuals prosecuted 2023–2025	**£3,800** median fine	Directors and managers can be charged personally.

MEDIAN FINE
£25K
For organisations, before costs.

MAXIMUM
Unlimited
Plus up to 2 years in prison.

AND THEN
Closure
A prohibition notice **closes the site**.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

One page per standard. Get everyone out.

1. **Header**: code, area, owner and the maximum penalty
2. **The law**: which regulator and which regulation
3. **The cost**: fine, what else can happen and a real case
4. **Right / wrong**: illustrated pass and fail, plus how to audit

THE 6 STANDARDS

FIR-01	Fire Risk Assessment ⛓ PRISON	FSO art.9	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	7 days	5
FIR-02	Flammables & Paint Storage (DSEAR) ⛓ PRISON	DSEAR 2002	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	Immediate	6
FIR-03	Escape Routes Clear ⛓ PRISON	FSO art.14	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	Immediate	7
FIR-04	Alarms & Emergency Lighting Tested ⛓ PRISON	FSO art.17	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	72 hours	8
FIR-05	Extinguishers, Training & Drills ⛓ PRISON	FSO art.21	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	7 days	9
FIR-06	EV & Battery Fire Risk ⛓ PRISON	FSO art.9	CRITICAL	Unlimited + prison	72 hours	10

IDEAL FIX TIME · COUNTED FROM AUDIT SUBMISSION

Immediate	Stop now · serious harm or clear breach	2 standards
72 hours	Fix within 3 working days	2 standards
7 days	Fix within 1 week · records, notices, training	2 standards

SCORING EACH CHECKPOINT

PASS

Every criterion met at the time of audit, with evidence captured.

FAIL

Any criterion not met at the time of audit. Record what you saw and who owns the fix.

N/A

Only where "Applies when" rules it out. Record why.

Note. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own fire safety legislation with similar duties.

FIR-01 FIRE SAFETY · FRS · STANDARD 01 OF 06

Fire Risk Assessment

Area **Whole site** | Person in charge **Dealer Principal · Facilities Manager** | Regulator **Fire & Rescue Service**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · magistrates' or Crown Court

Crown Court: **up to 2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

FSO

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) · **FSO articles 9 and 11**: suitable and sufficient assessment, recorded if 5+ employees, reviewed regularly

WHAT WE CHECK

A competent person has done a written fire risk assessment for the whole site (showroom, workshop, body shop, stores, EV charging), with actions tracked to completion.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Is there a written fire risk assessment by a competent person?
- Q2 Does it cover the workshop, paint shop, stores and EV charging areas?
- Q3 Are its actions tracked and closed?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

Breaches are criminal: an **unlimited fine**, and at Crown Court up to **2 years in prison**. The "responsible person" (usually the employer or occupier) is liable.

BEYOND THE FINE

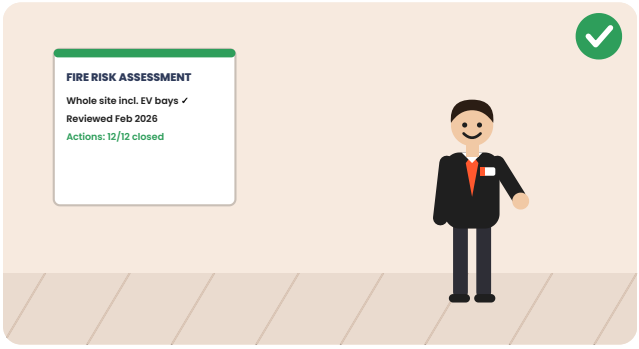
The fire service can issue a **prohibition notice** that closes the building or part of it immediately. Enforcement notices must be complied with, usually within 28 days.

REAL ENFORCEMENT

£25K

median fine for organisations in fire safety prosecutions (2023–2025). Prosecution costs can exceed the fine.

