

Instructional Design Document

Fire Evacuation Compliance Module

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

This document outlines the instructional design decisions made in the development of a 15-minute eLearning compliance module on fire evacuation procedure. The module was developed in response to a fire drill in which staff took twice as long as the company target to evacuate the building. The design process was supported by generative AI (Claude, Anthropic) as a thinking partner and content development tool — a process documented in the final section of this report.

Authoring Tool	Adobe Captivate
Tracking Standard	SCORM 1.2
Target Duration	15 minutes
Delivery	Desktop, during working hours
Audience	All company staff
Completion Tracking	Yes — required for compliance record

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The Performance Gap

A company fire drill revealed two specific and measurable failures: the building took twice as long as the target time to evacuate, with the Sales department identified as the slowest to exit. Additionally, several members of the HR department used the lift rather than the fire escape, despite this being explicitly against procedure. Analysis also revealed that staff had previously completed online fire safety training but had engaged with it superficially, clicking through without meaningful engagement.

Knowledge Gap vs. Motivation Gap

A critical insight from the analysis was that this is primarily a motivation and attitude problem, not a knowledge problem. The majority of staff are vaguely aware of the correct procedure. Previous training failed not because it lacked information, but because it did not create a felt sense of consequence or personal responsibility. Designing another content-heavy course would almost certainly produce the same result.

This distinction fundamentally shaped the design approach: rather than restating procedure, the module needed to create genuine engagement with the consequences of non-compliance, and to address the social dynamics of behaviour in an emergency.

Audience Analysis

Three audience segments were identified from the drill data, each representing a distinct failure pattern:

- Sales department — slowest to evacuate. Typically competitive and results-driven; likely to deprioritise drills as interruptions to productive work. Respond well to urgency, consequence, and direct challenge.
- HR department — used the lift despite knowing the procedure. Failure rooted in complacency and habitual behaviour rather than ignorance. The most important audience to reach because experience had created a false sense of safety.
- Receptionists and management — performed well in the drill. Receptionists in particular have a natural proximity to evacuation procedure as part of their role. Used as a positive model within the module.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Identify the safest way to leave the building and why using the lift is not appropriate.
- Demonstrate understanding of why taking personal possessions during evacuation endangers themselves and colleagues.
- Recognise the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour during a fire evacuation through realistic workplace scenarios.
- Describe the personal and legal consequences of failing to follow the company's fire evacuation procedure.

Note: Objectives three and four are designed specifically to address the motivation gap rather than the knowledge gap. Consequence and social responsibility are the primary levers for behaviour change in this context.

DESIGN DECISIONS

Scenario-Based Learning

Given the diagnosis of a motivation gap rather than a knowledge gap, a scenario-based approach was chosen over a traditional content-delivery format. Learners encounter realistic workplace situations featuring named colleagues, make decisions, and experience the consequences of those decisions. This approach is more likely to produce genuine reflection and behaviour change than slides and bullet points, and is significantly harder to click through without engagement.

Named Characters

Three named characters were developed, each representing one of the identified audience segments. Research consistently shows that named characters improve learner engagement and knowledge retention compared to a generic second-person approach. The characters were designed to be recognisable rather than caricatured — each failure is rooted in a believable human tendency rather than obvious wrongdoing.

Marco	Sales department. Grabs his laptop bag during evacuation. His failure is prioritising work over safety — a relatable tendency in a high-pressure sales environment.
Diane	HR department. Takes the lift despite knowing the procedure. Her failure is complacency born of experience — she has done it many times and nothing has ever happened.
Priya	Receptionist. Performs correctly throughout and serves as the module's learner guide. Her role as guide means she is present from the first screen, establishing her as a credible peer voice before she appears as a positive model in the visual content.

Priya as Learner Guide

A key design decision was to use Priya not only as a character within the scenarios but as the module's narrator and guide throughout. This solves two problems simultaneously: it establishes her as a positive behavioural model from the outset, and it changes the tone of consequence feedback from institutional to collegial. Feedback delivered by a trusted peer lands differently than feedback from an anonymous narrator — it is warmer, more direct, and significantly harder to dismiss.

Tone

The module uses a professional-with-weight tone throughout. Consequence feedback is factually grounded and direct without being punitive or preachy. Where possible, real-world evidence is cited to give the stakes credibility — for example, the behaviour of lift shafts during fires is described factually rather than hypothetically. Priya's voice uses 'we' and 'us' deliberately to frame fire safety as a shared responsibility rather than a top-down compliance requirement.

SCORM vs. xAPI

SCORM 1.2 was selected for this module rather than xAPI. The primary requirement is compliance tracking — confirming that each staff member has completed the module. SCORM handles this reliably and is supported by all major LMS platforms. xAPI would add value in a future iteration if the organisation wanted richer diagnostic data, such as which questions learners struggled with or how many attempts were required — but for a one-off compliance module, the additional complexity is not warranted.

MODULE STRUCTURE

The module follows a five-part structure designed to move learners from self-recognition to knowledge to applied practice:

Section	Content	Design Purpose
1. Introduction	Priya introduces herself and the drill result	Establishes the learner guide, sets stakes, creates personal relevance
2. Opening Scenario	Learner responds to the fire alarm — three-way choice	Creates self-recognition before instruction; harder to disengage from than a content screen
3. Branching Scenarios	Marco's possessions decision; Diane's lift decision	Applies knowledge in realistic context; consequence feedback addresses motivation gap
4. Procedure	Three focused screens covering route, possessions, and shared responsibility	Delivers essential knowledge concisely; visual rather than text-heavy
5. Knowledge Check	Four questions; SCORM completion trigger	Satisfies compliance requirement; tests engagement rather than rewarding click-through

THE ROLE OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE DESIGN PROCESS

This module was developed using Claude (Anthropic) as an AI thinking partner throughout the design process. The following documents how AI was used at each stage, both as a record of practice and as a demonstration of how generative AI can be meaningfully integrated into instructional design workflows.

