

FIRE SAFETY WITHIN OCC PROPERTIES MANAGING THE RISK

Policy, Strategy & Management Procedures

**Oxfordshire County Council
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1.0 Fire Safety Policy Statement

1.1 Policy Statement

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) confirms its commitment to a management framework, which incorporates all the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) and all subordinate regulations, and the responsibility to provide suitable and sufficient guidance so Managers can meet their obligations so far as is reasonably practicable.

Without detracting from the responsibility of Managers to ensure safe conditions of work, OCC will seek to provide or secure competent advice, information and training on fire safety matters from the Property Service Provider and OCC Health and Safety team to assist managers in their task.

All employees are reminded of their duties under the FSO to take care of their own safety and that of other employees and persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions, and also to co-operate with their employer to enable them to carry out their own responsibilities successfully.

Those persons having **control** of the premises whether as Manager, Headteacher, Governing Body, Facilities Manager, Managers having financial control over premises, Oxfordshire County Council are responsible for meeting the duties within their control imposed by the FSO.

OCC have provided the 'Fire Safety Folder' to aid those in control of premises to carry out their statutory duties.

1.2 Contact Details

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

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2.0 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of Policy

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote fire safety by providing information and giving advice on how to prevent fires, restrict fire spread, and ensure the safe escape from properties if a fire was to occur. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 also places a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to enforce the fire safety duties placed on employers, occupiers or owners of premises to protect employees or the general public from fire.

The purpose of this policy and manual is to communicate to site staff the importance of fire safety, their responsibility for maintaining the fire safety logbook, the role of OCC, the precautions which both OCC and site staff are required to implement, and the responsibility for record keeping.

It is important that Premises Manager and site users fully understand the actions necessary to control the risk, and their role in the control process.

Failure to adopt appropriate measures for the minimisation of fire risk (in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974) renders Premises Manager, OCC staff and others liable to prosecution.

There is a legal duty to adopt measures of the type presented in this policy document.

2.2 The 5 steps of a risk assessment

The following is a summary of the 5 steps that will be adopted for fire risk assessment at OCC premises:

Step 1 - Identify fire hazards

- Sources of ignition
- Sources of fuel

Step 2 - Identify people especially at risk

- Members of staff
- People not familiar with the premises
- People working alone

Step 3 - Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risks

- Measures to prevent fires
- Measures to protect people from fire

Step 4 - Record, plan, instruct, inform and train

- Record significant findings and actions taken
- Prepare an emergency plan
- Inform relevant people, provide instruction, co-operate and co-ordinate with others
- Provide training

Step 5 - Review

- Keep assessment under review
- Revise where necessary

3.0 Legal requirements

3.1 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

This 'Oxfordshire County Council - Fire Safety Folder' has been produced in consultation with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to help meet the council's duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

This legislation is usually referred to as "the Fire Safety Order", or simply "the FSO". It applies to virtually all non-domestic premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open space.

3.2 Enforcement and internal monitoring

As the local enforcing authority, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have a duty to enforce the Fire Safety Order in all county council premises. Officers will inspect and audit the fire safety management systems in premises in accordance with their enforcement policies and procedures.

Compliance with the Fire Safety Order's requirements and prohibitions will also be monitored in accordance with the council's normal departmental procedures and may be monitored/audited by the council's Service Provider (Carillion) and/or OCC Health and Safety Team.

3.3 Duties of the "responsible person"

The Fire Safety Order places the primary responsibility for fire safety in premises on the "responsible person". Where OCC is an employer or occupier (and in some circumstances the owner) of premises, it is the "responsible person" and as such the main duty-holder under the FSO.

Where OCC is *not* the employer (e.g. Aided Schools etc.) the employer will be the "responsible person" (e.g. The Governing Body, Charity Group etc.)

However, in county council premises shared with other employers or organisations, the other employers and occupiers will also be "responsible persons".

3.4 Duties of other "person(s) in control"

It should also be noted that the duties of the responsible person are extended to include "every person.....who has, to any extent, control of those premises so far as the requirements

relate to matters within his control ". This may for example include an owner or landlord (and in schools, the governing body) a Premises Manager, head teacher manager, or other person in a similar position of authority. Persons in Control could be held liable for the own acts or omissions.

