FSBS
FIRE SAFETY
BUSINESS SALES



The 90-day test

Can your fire safety business run without you?

2027 edition 10-minute read

By Simon Read, Founder & Managing Director

A practical guide with an owner-dependency scorecard

Images are illustrative.

The whole guide on one page

Start with the work that comes back to your desk. Then show who can take it on, within their competence and authority, using a completed job as evidence.

The test	What good looks like	Ask for
1. Map the work, not the job title	Each fire safety task has a named owner and cover	A task list matched to services
2. Check the limits of the cover	Competence and scheme roles fit the actual work	Module scope and issuer answers
3. Make the job file usable	Another person can find the decision and its evidence	A complete sample job file
4. Observe work before stepping back	Delegated work is checked within agreed limits	A dated record of the test
5. Price the work that remains	Replacement work is allowed for once	A reconciled profit bridge
6. Leave a handover someone can use	Open items have a person and a next action	A live exceptions list

The two-page scorecard covers ten tasks. Red means no evidenced cover, amber means cover needs proving, and green means work observed within agreed limits.

Bring one unresolved task to a free first conversation. There is no need to have decided to sell.

Set the test around a real job

Use this guide's chosen ninety-day planning period to prepare, observe and review a handover. Do not withdraw support from safety-critical work to make the exercise look successful.

Stage	Your evidence	Decision
Prepare	Tasks, limits and competent cover named	Is the work safe to delegate?
Observe	Completed work and review notes	Did the person stay within those limits?
Review	Exceptions and replacement work recorded	What still needs your involvement?

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere is invented. Its annual revenue is £1,500,000: installation £600,000, maintenance £600,000, remedials £210,000 and externally delivered assessment work £90,000. Its reported profit is £210,000, after £50,000 of owner pay.

Use Fenmere to follow the arithmetic. Use your own completed jobs to assess whether a handover works. A quiet telephone is not proof that a technical decision has been handled properly.

For each test, agree who checks the result and what stops the work. If the named competent cover is absent, stop the delegation test and restore suitable support.

1. Map the work, not the job title

Write down what you actually do when a customer asks for an alarm alteration. Separate the survey, technical review, price, access arrangements and customer approval.

What good looks like

BAFE separates fire safety schemes and uses modules within its SP203 schemes [1]. Match your task list to the services and modules your organisation actually covers.

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere's £90,000 of externally delivered assessment work stays separate from its own installation and maintenance work. The test asks who commissions that work and checks what comes back.

Task	Evidence to put beside the name
Survey an alarm alteration	Survey record and scope reviewed
Prepare a quotation	Assumptions, exclusions and approval
Arrange site access	Customer agreement and restrictions

The buyer's question

Which part of this job still comes back to you? Show the last completed example, including anything you had to correct.

What to check

Choose a completed job. Mark every point where your decision was needed, then name the proposed cover for each point.

2. Check the limits of the cover

A name in a deputy column is a starting point. Read the competence evidence and the scope of the work before you rely on it.

What good looks like

BAFE's SP203-1 updates describe module Lead Individuals and certification-body acceptance and surveillance of lead roles [2] [3]. Ask the issuer about the actual personnel change you are considering.

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

For Fenmere, handing over a quotation does not by itself prove cover for technical review. Its test records those tasks separately and leaves an unproved role open.

Question	Evidence to request
Which work is covered?	Current organisation and module scope
Who can perform and review it?	Competence records for that work
What does the proposed change mean?	Written answer from the relevant issuer

For design and building work within building regulations in England, the regulator distinguishes individual competence from organisational capability [4]. Apply that check to relevant work, not to every maintenance visit.

The buyer's question

Can the named person carry out this role after your involvement changes? Show the evidence, including any conditions still to meet.

What to check

Keep the delegation within the person's demonstrated competence and accepted role. Leave unsupported work with suitable competent cover.

3. Make the job file usable

Ask the proposed deputy to find the latest agreed scope and explain what remains open. You are testing the file, not their memory of a conversation with you.

What good looks like

BAFE's published updates cover management procedures, records and a commissioning/handover module [2] [3]. Use separate document questions for installation, commissioning/handover and maintenance.

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere's test keeps an installation decision beside its supporting record. A maintenance entry does not stand in for evidence that commissioning and handover were completed.

File section	Practical evidence test
Agreed scope	Can the deputy find the latest approved version?
Technical decision	Can they identify who checked it and why?
Open defect	Can they find the action, owner and customer response?
Handover	Can they find what was issued and what remains?

