INSTITUTE OF FIRE PREVENTION OFFICERS

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INSTITUTE OF FIRE SAFETY OFFICERS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Executive Committee of the Institute of Fire Prevention Officers (IFPO) acknowledges that it is the vast knowledge and experience of the IFPO membership that helps make the Institute what it is today.

Recently the Institute has played a major part in the national task force which has drawn up the national standard for Fire Risk Assessors. As a result, the Institute has made minor amendments to its assessment methodology for those seeking inclusion on the IFPO Fire Risk Assessors (FRA) Register, in line with the national standards. In future members entered onto the IFPO FRA Register, will need to demonstrate that they continue to develop their personal and practical skills and are maintaining an up to date knowledge of fire safety.

To assist our members with these matters the Institute has developed its own Continuing Professional Development Scheme, which will be mandatory for members wishing to be placed on or wish to remain on the FRA Register.

What is Continuing Professional Development?

CPD helps to create a structured career path, as well as safeguarding your professional Fire Risk Assessor status on the IFPO FRA Register. CPD is about your personal skills, knowledge and expertise, and reflections on what you've gained or achieved.

CPD sends your employer, colleagues and clients a strong message that you're serious about keeping your skills and experience fresh and fit-for-purpose.

How does CPD work?

- You create a framework to identify your skill gaps be they technical or personal.
- You plan to do activities that will refresh or expand your knowledge and experience, to fill the skill gaps.
- On the basis of what you've gained from the activities you've completed, you update your personal CPD Record.
- The system is entirely self-managed, though support is available if required.

As a professional organisation we acknowledge the honesty of our members, so we trust you to judge and maintain your own CPD entries.   Although there is an auditing process which IFPO can implement.   Your CPD documentation is retained by you, which means you can view or update your records at any time. We've designed your CPD with the busy practitioner in mind.   It's easy to use, so you'll be able to spend more time developing as a professional rather than filling out forms.   The CPD materials are supplied in an electronic as well as paper format so you can keep your CPD record on your computer, if you so choose.

Do all members have to do CPD?

All FRA Register Members have to carry out CPD to safeguard their Register Membership status.

Other Members are welcome to take part, but it is purely optional, although Student, Graduate, Technician and Associate members may find it useful as CPD can be used when any membership upgrades are sought.

What framework to use when planning CPD activities

Professional training can play a big part in your development, but you can include a range of other activities when planning your CPD, including:

- working on one-off internal projects,
- managing budgets,
- designing training or learning programmes,
- delivering training or learning programmes or
- voluntary work in the local community, using your professional skills.

No professional should stand still, you should be learning all the time.

CPD asks you to think about and record what you're doing, and plan and structure the most appropriate steps to take you forward.

Your CPD Questions answered.

What is Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) gives you the opportunity to create a structured career path and safeguard your professional status. By using a framework to identify your skill gaps, be they technical or personal and then creating an action plan to refresh or expand your knowledge and experience. You can make a real difference to your professional effectiveness.

Which categories of member must join the CPD scheme?

All FRA Register Members have to carry out CPD to safeguard their Register Membership status. Other Members are welcome to take part, but it is purely optional, although Student, Graduate, Technician and Associate members may find it useful, as CPD can be used when any membership upgrades are sought.

Why do I need to do CPD?

Keeping up with and recording your professional development lets you show that you're always striving to improve as a professional. **It's also a requirement of our Fire Risk Assessors Register membership.** It will give you greater status, but this comes with a responsibility to show that you're keeping on top of the demands of your job.

CPD isn't a burden it's really just a case of thinking about what you're doing and planning your next steps.

I'm an Associate Member – can I still do CPD?

Yes, it's not mandatory but you can still join the scheme and it may be useful if you seek an upgrade in the future.

I'm not very comfortable with computers; do I have to do my CPD electronically?

The CPD materials are supplied in an electronic as well as paper format so you can choose how to keep your CPD record.

I'll be on maternity leave for the next year – what should I do about my CPD?

You can record the time that you're on maternity leave on your CPD Record. Just enter it in your development plan. If you're not able to get the minimum requirement of 30 points within your 3 year cycle then you can advise us of the reason when you seek re-registration.

I've been on long-term sick leave and have been unable to do my CPD for 18 months – what should I do?

You can record the time that you're on sick leave on your CPD Record. Just enter it in your development plan. If you're not able to get the minimum requirement of 30 points within your 3 year cycle then you can advise us of the reason when you seek re-registration.

I've been made redundant and haven't updated my CPD for some time – what should I do?

If you're not able to work, let us know by recording this in your development plan. You can also reduce the number of points by up to 10 per year. Contact us if you need to know more.

I've been undertaking a higher level of study, how do I tell you about this in my CPD record?

When you undertake any form of study, you need to break it down by modules or subject areas. If you break the information down this way you'll be able to fully record it in your CPD record. You may want to name the first activity Module 1 – Health and safety, Module 2 – Risk assessment and so on.

I'm at the end of my 3 year CPD cycle – what happens next?

Firstly, you will receive a reminder e-mail in advance of your cycle end date, to inform you how long you have left to complete it. You will also be asked to complete the 'CPD Summary Report' and submit this with your application to renew your FRA Register status.