This also includes persons who, by virtue of any contract or tenancy, have an obligation in relation to the fire safety of the premises or the maintenance or repair of the premises or anything in or on them.

3.5 General fire precautions

The responsible person has a general duty under the FSO to *"take such general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of any of his employees"*. However the FSO applies not only to persons at work but also to all "relevant persons".

These are defined as any person *"who is or may be lawfully on the premises and any person in the immediate vicinity of the premises who is at risk from a fire on the premises"*.

In relation to such non-employees, the responsible person has a general duty to *"take such general fire precautions as may reasonably be required in the circumstances of the case to ensure that its premises are safe"*. In both cases, these *"general fire precautions"* are a combination of:

- the *"preventive measures"* designed to reduce the risk of fire occurring on the premises and to reduce the risk of the spread of fire on the premises, and
- the *"protective measures"* provided to protect relevant persons in the event of a fire occurring (ie the fire detection and alarm system, the means of escape, the emergency lighting system, signs, fire-fighting equipment, staff training, the emergency plan etc).

3.6 Fire safety arrangements

The responsible person must make arrangements for *"the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures"* identified by the risk assessment.

This means that the fire safety arrangements implemented at each premises must:

- comprise fire safety systems and procedures that actually work - taking account of the risk, nature of the activities and size of the premises
- be planned using a systematic approach which identifies priorities and sets objectives. (Whenever possible, the elimination of any risk of fire should be planned through the careful selection and design of facilities, equipment and processes. If the risk cannot be avoided, then it should be minimised by the planning of effective control measures applying the principles of prevention specified in the FSO)

- be organised with a coherent structure of responsibilities, communication and accountability
- include controls to ensure that decisions for achieving the reduction and management of the residual risk from fire are actually implemented as planned
- be reviewed, tested and modified as necessary and new control measures introduced where required.

3.7 Records

The responsible person has a duty to ensure there are records made and kept of:

- the significant findings of the fire risk assessment (including any group of persons identified as especially at risk), and
- the fire safety arrangements for the premises

The complete Fire Safety Order is available from the internet at:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051541.htm>

3.8 Building Regulations 2010 approved document B

All projects irrespective of whether submission for building regulations approval is required, must wherever possible comply with the guidance included in approved document "B" (ADB) of the Building Regulations 2000 (as amended).

3.9 Building Bulletin 100

All projects irrespective of whether submission for building regulations approval is required, must wherever possible comply with the guidance included in Building Bulletin 100 (BB 100) - Design for fire safety in schools.

3.10 British standards

A fire safety strategy statement is to be prepared for all projects and must include all aspects of the design with particular reference to any issues that do not comply with the guidance included in ADB and for schools BB 100. The reasons for non-compliance must be clearly identified together with the proposed alternative engineered solutions be it BS 7974 - Application of Fire Safety Engineering Principles to the Design of Buildings or BS 9999: 2008 Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings selected for adoption to compensate for the non-compliance with the above guidance.

4.0 OCC Strategic Approach

4.1 Fire Safety Logbook

All OCC sites will be issued with a Fire Safety logbook. It will be the responsibility of the Premises Manager to ensure that the requirements of the logbook are fully complied with and that all records are kept up to date. They will also ensure that all users of the site are aware their responsibility as part of the Fire Risk Assessment and action plan.

Replacement pages and forms may be downloaded from the council's Customer Services Health and Safety website on the intranet.

4.2 Fire safety strategy

The county councils strategy for all work carried out at or to its properties is set out in the Providers Manual document Fire Safety Strategy. This work includes new build, alterations and improvements, refurbishment and maintenance of property. This document includes the county councils policy with regard to fire suppression.

4.3 Fire risk assessment

To identify the nature and extent of the general fire precautions necessary, the responsible person will carry out a fire risk assessment of the premises and of any "*dangerous substances*" that are, or are liable to be, present in or on the premises. This will be carried out by completion of the Fire Risk Assessment document in the Fire Safety Logbook.