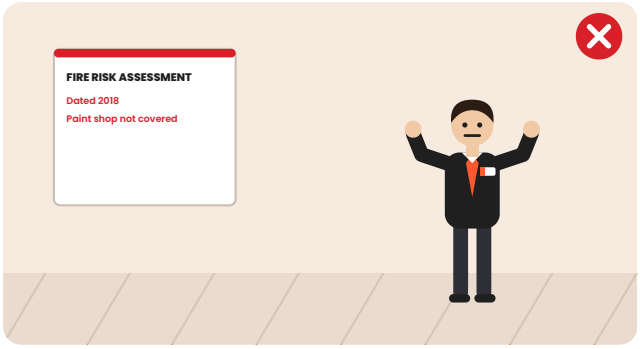
✔ RIGHT WAY



Current assessment, all actions closed.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



2018 assessment missing the paint shop.

PURPOSE

The assessment is the legal foundation. Without it, every other fire failure is harder to defend.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ 7 days

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Written assessment
- All areas covered
- Actions closed
- Reviewed after changes

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Request the assessment
2. Walk areas it should cover
3. Check the action tracker

Evidence: Assessment + action log.

WORST CASE No valid assessment: **unlimited fine**, and the first charge in almost every fire prosecution.

FIR-02 FIRE SAFETY · FRS · STANDARD 02 OF 06

Flammables & Paint Storage (DSEAR)

Area **Body shop · Stores**

Person in charge **Body Shop Manager · Facilities Manager**

Regulator **Fire & Rescue Service**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · magistrates' or Crown Court

Crown Court: **up to 2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

FSO

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) · **DSEAR 2002** dangerous substances and explosive atmospheres · FSO art.12

WHAT WE CHECK

Paints, thinners, fuels and aerosols are kept in fire-resisting cabinets or stores, in minimum quantities, away from ignition sources, and fuel draining is done safely.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Are flammables stored in fire-resisting cabinets or a dedicated store?
- Q2 Are quantities in work areas kept to a minimum?
- Q3 Is fuel drained with proper equipment, away from ignition sources?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

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BEYOND THE FINE

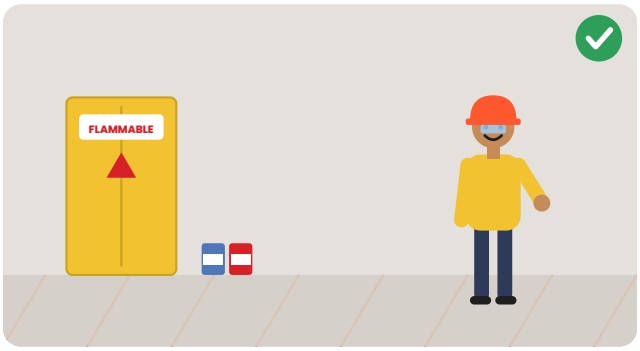
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

£362K

fines on two companies running one hotel (2021) for 38 fire safety breaches, including breaching a prohibition notice.

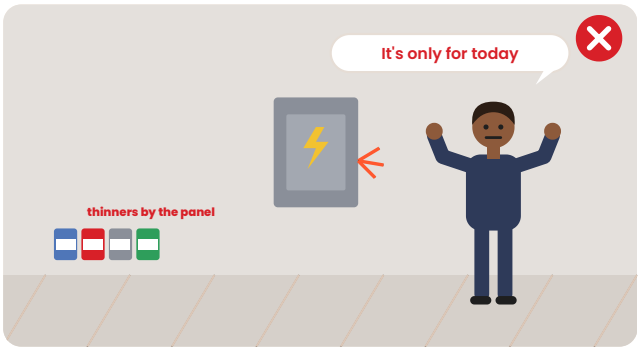
✔ RIGHT WAY



Flammables in a fire-resisting cabinet.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Thinners next to a sparking electrical panel.

PURPOSE

Paint shops and fuel drains are the most likely places for a dealership fire to start.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ Immediate

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Fire-resisting storage
- Minimum quantities
- No ignition sources
- Safe fuel draining

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Walk the paint shop and stores
2. Check cabinets
3. Check fuel drainer

Evidence: Photos + DSEAR assessment.

WORST CASE A fire that starts in stored flammables brings **unlimited fines**, prison risk and possible loss of the building.