The buyer's question

If you were unavailable, could another competent person explain this job from the record? Show where the next action is written.

What to check

Use one completed job and one open job. Record each missing item, who will supply it and where the final version will be kept.

4. Observe work before stepping back

Choose a bounded task that the proposed deputy is competent and authorised to handle. Agree the review and the stop condition before it starts.

What good looks like

Match the task to the person's competence and the organisation's scheme scope [1] [2] [3]. Keep a dated record of what was completed, checked and corrected.

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere uses the same open job file for its before-and-after review. It records whether the deputy found the unresolved issue and followed the agreed escalation route, rather than counting days without a call.

Before	During	After
Name the task and its limits	Observe work within that scope	Retain the completed record
Name competent cover	Escalate an exception	Record what needed your help
Agree when to stop	Stop if cover is absent	Decide what can be delegated next

The buyer's question

What evidence changed this task from amber to green? Show the work reviewed, not just the name of the person taking over.

What to check

If the named competent cover is absent, stop the delegation test. Do not leave safety-critical work unsupported to complete the exercise.

5. Price the work that remains

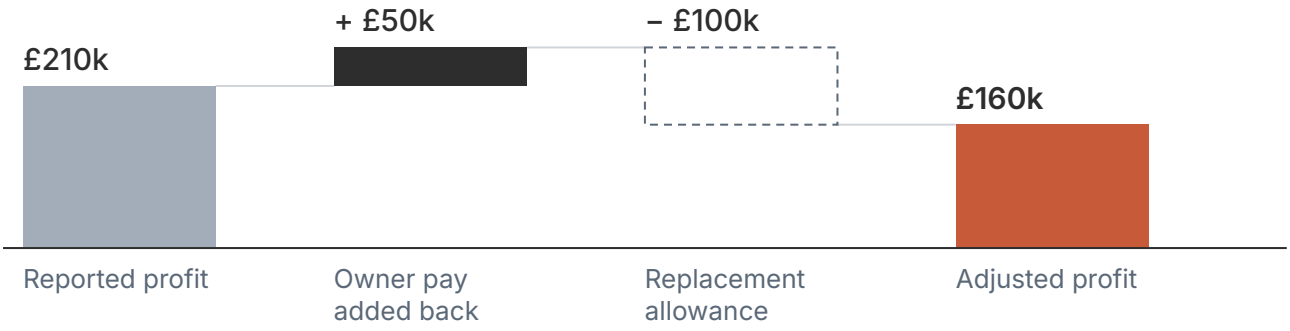
Cost the fire-alarm design review and commissioning/handover work you still carry. Ask your accountant how replacement costs affect the profit you present.

What good looks like

Match costed roles to alarm job files and accepted module lead cover [2] [3]. Reconcile existing owner pay and replacement costs once.

Fenmere's replacement cost bridge

Illustrative



£210,000 plus £50,000 less £100,000 leaves £160,000.

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

The £100,000 replacement allowance is an invented all-in assumption, not a pay benchmark. Fenmere adds back £50,000 of owner pay to reported profit of £210,000, then deducts £100,000. Adjusted profit is £160,000.

Evidence	Question it answers
Current pay in the accounts	Has this cost already reduced reported profit?
Alarm review and handover	Who will do and check this work?
Module lead cover	What supports the role and its cost?

The buyer's question

Which alarm tasks and module roles does the allowance cover? Show the job files and accepted cover beside each cost.

6. Leave a handover someone can use

Close the test with an exceptions list. Give each open decision a named owner, a next action and a place to find the supporting file.

What good looks like

In England, the Home Office explains duties for Responsible Persons to retain fire-safety information and pass relevant information to an incoming Responsible Person [5]. Keep that premises duty distinct from the sale of a contractor.

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere's handover list separates its own open service work from information held for a customer's premises. It asks who needs each record and who has authority to provide it.

Open item	What the handover needs
Failed test or unresolved defect	Status, competent decision-maker and next action
Customer approval	Outstanding question and authorised contact
External assessment	Commissioned scope, returned report and review status
Out-of-hours issue	Named cover and escalation arrangements

The buyer's question

What remains dependent on you at the end of the test? Show the open list as well as the completed work.

What to check

Keep any unproved task amber or red. Decide what needs more evidence before reducing your involvement further.

Succession does not have to mean disappearing

An acquirer's 2024 annual report records the acquisition of a fire and security installation and maintenance business in April 2023. It reports £2.0 million of post-completion revenue in the year ended March 2024 [7]. This gives a low-single-million revenue example in relevant work.