4.4 Fire safety action plan

A Fire Safety Action Plan will be developed to assist in planning the actions necessary to rectify any identified deficiencies in the preventive and protective measures so as to ensure their continued effectiveness.

The action plan will be informed and developed from a number of sources of information including:

- the significant findings of the fire risk assessment and any subsequent review
- fire incidents, near miss and fire hazard reports
- routine maintenance inspections and checks
- routine day to day checks of the premises
- fire safety training records
- debriefs following fire drills
- directorate instructions
- reports from visiting inspectors from the Property Service Provider, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and from the County Council Health and Safety Team

4.5 Plan of premises

A plan(s) of the premises will be kept in this section of the Fire Safety Logbook as a practical way of recording the preventive and protective measures that have been taken. The plan(s) need only be a simple line drawing of the premises.

The plans will include the following where appropriate:

- structural features such as the layout and use of rooms, wall partitions, corridors, stairways, fire exits, etc. – including any fire-resisting structure and self-closing fire doors provided to protect the means of escape
- location of refuges and lifts that have been designated suitable for use by disabled people and others who may need assistance to escape in case of fire
- details of the number, type and location of the firefighting equipment provided
- location of smoke and heat detectors, manually-operated fire alarm break glass call points and control equipment for fire alarms
- location of any emergency escape lighting equipment and exit route signs
- location of any high-risk areas, equipment or process that must be shut down by staff on hearing the fire alarm
- location of any automatic firefighting systems, wet or dry risers and sprinkler controls
- location of the isolation switches/valves for the electrical, gas, water or/and oil supply and any dangerous substances

Where building work is carried out that affects fire safety, the person carrying out the work will be required to provide the responsible person for the building with sufficient information to operate and maintain the building in reasonable safety in accordance with Building Regulations requirements.

4.6 Emergency plan (including evacuation plan)

All OCC premises will adopt an emergency plan to ensure that the people in the premises know what to do if there is a fire and that the premises can be safely evacuated. All emergency plans will be recorded and a copy kept in the premises Fire Safety Logbook.

The emergency plan will be based on the outcome of the fire risk assessment and be available to employees, their representatives (where appointed) and the enforcing authority.

Everyone who uses the premises will be made aware of the evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of fire. Systems will be in place to deal with the various issues presented by visitors, contractors and members of the public who may access the site.

In simple premises the emergency plan may need to be no more than a fire action notice.

In multi-occupied and more complex premises, the emergency plan will need to be more detailed and compiled only after consultation with other occupiers and other responsible persons e.g. owners, who have control over the building. In most cases this means that an emergency plan covering the whole building will be necessary. It will help if one person is delegated to co-ordinate this plan.

Emergency plans should be appropriate to the premises and could include:

- how people will be warned if there is a fire
- what people should do if they discover a fire
- how the evacuation of the premises should be carried out
- where people should assemble after they have left the premises and procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated
- identification of key escape routes, how people can gain access to them and escape from them to a place of total safety
- arrangements for fighting the fire
- the duties and identity of employees who have specific responsibilities (such as fire marshals/wardens) if there is a fire
- the arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as young children and babies, lone workers, contractors, members of the public and visitors and those with disabilities.
- any machines/appliances/processes/power supplies that need to be stopped or isolated if there is a fire
- specific arrangements, if necessary, for high fire risk areas and dangerous substances
- arrangements for an emergency plan to be used by a hirer of part of the premises.
- contingency plans for when life safety systems, such as evacuation lifts, fire detection and warning systems, sprinklers or smoke control systems are out of order
- how the fire and rescue service will be called and who is responsible for doing this. These arrangements must take account of whether the premises has an automatic fire detection and alarm system connected to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC).
- procedures for meeting the fire and rescue service on their arrival and notifying them of any special risks, eg the location of highly flammable materials and/or other dangerous substances.
- what training employees need and the arrangements for ensuring that this training is given.
- phased evacuation plans where appropriate (ie where some areas are evacuated while others are alerted but do not evacuate at that stage)
- plans to deal with people once they have left the premises.

