

Fire Safety Policy

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Risk assessment

A fire risk assessment is required under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in England and Wales, the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 in Scotland and the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 in Northern Ireland.

Under these regulations, the "responsible person" is legally obliged to ensure that the fire risk assessment is carried out and to deal with any problems that were highlighted during that assessment (although the relevant phrase is "duty holder" under the Scotland regulations and "appropriate person" under the Northern Ireland regulations).

A fire risk assessment will be carried out covering every premises by a suitably qualified and experienced fire safety professional and a record of assessment will be available at the premises to which it relates. The premises manager and others through the corporate structure are responsible for ensuring that problems highlighted in the risk assessment are resolved.

Unless otherwise required i.e. landlord requirements, a fire risk assessment will be undertaken for any newly constructed or newly acquired premises within 1 month of opening/completion.

A copy of the fire risk assessment will be held for each premises.

Risk assessment review

The fire risk assessment(s) will be kept under operational review by the premises manager at all times. In addition, operational reviews will also be completed every six months by the premises manager and recorded. The purpose of review is to identify circumstances that may affect the risk assessment. Such circumstances might be relatively minor and some may have significant life safety implications. It is the responsibility of the premises manager to respond to any of the following circumstances by acting quickly to reduce the risk to life and to report to his or her line manager and the nominated competent person for advice and guidance.

- + Alterations to the premises that may have an impact of means of escape;
- + Incidents that may compromise escape routes or the availability of fire exits;
- + Changes in the use of the premises or part thereof;
- + Significant changes in occupancy numbers;
- + Failure of the fire alarm;
- + After a fire;
- + As required following inspection by the fire and rescue service.

Records of measures taken to address any of the above circumstances will be made. Acceptable records include emails, or other hand-written/ typed documents providing they are both signed and dated. All such records will be kept with the fire risk assessment.

Where a formal review of the risk assessment is required, a suitably qualified and experienced fire safety professional will be instructed. In any event, such a review will be carried out every two years.



All formal reviews will be recorded and a copy will be held on the premises to which it relates.

Audit

The nominated competent person will conduct an audit of this policy in line with the service level agreement. The audit will be recorded and any problems will be highlighted. The premises manager and others through the corporate structure are responsible for ensuring that problems highlighted are resolved.

Training

Induction

All employees will be provided with basic fire safety instruction on day 1 as part of their health and safety induction. This will be provided regardless of the nature of their employment e.g. permanent or temporary.

All employees of another employer e.g. agency employees will be provided with a basic fire safety briefing on day 1 of their employment at the premises. There is no requirement to record this briefing because, due to the transient nature of agency workers, it is considered to be onerous and there will always be a sufficient number of trained employees on the premises.

Instructions will include the following points:

- + What the fire alarm sounds like;
- + The location of fire exits;
- + How to raise the alarm on discovery of fire using manual call points and their locations;
- + The location of the assembly point;
- + Departmental specific fire evacuation plan.

Fire team

In addition to induction and general fire safety training, all members of the fire team will be provided with training once a term. The training will cover the following minimum requirements:

- + A full understanding of the fire procedures;
- + A full understanding of the requirements of this policy; and
- + Practical use of the evacuation chair or evacuation lift/ fire-fighting lift where provided.

Refresher

All employees will be provided with refresher training at a frequency determined by their role and in line with the fire risk assessment.



The minimum scope for all refresher training will be as follows:

- + Action in the event of fire;
- + Action on hearing the fire alarm signal;
- + Method of operation of manual fire alarm call points;
- + How to summon the fire and rescue service; and
- + Identity of persons who are responsible for assisting with an evacuation.

Evacuation chairs

Specialist training for the use of evacuation chairs is not required. The use of online training videos and user instructions is considered to be sufficient. Where an evacuation chair is provided, all members of the fire team will receive training in the use of the chair at six monthly intervals.

Records

All general fire safety training, fire team training and refresher training will be recorded on the “Fire training record” template provided.

Fire team

A fire team will be available to take control in the event of an emergency and implement the fire evacuation plan. As a minimum the fire team will comprise of the following personnel:

- + All managers;
- + All porters;
- + All nursery employees;
- + All live-in employees;
- + Selected employees e.g. duty managers/ night managers;
- + Anyone with a role identified by the fire procedures.

The number of persons in the fire team will be proportionate to the size of the premises.

Staffing levels

Every premises will establish a level of staffing required to fulfil the requirements of the fire evacuation plan at any time during the day or at night.

Where there is one person on duty at any time, lone worker personal safety arrangements will be put into place.

