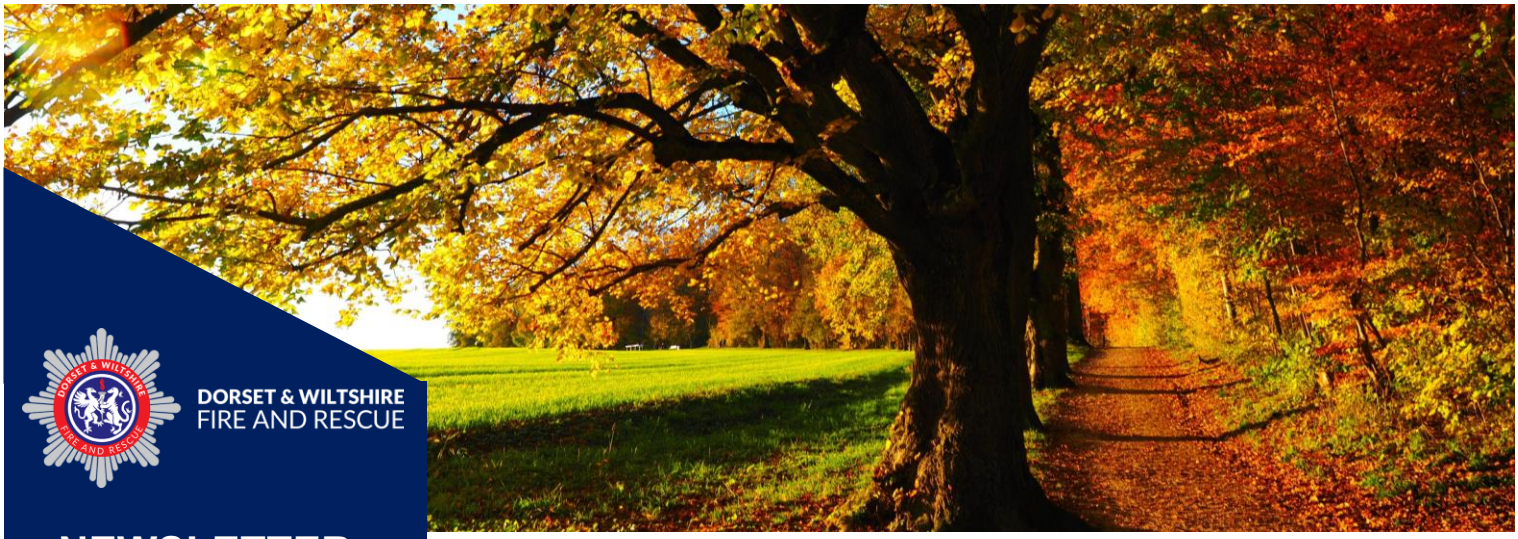


DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

NEWSLETTER

Issue 3 – October 2026

WELCOME

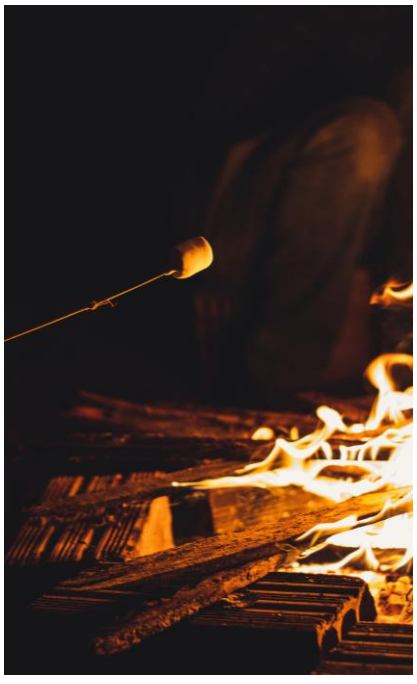
Through our newsletters we will keep you up to date on new legislation, as well as provide guidance on how to reduce the risk of fire in your business

As autumn events and seasonal celebrations get underway, decorative flower walls, floral arches and artificial greenery are becoming increasingly popular. While they create an attractive backdrop, many are made from combustible materials that can burn rapidly and produce large amounts of smoke if ignited.

Recent fires in busy late-night venues are a reminder that the risks associated with nightclubs, bars and pubs can exist anywhere, day or night. Dark environments, loud music, crowded conditions and the effects of alcohol can make it harder for people to recognise danger and evacuate quickly in an emergency. If you own or work in this type of business, find out what your responsibilities are on page 3.

Did you know? We run free fire safety webinars!
Click here to sign up.