FIR-03 FIRE SAFETY · FRS · STANDARD 03 OF 06

Escape Routes Clear

Area **Whole site** | Person in charge **Facilities Manager** | Regulator **Fire & Rescue Service**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · magistrates' or Crown Court

Crown Court: **up to 2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

FSO

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) · **FSO article 14** emergency routes and exits

WHAT WE CHECK

Escape routes and fire exits are clear, marked, lit and unlocked while people are in the building. Nothing is stored in corridors or in front of exits.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Are all escape routes and exits clear and unobstructed?
- Q2 Can fire exits be opened easily without a key?
- Q3 Are routes signed and lit?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

Breaches are criminal: an **unlimited fine**, and at Crown Court up to **2 years in prison**. The "responsible person" (usually the employer or occupier) is liable.

BEYOND THE FINE

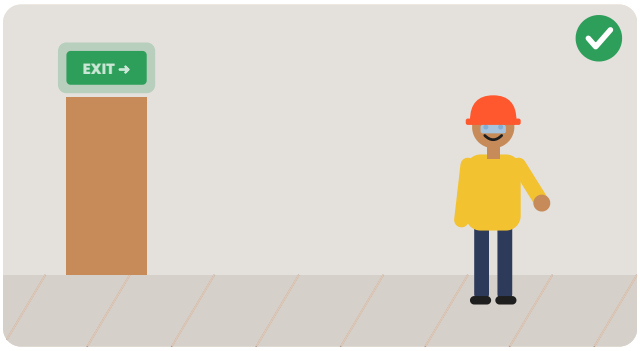
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

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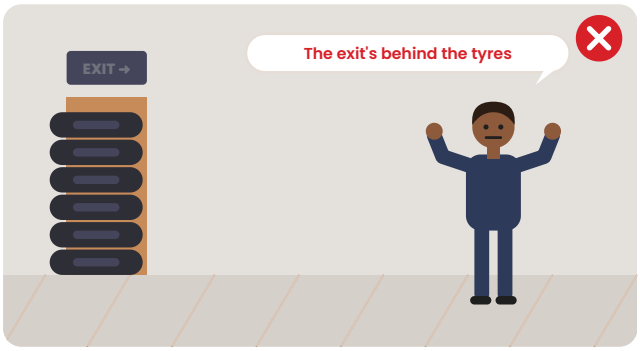
✔ RIGHT WAY



Exit clear, signed and lit.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Exit blocked by tyres.

PURPOSE

Blocked exits are one of the most common reasons for fire safety prosecutions.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ Immediate

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Routes clear
- Exits open without keys
- Signs and lighting

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Walk every route
2. Test every exit door
3. Check signs

Evidence: Photos of routes.

WORST CASE Blocked exits appear in prosecution after prosecution: **unlimited fines**, and a **prohibition notice** can close the site.

FIR-04 FIRE SAFETY · FRS · STANDARD 04 OF 06

Alarms & Emergency Lighting Tested

Area **Whole site** | Person in charge **Facilities Manager** | Regulator **Fire & Rescue Service**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · magistrates' or Crown Court

Crown Court: **up to 2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

FSO

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) · **FSO articles 13 and 17** detection, warning and maintenance · BS 5839 / BS 5266

WHAT WE CHECK

The fire alarm is tested weekly, emergency lights monthly, and both are serviced by a competent engineer, with everything logged.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Is the fire alarm tested weekly from a different call point, with results logged?
- Q2 Are emergency lights tested monthly and given a full-duration test yearly?
- Q3 Are both serviced by a competent engineer?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

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BEYOND THE FINE

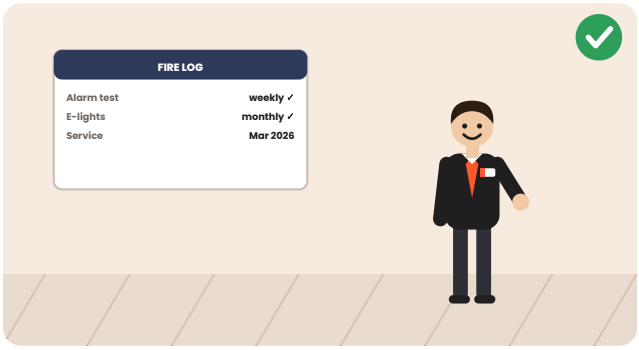
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

£25K

median fine for organisations in fire safety prosecutions (2023–2025). Prosecution costs can exceed the fine.