Minimum staffing levels will be increased in line with requirements for discharging the fire procedures and PEEPs and where considered necessary by the premises manager due to the following considerations:



- + Temporary failure of the fire alarm or part thereof;
- + Large events; or
- + Where additional building security is required.

Testing and maintenance

Unless otherwise advised by manufacturer operation and maintenance requirements, advice from specialist contractors or by the fire risk assessment, the following table contains minimum testing and maintenance requirements for commonly found active and passive fire protection systems.

Specialist contractor

System	Frequency
Emergency lighting	Annual
Fire hydrant	Annual
Lightning protection	Every 11 months
Fire extinguisher (including hose reels)	Annual
Fire shutter/ curtain	Annual
Ventilation/ AOV system	Annual
Wet and dry riser	Annual
Laundry ductwork cleaning	Annual
Fire/ smoke damper	Annual
Sprinkler/ misting system	System dependent
Fire alarm and Vesda system	Three or six monthly to ensure 100% in any 12 month period
Kitchen extract ductwork cleaning	Six monthly
Ansul fixed fire suppression system	Six monthly
Emergency voice communication (EVC) system	Six monthly
Dry riser visual inspection	Six monthly



In-house

System	Frequency
Operational fire risk assessment review	Six monthly
Fire door check	Sample checked once a term
Emergency lighting test/ check of self test units	Monthly
Fire-fighting/ disabled evacuation lift auxiliary power test*	Monthly
Fire alarm and peripheral devices test	Weekly
Emergency voice communication system test	Weekly
Vibrating pillows test (peripheral device)	Checked before issued
Fire door hold-open device test (peripheral device)	Weekly
Fire shutter/ curtain test (peripheral device)*	Weekly
Fire-fighting/ disabled evacuation lift functional test	Weekly
Ventilation/ AOV system*	Weekly
Fire precautions check	Weekly
Fire walks	Daily

*Testing requirements may vary. Refer to manufacturers' recommendations.

Fire drill

At least one full fire evacuation drill of the premises involving members of the public and students will be completed at least once a term.

A false fire alarm resulting in an evacuation of the premises can be used to supplement the planned full fire evacuation drill.

The purpose of a fire drill is to test the fire procedures for the purpose of verifying their effectiveness, making improvements where necessary and identifying additional training requirements.

Premises managers are required between full fire evacuation drills to be creative and use small scale simulation exercises and desk top exercises with involvement of team members who work at different times of the day and night. A minimum of two night-time (23:00 to 07:00) simulation exercises will be carried out in any 12-month period and there will be a minimum of two months between any simulation drills.

All fire drills will be recorded on the "Record of fire drill" template.



Fire hazards

Fire hazards will be controlled by compliance with other corporate policies and other measures identified by the fire risk assessment and fire audit. These include but are not limited to the following:

- + Electrical hazards;
- + Smoking;
- + Portable heaters and heating installations;
- + Arson;
- + Cooking;
- + Housekeeping;
- + Contractors and in-house maintenance activities.

Policies will be reviewed and kept up to date.

Dangerous substances

Where required, a risk assessment will be undertaken to comply with the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002. These regulations are concerned with protection against risks from fire, explosion and similar events arising from dangerous substances used or present in the workplace.

Examples of activities that are covered by DSEAR in workplaces include:

- + Deliveries from road tankers, such as LPG and petrol;
- + Handling, storage and use of gases under pressure e.g. bulk LPG storage.

Where these activities are present, a general risk assessment will be carried out.

For a full list of activities refer to <http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/dsear.htm>

Hot works

Hot work is a process that can be a source of ignition when flammable material is present or can be a fire hazard regardless of the presence of flammable material in the workplace. Common hot work processes are welding, soldering, cutting and brazing.

All hot works carried out by contractors or employees will be subject to hot work permit to work procedures and a permit to work form will be completed.



Fire alarm

Isolation of any part of the fire alarm system due to a faulty device or for an event where the nature of the event might lead to false alarms is not permitted without completion of the “Fire alarm isolation - permit to work” template.

Isolation shall be taken to include isolation by technical means from the fire alarm control and indicating panel or isolation by way of placing protective covers over fire detection devices.

Where isolation of any fire detection device is required, we will give consideration to the following:

- + Avoid isolating devices in areas where fire could start and grow unnoticed;
- + Keep the number of devices and the duration of isolation to a minimum;
- + Ensure that isolated devices are returned to normal operation as soon as possible; and
- + Additional measures during the period of isolation e.g. frequent patrols/ permanent presence in the affected area.

Fire procedures

General

Documented fire procedures will be prepared and maintained for all premises. Templates for adopting and personalising are provided for use as required.