You will need to retain your CPD Record and any supporting evidence for three years in case you are subject of an audit. Once your 'CPD Summary Report' has been received and vetted you will receive a confirmation email with an electronic certificate.

Guidance for completing your IFPO CPD Record

Your CPD Register is supplied with easy to complete templates, for each section of your record. Information is provided below to assist you in how to maintain your record.

Creating a Development Plan

The development plan is normally for three years, but should be reviewed regularly during this period to ensure it is relevant and up to date. It recognises that plans can change as circumstances alter so these plans can be amended.

Step 1

The first step in creating your development plan is an assessment of your current level of professional development.

To do this, you need to:

- use a range of methods and techniques to assess your knowledge, skills, experience and performance; these should be based on valid and reliable evidence from your current professional role, including formal appraisals where appropriate
- consider and review the nature of your current practice and career path and
- evaluate past goals and achievements.

Useful questions to consider include:

- What are my main fire safety duties and what do I need to do to continue to carry out these duties to a high standard?
- Do I have sufficient skills in areas other than fire safety?
- Where do my strengths and weaknesses lie?

Another important issue to consider at this stage is what your career objectives are.

Step 2

Once you've got a clear idea of your current level of professional development, the next step is to outline a realisable development plan. Your plan will consist of proposed CPD activities that will keep your core skills and knowledge up to speed, contribute to the development of new professional skills, and help in the acquisition of transferable skills.

Step 3

The activities that you include in your plan only contribute to your CPD once you have completed them and reflected on and evaluated their effectiveness in terms of maintaining your core skills and knowledge, developing new professional skills, and/or developing skills in areas other than fire safety. This process of undertaking reflective practice on your CPD activities is fundamental to the CPD process.

The final stage of your development plan, therefore, is the process of quantifying the amount of development an activity is worth and allocating CPD points to your CPD record.

In simple terms, goals for the development of practice are set for a three-year period.

The activities you then undertake should be towards these goals. Once you have undertaken an activity it should be reviewed against the goal as to its effectiveness. It is this reflection that forms the greatest part of CPD, undertaking activities without reflecting on their value are of little use.

Recording Activities and Allocating CPD points

When you complete an activity, you need to assess its value in terms of the amount of personal development you've gained from it. This personal assessment or 'reflection' is how you earn your CPD points. You must then record the activity on an Activities Record Sheet and allocate the points in the relevant sections. (One sheet per activity recorded)

Maintenance of Skills

> Maintaining core professional skills and knowledge is where you record those activities you undertake that keep your core competence up to date.

New Professional Skills

> Developing new professional skills is where you record those activities you undertake that provide you with new knowledge and skills in Fire and Safety

Transferable Management Skills

> Developing transferable/management skills is where you record those activities you undertake that broaden your management skills, as well as other activities you may undertake for other parts of your role.

Reflective statement

For each activity you record, you need to add a reflective statement which sets out the benefit you received by undertaking the activity, how it has developed you, and whether it has met the aims and objectives that you set at the beginning of the activity. It is this reflective statement that will guide you to the amount of points you award it.

Each activity you complete and reflect on carries a maximum of 3 CPD points. How many points you award yourself depends on the level of development you feel you've achieved.

Use the following as a general guide:

- 3 points for an activity that has been extremely useful in developing new skills, or introduced new concepts to existing skills, and inspired you to do more research or other work.
- 2 points for a useful activity that has introduced new concepts for reflection and helped you put them into use.
- 1 point for confirming facts you already knew but needed to reflect on.
- 0 points for activities which are commonplace for you.

Distributing points

It is important to remember that the maximum number of points you can award yourself in respect of any one activity is 3 points.

It is also important to note that it is your decision as to how you distribute points to the various sections of your online CPD record. So, for example, if you decide to award yourself 2 points for an activity, and that activity was valuable in terms of both maintaining your core skills and developing transferable skills, you can distribute 1 point to each section of on the Activity Record.

For activities that last longer than one day, you may wish to allocate more than the maximum of 3 points. In such circumstances, add sufficient entries to your record to allow you to allocate the required number of points, and clearly state in your reflection why you're allocating more than the maximum. So, if you want to allocate 8 points, add three activities to your record (two entries with 3 points and one with 2 points)

Similarly, if any of your planned activities are particularly large in size or long in duration, you may allocate points at various stages. If, for example you are working towards an MSc, you may award yourself points when you've completed a module or finished a term's work. What is crucial is that you reflect on what you've completed and award yourself points on the basis of the value that the activity has had for you.

You should review all your activities after about six months to assess how much the initial development you acquired has impacted on your normal work activities. If the impact has been significant and you can demonstrate it, you can record another activity to show this.

Accumulating points

To successfully complete each three-year CPD cycle, you must accumulate a minimum of 30 CPD points.

Depending on what stage you're at in your career, you may wish to concentrate on one section and less on the other two. For example, if you're a seasoned practitioner you may wish to focus more on developing transferable skills and less on maintaining and developing your professional skills. Whatever you decide, your total points for each three-year cycle should be no less than 30.

Available Support

If you have any questions about your CPD first check the 'FAQ's on CPD' in your CPD Record or you can access it on the IFPO Website

www.ifpo.org.uk

If you cannot find an answer to your question, e-mail secretary@ifpo.org.uk with your question and we will respond with an answer.