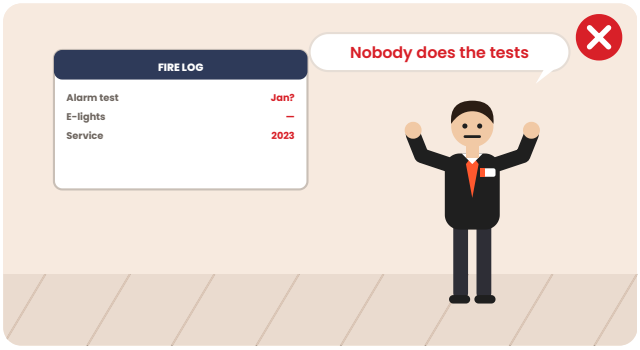
✔ RIGHT WAY



Weekly and monthly tests logged.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



No tests since January.

PURPOSE

An alarm that fails on the day is a failure the fire service will find in the log book.

FIX IT WITHIN

72 hours

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Weekly alarm tests
- Monthly light tests
- Annual service
- Log book kept

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Check the fire log
2. Test a call point
3. Check service certificates

Evidence: Log book + certificates.

WORST CASE Missing maintenance is an **unlimited fine** offence, and a fatal fire makes it far worse.

FIR-05 FIRE SAFETY · FRS · STANDARD 05 OF 06

Extinguishers, Training & Drills

Area **Whole site** | Person in charge **Facilities Manager · HR**

Regulator **Fire & Rescue Service**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · magistrates' or Crown Court

Crown Court: **up to 2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

FSO

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) · **FSO articles 13, 15 and 21** firefighting equipment, procedures and training

WHAT WE CHECK

Extinguishers suitable for each risk (including electrical and flammable liquids) are serviced yearly. Staff are trained, fire marshals are named, and evacuation drills happen at least yearly.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Are extinguishers the right type for each area and serviced annually?
- Q2 Are staff trained and fire marshals named on every shift?
- Q3 Has an evacuation drill been held in the last 12 months?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

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BEYOND THE FINE

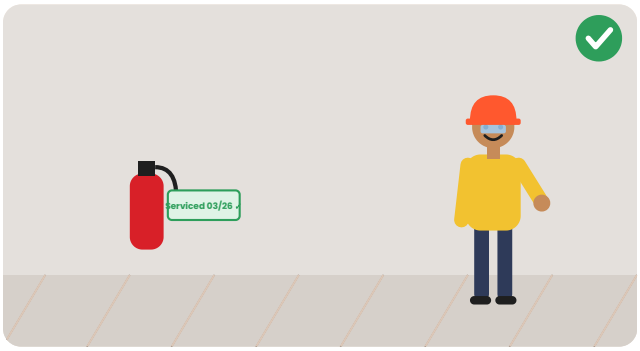
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

£25K

median fine for organisations in fire safety prosecutions (2023–2025). Prosecution costs can exceed the fine.

✔ RIGHT WAY



Extinguisher serviced this year.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Extinguisher tag from 2023.

PURPOSE

Trained staff put small fires out and get people out.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ 7 days

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Right extinguishers
- Annual service
- Staff trained
- Annual drill

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Check tags
2. Check training records
3. Check the drill log

Evidence: Tags + training + drill log.

WORST CASE Untrained staff and lapsed equipment are standard charges in fire prosecutions: **unlimited fines**.

FIR-06 FIRE SAFETY · FRS · STANDARD 06 OF 06

EV & Battery Fire Risk

Area **Workshop · Car park** | Person in charge **Service Manager · Facilities Manager** | Regulator **Fire & Rescue Service**

MAXIMUM PENALTY

Unlimited

fine · magistrates' or Crown Court

Crown Court: **up to 2 years in prison**

• CRITICAL | ⛓ PRISON RISK

THE LAW

FSO

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022) · **FSO article 9** risk assessment applied to lithium-ion batteries · manufacturer EV guidance

WHAT WE CHECK

Damaged or high-risk EVs are quarantined outdoors or away from buildings, charging bays are assessed, and staff know the EV fire procedure.