Every premises will hold a record to confirm the fire alarm cause and effect. This will be used to verify the fire procedures. A review of the procedures will be carried out when any changes are made to the cause and effect.

A review of the fire procedures will also be carried out under the following circumstances:

- + Where required by the fire risk assessment or any review of the same;
- + Where alterations are made to the premises;
- + Following changes in the use of the premises or part thereof;
- + Following significant changes in occupancy numbers;
- + Failure of the fire alarm;
- + After a fire; and
- + As required following inspection by the fire and rescue service.

Disabled evacuation

The term ‘disabled persons’ covers a wide range of conditions but for all practical purposes these are as follows:

- + Persons who are unable to hear the fire alarm;
- + Persons who are registered as blind;



- + Persons in wheelchairs;
- + Persons who are mobility impaired; and
- + Persons with cognitive conditions e.g. dyslexia.

To preserve the dignity of disabled persons it is not the responsibility of premises employees to make judgements about the ability of a disabled person to self-evacuate without assistance. Consequently disabled persons have a responsibility to request assistance and signage/ information to this effect is provided in the premises. However, persons with an obvious disability e.g. persons in a wheelchair or those who are obviously blind or profoundly deaf should be approached in a discreet manner to identify if assistance is required.

The term 'assistance' should not be taken to mean physical assistance as this may not be necessary, possible and even unwanted/ refused by the person concerned. Assistance might simply be allocating the person a room on the ground floor, nearest upper floor to the ground floor or physically showing someone the route from their bedroom to the fire exit or nearest protected escape stair. Ensuring that information concerning the whereabouts of disabled persons to the fire and rescue service can also be deemed as assistance.

Any person approached to identify if assistance is required and any person requesting assistance should be provided with a PEEP. All PEEP forms must be kept with the fire box so they are immediately available in the event of a fire for reference by employees and to provide to the fire and rescue service. Once the student/ guest/ staff member has permanently left the premises, their PEEP form should be discarded. If they come back on another occasion and the PEEP is no longer in place, a new one should be completed. A PEEP form template is provided.

The objective of a PEEP is to agree how the disabled person will evacuate the premises. The most desirable outcome for both the premises and the disabled person will be evacuation without assistance from premises employees. It should be remembered that measures agreed with the disabled person might be exceptional for exceptional circumstances e.g. shuffling down steps on their bottom.

The amount of assistance available and agreed must be deliverable at any time of the day or night. We will never promise a level of assistance that cannot be provided.

The following is a summary of typical assistance levels:

Persons who are unable to hear the fire alarm

Persons who are unable to hear the fire alarm should be provided with a vibrating pillow device. The device should be taken to the bedroom, tested and demonstrated to the user. Having been woken to the sound of the fire alarm by the device the person can proceed to the assembly point with no further assistance.

We will maintain a minimum of one Deafguard device (or equivalent) per person who requires one plus at least one spare



Persons who are registered as blind

Persons who are blind or partially sighted live with their condition and are usually adept at moving around or accompanied by a carer or guide dog. The person will be able to hear the fire alarm but their movement might be delayed. Consult the fire risk assessment for details of stay put or simultaneous evacuation in the event of fire. Once in the protected stair it should be possible for the person to make their way to the final exit.

It is anticipated that others will provide assistance but the PEEP form might indicate assistance by employees to see the student/ guest/ staff member safely out of the premises.

Persons in wheelchairs

This is potentially the hardest group of people to make arrangements for because not all bedrooms are on the ground floor or where step free egress from the premises is provided.

A number of bedrooms have been adapted for use by disabled persons to make them accessible to wheelchair users. These rooms will always be allocated to a wheelchair user who notifies the premises of their requirements prior to arrival. This is in preference to a wheelchair user who arrives at the premises with no prior notification although every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate them in an accessible room.

Evacuation chairs will be provided where required and in line with the fire risk assessment.

Where provided, the evacuation chair should be placed in an escape stair near to accessible bedrooms or in a fixed and immediately accessible location elsewhere where it can be taken to the required stair. The evacuation chair must be secured to prevent it from becoming an obstruction if knocked by persons leaving the premises in an emergency.

Where a person cannot transit into an evacuation chair, where they cannot self-evacuate with or without assistance from a spouse or carer and where step free egress is not provided, the person should be advised that physical assistance cannot be provided by employees and that they should make alternative arrangements with more suitable premises or, where this is not possible or refused, to make their way to the nearest protected stair and to remain there until rescued by the fire and rescue service. This must be recorded on the PEEP. Employees are not permitted to attempt to move persons into an evacuation chair.