Needs Analysis

Claude was used as a sounding board during the analysis phase, helping to surface the distinction between the knowledge gap and motivation gap based on the drill data provided. Prompting the AI with audience information and failure patterns produced a structured analysis that identified the Sales and HR segments as requiring different motivational approaches — a insight that directly shaped the character design.

Learning Objectives

Draft learning objectives were developed collaboratively with AI assistance, using Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework. Claude flagged where objectives were measuring recall rather than behaviour and suggested revisions that more accurately targeted the motivation gap — for example, shifting from 'list the correct

evacuation procedure' to 'recognise the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour through realistic scenarios.'

Character Development

The three character archetypes were developed through a structured conversation with Claude, beginning with the audience data and working toward recognisable human failure patterns. The AI's suggestion to use Priya as a learner guide rather than a separate scenario character was a significant design improvement that emerged from this iterative process, solving both the tone problem and the character presence problem simultaneously.

Scenario and Dialogue Writing

Full branching scenario content was drafted with AI assistance, including all three decision paths for both Marco and Diane's scenarios, and all consequence feedback text. The AI's ability to generate multiple versions of consequence feedback at different tonal registers allowed rapid iteration until the professional-with-weight tone was established. Factual grounding — such as the behaviour of lift shafts during fires — was verified independently before inclusion.

Knowledge Check Design

Assessment questions were drafted with AI assistance and reviewed against the learning objectives to ensure alignment. The AI was specifically useful in generating plausible distractor options — for example, option B in Question Two ('Leave without saying anything — ensure you don't waste time talking') was refined through discussion to create a distractor that sounds responsible on the surface, making it a genuinely useful wrong answer rather than an obvious one.

Reflection on AI-Assisted Design

The most significant value of AI in this process was not content generation but accelerated iteration and structured thinking. Having a thinking partner available at each stage of the design process — one that could respond to context, flag inconsistencies, and generate alternatives rapidly — compressed what would typically be a multi-day design process into a focused, iterative conversation. The designer's role throughout was curatorial: evaluating AI output, pushing back where needed, and making the judgement calls that required human understanding of the audience and organisational context.

This reflects what is likely to become the standard model for AI-assisted instructional design: not AI replacing the designer, but AI removing the friction from the design process so that the designer can focus on the decisions that matter most.

EVALUATION STRATEGY — KIRKPATRICK MODEL

The effectiveness of this module will be measured across four levels using the Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation. This framework moves from immediate learner reaction through to measurable business impact, providing a structured and proportionate approach to understanding whether the training achieved its goals.

Level 1 — Reaction

A brief post-completion questionnaire will be presented to learners immediately after finishing the module. This measures whether learners found the training relevant and felt equipped by it — a low-resource indicator of whether the content landed as intended.

Question A	Do you feel that this training was useful in preparing you for future evacuations?
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Question B	Are you confident that you know the company's fire evacuation procedure?
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Responses will be collected on a simple agree/disagree or five-point scale. While level one data alone cannot confirm that learning has taken place, a pattern of negative responses would indicate that the module needs review — particularly given that the previous training was perceived as generic and irrelevant by staff.

Level 2 — Learning

The four-question knowledge check at the end of the module serves as the level two measurement. It tests whether learners have understood the correct evacuation procedure, the rationale behind key rules, and their individual responsibility during an evacuation. SCORM completion is tied to passing this assessment, ensuring that learners cannot receive a completion record by clicking through without engaging with the content.

Pass rate data across the organisation, and by department, will provide useful diagnostic information — particularly in identifying whether the Sales or HR departments show lower comprehension scores, which would inform any future targeted interventions.

Level 3 — Behaviour

The primary level three measurement will take place during the next scheduled fire drill. Performance will be observed and recorded against two specific metrics: whether staff follow the correct evacuation procedure (no lift use, no retrieval of personal possessions), and whether the building is evacuated within the company's target time.

These metrics map directly to the performance gaps identified in the original drill and the learning objectives of this module. Departmental breakdown of results will allow comparison with the previous drill data, identifying whether the Sales and HR departments in particular show improvement. This level of measurement requires no additional infrastructure — it uses the existing drill observation process with added attention to the specific failure points this training addressed.

Level 4 — Results

Level four measures the organisational outcome that the training was ultimately designed to support. In this context, the business result is straightforward: reduced risk of harm, injury, or legal liability in the event of a real fire, and consistent compliance with the company's evacuation standards.

A successful level three outcome — correct procedure followed and target evacuation time achieved in the next drill — directly constitutes the desired business result at level four. No additional measurement infrastructure is required for this module. However, it is worth noting that in the event of a real fire emergency, any documented evidence of correct procedure being followed would also serve as level four evidence, and would additionally demonstrate the organisation's duty of care obligations having been met.

Should the drill data at level three show that specific departments continue to underperform, this would trigger a level four concern — indicating that the training alone was insufficient and that additional interventions (such as departmental briefings, updated signage, or changes to the physical environment) may be required to achieve the business result.