Applies when: Sites that sell, service or store electric and hybrid vehicles.

CHECKPOINTS IN THE AUDIT

- Q1 Is there a quarantine area for damaged EVs away from buildings?
- Q2 Are EV charging and storage areas included in the fire risk assessment?
- Q3 Do staff know the procedure for an EV or battery fire?

WHAT NON-COMPLIANCE COSTS YOU

THE FINE

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BEYOND THE FINE

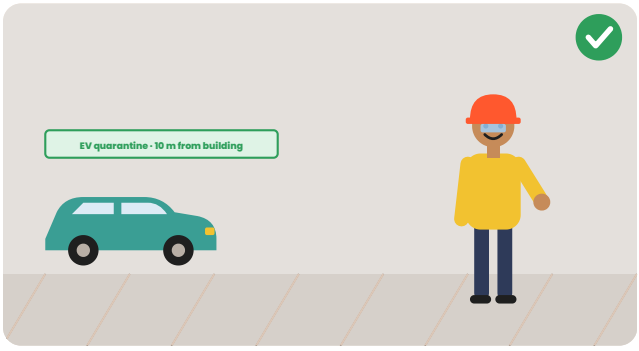
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REAL ENFORCEMENT

EV

Damaged lithium-ion batteries can reignite days later. Fire services increasingly expect dealers to plan for EV fires.

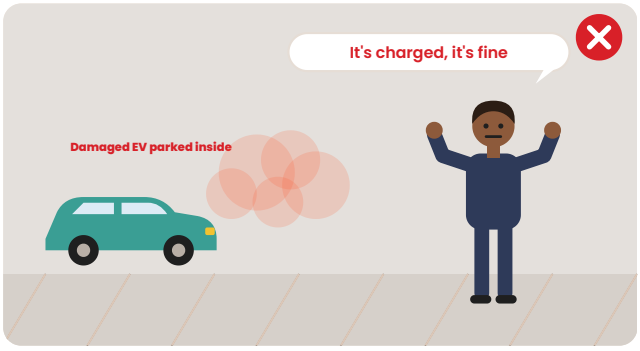
✔ RIGHT WAY



Damaged EV quarantined outside.

✖ WRONG WAY

UNLIMITED + PRISON



Damaged EV parked inside the workshop.

PURPOSE

Lithium-ion fires are hard to put out and can reignite. The risk is growing with every EV sold.

FIX IT WITHIN

◷ 72 hours

AUDIT CRITERIA · PASS WHEN

- Quarantine area
- Charging bays assessed
- EV fire procedure
- Staff briefed

IDEAL WAY OF AUDITING

1. Walk EV areas
2. Check the risk assessment
3. Ask staff about the procedure

Evidence: Photos + procedure.

WORST CASE An EV fire inside a showroom can destroy the building. The FRA gap behind it is an **unlimited fine**.

FIX IT BEFORE THE FIRE SERVICE VISITS

Your 30-day fire safety action plan.

Today

- [ ] **FIR-02** Flammables & Paint Storage (DSEAR)
  Immediate
- [ ] **FIR-03** Escape Routes Clear
  Immediate

This week

- [ ] **FIR-04** Alarms & Emergency Lighting Tested
  72 hours
- [ ] **FIR-06** EV & Battery Fire Risk
  72 hours
- [ ] **FIR-01** Fire Risk Assessment
  7 days
- [ ] **FIR-05** Extinguishers, Training & Drills
  7 days

This month

Re-audit the site in 30 days.

?/6 Count your passes. Every fail is a potential **criminal charge** for the responsible person.

SOURCES

- GOV.UK: Fire Safety Order enforcement and sanctions for non-compliance · gov.uk
- DutyRoom: 34 fire safety prosecutions, from blocked exits to a £362,000 fine · dutyroom.com
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; DSEAR 2002 · legislation.gov.uk

Disclaimer. For compliance-audit guidance only; not legal advice. Fine figures come from published prosecution summaries.

AUDIT SIGN-OFF

DEALERSHIP / SITE	AUDITOR	DATE	SCORE __ / 6

BRANCH / DEALER PRINCIPAL SIGNATURE	COMPLIANCE LEAD SIGNATURE