Where the premises has a fire-fighting or evacuation lift this can be used for the movement of wheelchair users and other disabled persons. A safe operating procedure must be prepared and documented training must be carried out as part of fire team training.

Persons who are mobility impaired

Persons in this category are likely to require more time to leave the premises and for this purpose guidance above for persons who are registered blind will apply.

Persons with cognitive conditions

Persons with cognitive conditions to an extent where they require assistance are likely to be accompanied by a carer or carers in the event of groups. The PEEP should be prepared with the carer.



Disabled refuges

Premises must designate refuge points as identified in the fire risk assessment. Where sufficient space permits this should be in the escape stair but where sufficient space is not available this should be in the bedroom corridor immediately adjacent to the entrance to the escape stair. The location of refuge points should be detailed in the fire procedures.

Fire box

A fire box will be provided and maintained in each porter's lodge, where access to it is available 24 hours a day. The fire box will contain the following minimum contents:

- +Loud hailer;
- +High visibility tabards (enough for all members of the fire team with a minimum of 2);
- +Clipboard with current PEEP forms;
- +Pen;
- +Student/ guest/ staff member list;
- +Working torches x 2;
- +Spare batteries for loud hailer and torch;
- +Copy of the incident management plan;
- +Layout plan(s) for each area of the college and an overall map showing how areas link together;
- +Keys to fire protection systems such as fire-fighting/ evacuation lift, manual smoke ventilation system etc.;
- +Disposable emergency foil blankets, 1 for every 5 bedrooms;

Fire walks

The purpose of fire walks is to ensure that fire hazards are controlled and that means of escape are available at all times. Each fire walk is required to confirm the following:

- + That the fire alarm panel is healthy and free from faults that have not been addressed;
- + That all doors off public areas that leading into service areas e.g. store rooms, risers, plant rooms etc. are secured if not in use and, in any event, fully closed into the rebate;
- + That bedroom escape routes (including corridors) and escape stairs leading to fire exits are maintained free from combustible storage and/ or other items that might cause an obstructions to persons leaving in the event of an emergency;
- + That pins and tamper proof tags (where provided) are present on all fire extinguishers; and
- + That fire exits are unobstructed.



The frequency of fire walks shall be as follows:

- + Day - early (07:00 to 15:00) – 1 fire walk;
- + Day – late (15:00 to 23:00) – 1 fire walk;
- + Night (23:00 to 07:00) – 5 fire walks.

All fire walks should be carried out by a person who is a member of the fire team.

There must be a minimum of two hours between each day fire walk and all fire walks must be recorded.

Where an electronic system is provided for recording fire walks, the touch-points will be deployed such that the walk can only be carried out in one set sequence with all areas visited.

Fire events

Any fire incident (irrespective of its apparent seriousness) must be recorded in line with the accidents and incidents policy. An investigation must be carried out and steps must be taken as necessary to prevent recurrence.

Following any fire event resulting in a fire signal from an automatic fire detector, the specialist contractor is required to carry out a check of the system to ensure that the device(s) involved remain in full working order.

False fire alarms

False alarms will be kept to a minimum through compliance with this policy.

Each false alarm will be recorded and investigated with steps taken as necessary to prevent recurrence.

If the number of false alarms across all categories of false alarm exceeds 1 in 50 detectors in any 12-month period a full investigation will be carried out.

False fire alarms can be categorised as follows:

Unwanted alarms

These are where the fire alarm system has responded to a fire-like phenomenon such as student/ guest/ staff member activities in their bedrooms. It is also where accidental damage to any part of the fire alarm system has occurred causing it to generate a fire signal.

Equipment false alarm

This is where a fire signal has been generated from a fault with the fire alarm system.

Malicious false alarm

This is where a person initiates a fire signal from operation of a manual call point or activation of a detector, whilst knowing there is no fire.



False alarms with good intent

This is where a person initiates a fire signal in the honest belief that there is a fire, when no fire actually exists.

Fire and rescue service activities

Visits to the premises by the fire and rescue service will be carried out from time to time for a number of reasons. Detailed arrangements for managing relationships with the fire and rescue service and all other regulators are held in the Saeker library under guidance. Key requirements include the following:

- + Identification must always be requested prior to entry beyond publicly accessible areas by anyone purporting to be from a regulatory body;
- + All visitors must be required to sign-in on arrival;
- + Site rules must always be adhered to;
- + PPE must be provided where required;
- + Access to all areas and records must be provided upon request;
- + Follow-up correspondence must always be acknowledged in writing; and
- + Actions required must be completed in accordance with stated timescales and this must be confirmed in writing on completion. If actions cannot be completed within the stated timescales, an extension should be applied for and agreed in writing.