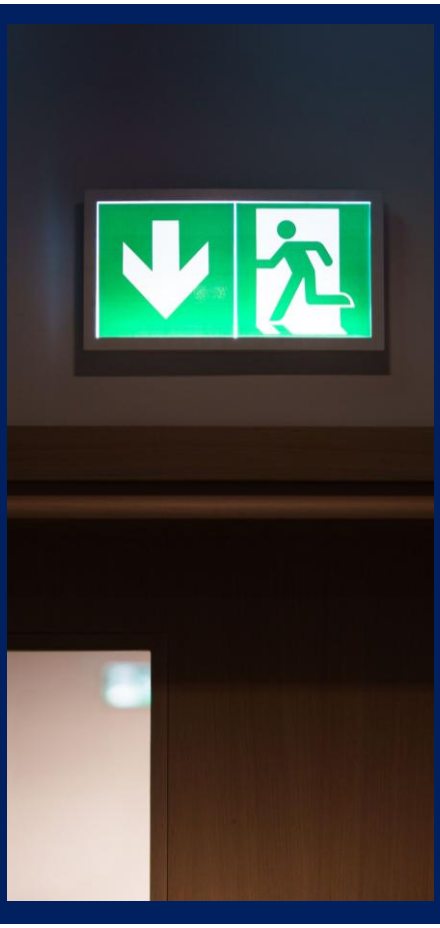




AUTUMN SUMMARY

In this issue, we will cover the following topics:

- Emergency lighting & heating (Page 2)
- Lithium-ion batteries (Page 2)
- Selling fireworks – store them safely (Page 2)
- Events & celebrations – The party season (Page 3)



AS THE NIGHTS DRAW IN: CHECK EMERGENCY LIGHTING & HEATING

With shorter daylight hours and colder weather, it's essential that businesses review their emergency lighting and heating arrangements.

Emergency lighting plays a vital role in helping people evacuate safely during a power failure or fire. Ensure your emergency lighting system is tested regularly and serviced by a competent person in accordance with the relevant standards (**BS 5266).** Any faults should be rectified promptly.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has chosen 'Cold Weather' as its monthly theme for November, highlighting the importance of using portable heaters safely. See our tips below:

- Position heaters well away from combustible materials such as stock, packaging, furniture and decorations.
- Ensure they have been EET (PAT) tested.
- Switch heaters off when rooms are unoccupied.
- Damaged electrical equipment and overloaded sockets remain a common cause of workplace fires, so regular inspections and safe use of electrical appliances are essential.

LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

Lithium-ion batteries are found in many everyday devices, but if they are damaged, misused or disposed of incorrectly they can cause serious fires. DWFRS is attending an increasing number of incidents involving lithium-ion batteries, so help us prevent these fires.

Never put batteries in general waste or recycling bins. Always take them to a suitable battery recycling facility to help keep bin crews and waste sites safe.

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service | Batteries

SELLING FIREWORKS - STORE THEM SAFELY

Businesses selling fireworks have additional responsibilities to reduce the risk of fire and explosion.

The sale of fireworks is restricted to:

- Between 15 October and 10 November
- Between 26 December and 31 December
- The three days before and the day of:
  - Diwali
  - Lunar New Year

It is illegal to sell fireworks to anyone under the age of 18. Fireworks should be stored in suitable, secure locations away from flammable materials, with appropriate signage in place and restricted access to storage areas and display cabinets. Storage arrangements should always be supported by a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment.

Review your fire safety arrangements before stock arrives.



For fireworks advice relating to your area, visit your Local Authority website.

EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS – THE PARTY SEASON

Key responsibilities of the responsible person for licensed premises:

- Carrying out a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment (remember to include all seasonal and temporary decorations) and acting on the findings.
- Keeping all escape routes and exits clear, unobstructed and unlocked during trading hours.
- Providing and maintaining suitable fire detection, emergency lighting and other fire safety systems.
- A comprehensive fire safety strategy helps you meet your legal responsibilities, protect people and, most importantly, save lives.
- Ensuring staff are trained to respond effectively in an emergency.
- Reviewing fire safety arrangements whenever the venue layout, occupancy or use changes, including temporary or seasonal installations.

Common causes of serious fires in licensed premises include pyrotechnics and theatrical effects, electrical faults from lighting and sound systems, overcrowding, blocked or locked exits, and flammable decorations and furnishings.

Simple precautions save lives. Regularly check exits, test emergency lighting, inspect electrical installations, manage occupancy levels and ensure all staff understand evacuation procedures. A comprehensive fire safety strategy ensures compliance with your legal requirements and saves lives.

For more information visit our website - Events and celebrations.

OUR SEPTEMBER RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME SEMINAR FEEDBACK

In September, we hosted two fire safety seminars for registered managers of residential care homes and professionals working within the care sector. The sessions provided an opportunity to share practical case studies and highlight key fire safety requirements.

“The content and trainers were great; it was very engaging and an enjoyable morning.”

“I found the Fire Safety Care Seminar very useful and informative. It increased my understanding of fire safety requirements within care settings and highlighted key areas to consider during quality monitoring visits.”

“Really interesting and all presenters were knowledgeable and engaging.”

“I feel the seminar was good use of my time. It highlighted the importance of staff response and confidence of how to respond to a fire is very important. I will visit this subject with staff ASAP.”

“Really informative session.”



2027 WEBINARS – Further dates to be added.

Fire Safety Basics – 20 January 10am to 11.30am.

Fire Safety in heritage/historic buildings – 12 April 12pm to 1.30pm. Sign up now!

USEFUL LINKS

Risk assessment guidance
Fire safety and the law
Building regulations
Events and celebrations

Check out our socials below:

If you do not wish to be contacted with this newsletter in the future, please email businessfiresafety@dwfire.org.uk.

www.dwfire.org.uk