It is important to note that an evacuation plan should not rely upon the intervention of the Fire and Rescue Service to make it work

'Action in case of fire' notices

Printed notices must be exhibited at conspicuous positions in all parts of the premises. They must state, in concise terms, the essentials of the action to be taken upon discovering a fire and on hearing the alarm. (They are commonly displayed adjacent to the fire alarm break glass call points).

Where considered necessary, notices giving more detailed instructions should be exhibited in staff rooms and on other notice boards.

4.7 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)

As part of the risk assessment process, persons in control of county council premises should consider the need for “Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans” (usually referred to simply as “PEEPs”).

PEEPs can be designed either as personal plans for individual employees (or regular individual visitors), or as a series of standard plans which are made available to casual users who may visit the premises infrequently or only on one occasion.

Where people with special needs use or work in the premises, their needs should, so far as is practicable, be discussed with them. These will often be quite modest and may require only minor changes to premises or modifications to existing procedures.

In premises with a simple layout, a common-sense approach, such as offering to help a blind person or helping an elderly person down steps may be enough. In more complex premises, more elaborate system may be required.

The government has published a supplementary guide entitled “Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Means of Escape for Disabled People” which is free to download on the <http://www.firesafetylaw.communities.gov.uk/> page of the Fire Gateway web portal.

This guide provides examples and information to help in the drawing up of individual and standard PEEP’s in a practical, equality-based manner. It includes sections on the following:

- mobility impaired people
- wheelchair users
- carry-down procedures
- electrically powered wheelchairs
- hearing impaired and deaf people
- visually impaired and blind people
- people with cognitive disabilities
- people with less apparent requirements (for example, epilepsy).
- visitors and customers

4.8 Fire safety training

It is the delegated functional responsibility of the person in charge of county council premises to ensure that all members of staff are provided with adequate fire safety training:

- at the time they are first employed, and
- on their being exposed to new or increased risks because of their being transferred; given a change of responsibilities; the introduction of new work equipment, new technology or a new system of work; or a change affecting existing work equipment or systems of work already in use that alters the fire risks

In all premises a competent person will be nominated to have overall responsibility for organising staff training and coordinating the actions of employees in the event of fire. The name of the nominated person(s) will be recorded in the ‘Schedule of appropriate and premises contacts’ (F.1) at the front of the Fire Safety Logbook.

Training will include suitable and sufficient instruction on the fire precautions and actions necessary to safeguard employees and other relevant persons on the premises. It will be based on concise, comprehensible and relevant written instructions, copies of which should be retained in this section of the Fire Safety Logbook for reference.

Training will normally take place during working hours and be:

- repeated periodically where appropriate (but at least annually)
- adapted to take account of any new or changed risks
- provided in a manner appropriate to the risks identified by the fire risk assessment
- The aim is to ensure that all employees receive instruction, practical demonstration and training appropriate to their responsibilities in the event of an emergency and will include employees on flexible or shift duties who work outside the normal working hours.

4.9 Fire safety tests and routine checks

Regular testing, maintenance and servicing of fire safety facilities, equipment and procedures will be undertaken. The nature, frequency and recording of the tests/inspections carried out will be set down in the Fire Safety Logbook. These tasks will be carried out either internally by council staff or by external contractors/service engineers to:

- Fire extinguishers
- Fire alarm systems, including sounders, detectors, call points and panel
- Emergency escape lighting
- Fire safety drills – Evacuation procedures
- Visual inspections of fire escape routes

5.0 Management Procedures

5.1 Action to be carried out by OCC Property & Facilities

Property & Facilities will ensure that all work carried out at OCC property by their Property Service Provider/consultants is carried out in accordance with current legislation and the Fire Safety Strategy set down in the Providers Manual document Fire Safety Strategy.

5.2 Action to be carried out at schools by OCC Schools Health and Safety Team

OCC Schools H&S team will carry out annual H&S monitoring to include review of Fire Safety Logbooks for all schools that buy in to their service. Schools that do not buy in will be expected to obtain an H&S audit to include the Fire Safety Logbook by a competent provider to a standard of no less quality than that provided by Council's monitoring standard.

5.3 Action to be carried out by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

OFRS will only visit OCC sites to carry out fire safety audits when invited to do so or following a fire at the property. OFRS will review projects submitted for building regulation approval to ensure that work carried out complies with the requirements of the Fire Safety Order.

