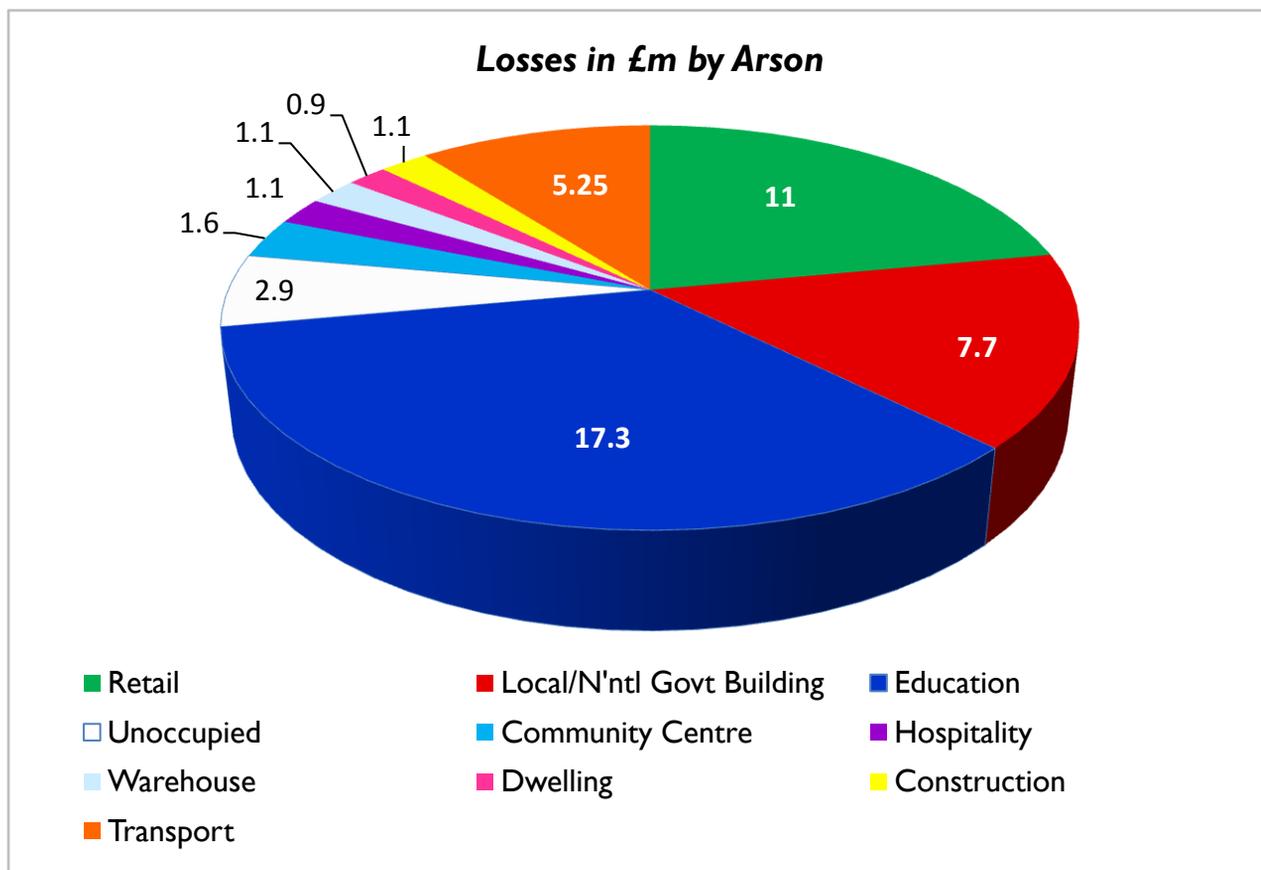


No BS Fact Sheet No. 17

Arson in Commerce & Industry



Surveys show that virtually no industry sector is safe from the attention of the arsonist. During a recent, one year period, there were 128 serious arson fires in the UK, each involving a direct loss in excess of £50,000 and of these, 76% occurred between 6pm and 6am. The “Top 10” occupancies most susceptible to an arson attack are shown below...



Further analysis of the problem shows that arson fires often occur in warehouses or storage areas where large quantities of high value goods may be stored with relatively few staff working there. As these areas are common to all industries, with even offices having potentially vulnerable stationery stores, some of the following sections are directed particularly towards the problems associated with storage, including the handling of waste materials.

A simple guide to assessing the arson threat to a building, ten statements describing measures for effective arson risk management are set out in the table overleaf. For each of the responsible person's buildings, each statement should be rated on a scale of zero to ten, where ten indicates strong agreement with the statement, and zero indicates strong disagreement with the statement. If a mark of four or less is given for any item, consideration should be given to the effect that this will have in increasing the risk of arson. The total of all the ratings, out of a maximum of 100, will give an indication of the overall arson risk – the lower the figure, the lower the level of protective measures in place and the greater risk of arson.

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A simple arson risk assessment for commerce and industry...

Method of Control	Marks Awarded
<p>1. Awareness of vulnerability to arson attack Management are alert to the possibility of arson attacks from employees and from outsiders. Employees are selected carefully and good labour relations are maintained, so that no employees have an incentive to commit arson.</p>	
<p>2. Security measures to prevent intruders entering the building Intruders are deterred by boundary fences or challenged before reaching the building. The building itself is secure.</p>	
<p>3. Detection of intruders If security measures are breached, an intruder will be detected.</p>	
<p>4. Control of inherent ignition sources other than arson Inherent ignition sources are kept to a minimum to avoid staff and visitors causing fires.</p>	
<p>5. Control of easily ignitable materials Procedures ensure that quantities of easily combustible materials do not accumulate inside or outside the building, especially in areas where ignition could occur.</p>	
<p>6. Detection of fire at an early stage A suitable fire warning system has been installed and there is no reason to suppose that the fire service may not attend promptly in the event of fire occurring.</p>	
<p>7. Installation of fire extinguishing systems related to the potential fire growth rate If the combustibility of the stored materials is high and/or the fire station is distant, sprinklers or an equivalent installed system are fitted.</p>	
<p>8. Division of areas by fire-break walls to limit the extent of fire spread Large areas are compartmented to control fire spread, and separate buildings are not too closely spaced.</p>	
<p>9. Segregation of high value stock into appropriately protected warehouse areas Any high value stock is separated into especially secure and appropriately protected warehouse areas.</p>	
<p>10. General competence and reliability of staff Staff are trained in and operate good fire safety management practices and react correctly to any untoward occurrences.</p>	
TOTAL	

Undoubtedly, an arson risk assessment is a great starting point as it allows you to follow a structured process designed to minimise such an incident from occurring.

Failures in building management can lead to serious fires occurring, whether from arson or other causes. It should be realised that the potential for a building to burn down is always there and that arson is merely another ignition source in addition to those inherently present, though a very important one.

A number of different management measures can be used to control the events that may lead to serious fire damage, particularly in the case of arson.