A fire engineering consultancy said it became employee-owned through an Employee Ownership Trust in December 2024. Its announcement described succession and continued involvement, with leadership remaining in place at transition [6].

The revenue measure is not prior-year standalone turnover, a sale price or a valuation multiple; neither example is an exact match to Fenmere or proves that a handover succeeded.

What the public record supplies	What to settle for your business
A completed trade acquisition	Which ownership route you want to explore
A reported revenue measure	How the work compares with your firm
Continued leadership in an EOT transition	The work and authority you would retain

Separate ownership from day-to-day work. Use the scorecard to show what is ready to hand over while you remain involved.

Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere's completed files and open-task list show what needs attention without assuming an ownership route.

Bring the unresolved task

Bring your scorecard and one supporting job file.

01285 704466 a free first conversation

Owner-dependency scorecard

Write the current task owner, competent deputy and evidence observed. Enter R, A or G before and after the test: red means no evidenced cover; amber means cover needs proving; green means work observed within agreed limits. Use both pages.

Business and test dates

Task	Current owner	Competent deputy	Evidence observed	Before R/A/G	After R/A/G
Survey an alarm alteration					
Review the design					
Approve quotation scope					
Resolve a failed test					
Check commissioning and handover					

Follow-up action, person responsible and review date

If the named competent cover is absent, stop the delegation test and restore suitable support. Keep safety-critical work supported.

Type your answers in and save a copy, or print the page and fill it in by hand. Nothing you enter is sent to us.

Owner-dependency scorecard continued

Write the current task owner, competent deputy and evidence observed. Enter R, A or G before and after the test: red means no evidenced cover; amber means cover needs proving; green means work observed within agreed limits.

Business and test dates

Task	Current owner	Competent deputy	Evidence observed	Before R/A/G	After R/A/G
Arrange customer access					
Obtain customer approval					
Commission an external assessor					
Maintain the customer evidence file					
Handle out-of-hours escalation					

Follow-up action, person responsible and review date

If the named competent cover is absent, stop the delegation test and restore suitable support. Name the follow-up action, person responsible and review date below each table.

Type your answers in and save a copy, or print the page and fill it in by hand. Nothing you enter is sent to us.

Sources and validity

1. BAFE: What areas of fire safety does BAFE cover?, undated. Scheme distinctions and modular scope; scheme requirements are not a universal statutory licence.
2. BAFE: SP203-1 version 8.0 summary of key changes, August 2023. Published summary of module roles, procedures and records.
3. BAFE: SP203-1 version 8.0.1 update, October 2023. Lead roles and commissioning/handover module; no sale-transfer outcome is inferred.
4. Building Safety Regulator: Design and building work: meeting building requirements, updated Mar 2024. England, work within building regulations. Higher-risk building work has additional requirements. This is not a rule for every maintenance visit.
5. Home Office: Fire safety responsibilities under Section 156, updated Oct 2023. Used for England premises and roles covered by the Fire Safety Order. A contractor's sale alone does not establish a change of Responsible Person.
6. Design Fire Consultants: DFC becomes employee-owned, December 2024. The company's own account of its December transition and stated aims; no exact completion day, price or finance terms are supplied.
7. Marlowe plc: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024, note 12, printed page 93. Financial statements authorised August 2024; separate publication day not established. Victory Fire Limited acquisition completed April 2023. The £2.0 million is post-completion revenue in the year ended March 2024, not prior-year standalone turnover. Low-single-million scale is an editorial description of that measure, not an exact comparison with Fenmere. No price, profit, financing, certification continuity or seller motive is inferred.

Checked Oct 2026. We review every guide after the Autumn Budget in October 2026. Take advice on the legal, technical and accounting questions in your own proposed handover.

The exercise. Ninety days and the red, amber and green definitions are this guide's practical test, not legal requirements, a certification procedure or a market benchmark. The published BAFE summaries support the limited statements used here; ask the relevant issuer about your actual arrangements.

The example. Fenmere Fire Protection is invented, not a Reads client or a real sale. Its figures illustrate arithmetic, not market value or replacement pay. The images are illustrative.

Which task still comes back to you?



Bring that task, your scorecard and one supporting job file to a free first conversation. There is no obligation to go further.

Simon Read
Founder & Managing Director

01285 704466

enquiries@firesafetybusinessforsale.co.uk
firesafetybusinessforsale.co.uk

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Prepared by Simon Read | Reads Advice Partners Ltd | firesafetybusinessforsale.co.uk
The Alliston Centre, Stroud Rd, Cirencester GL7 6JR
01285 704466
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