5.4 Action to be carried out by Premises Manager

General duties include:

- Comply with Fire Safety Duties including the completion of:-
- **# Fire Safety Risk Assessment** completed reviewed, signed and dated annually or as required.
- **# Fire Safety Action Plan** to address and record defects identified in the Fire Safety Risk Assessment.
- **# Plan of premises** annotated with Fire Safety data (call points, escape routes, fire doors etc).
- **# Emergency Evacuation Plan** giving details of duties and responsibilities of all employees to ensure safe evacuation. *Safe evacuation of all site users from the site to a designated place of safety is the primary consideration*
- Signs and Notices are suitable and sufficient to assist safe evacuation.
- **# Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan.** Particular attention will need to be paid to people with special needs, including those with a disability. Persons in control of county council premises should consider the need for "Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans".
- Employees are provided with clear and relevant information on the risks to them identified by the fire risk assessment including the measures that have been taken to prevent fires and how these measures will protect them if a fire breaks out.
- Employees (and their health and safety representatives) are consulted about nominating people to carry out particular roles in connection with fire safety and about proposals for improving the fire precautions
- Before a young person is employed, a parent/person with parental responsibility is provided with information about the risks and precautions to protect that child
- The necessary co-operation and co-ordination with other responsible persons who also have premises in the building takes place, and that they are informed of any significant risks found, and how those risks, which might affect the safety of their employees, will be reduced or controlled.
- The employer of any person from an outside organisation who is working in the premises is provided with clear and relevant information on the risks to those employees and the preventive and protective measures taken
- **# All Fire Safety Training** (at least every 6 months).
- **# Evacuation Drills** – To be held at differing times; Schools and Children's Homes every 3 months, other establishments every 6 months.
- **# A debrief** following an evacuation drill is an essential element of the drill and must be recorded separately as evacuation training.
- **Alarms (Panel only)** – Visual check required daily to ensure no faults are indicated. Any *defects* need to be recorded. **Servicing and maintenance of fire alarms at non-school properties will be carried out by the SP.**

- **# Alarms (Call points)** must be tested weekly on a rotational basis. Quarterly and Annual inspection and tests by a qualified engineer must also be recorded. **The SP will carry this out at non-school properties.**
- **# Emergency Lighting** – Must be tested monthly to ensure these lights illuminate. Annual tests to be carried out by a qualified electrician and recorded. **The SP will carry this out at non-school properties.**
- **# Fire Extinguishers** require a visual check monthly to ensure they are in position, have not been tampered with/used and there is no sign of leakage. They must be serviced annually by a competent person. **The SP will carry this out at non-school properties.**
- **# Self-contained smoke/heat detectors** must be tested weekly, by operation of test button.
- **Escape routes** should be checked daily to ensure they are clear and any *defects* need to be recorded.
- **#' Near misses** need to be recorded and investigated.
- **# COSHH (including Radiation sources)** – An up to date list of all hazardous substances, amounts and places of storage needs to be kept in the Fire Safety .

THESE ACTIONS NEED TO BE RECORDED IN THE AND WHERE NECESSARY REMEDIAL ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED. THE SP WILL RECORD TESTING AT CORPORATE BUILDINGS IN THEIR OWN

5.5 Additional duties regarding the hiring/leasing of premises

The person responsible for hiring or leasing out a venue or premises must ensure that the legal duties and responsibilities of those hiring or leasing the premises are clearly established and documentation for each unique, occasional or separate event or function is completed.

5.6 Employees Duties

It is the statutory duty of all county council employees at work to:

- Co-operate with the council as their employer to ensure the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and not do anything that will place themselves or other people at risk.
- Remain vigilant to the risk of fire and report any defects in the fire safety arrangements to their line manager when first identified.

6.0 Reporting/recording fire incidents, near misses and other fire safety hazards

All occasions where a fire has, or could have occurred, will be properly recorded and the cause investigated so that the effectiveness of the preventive and protective measures can be reviewed and, if necessary, revised.

To ensure this is done in a systematic way, all such occurrences must be recorded using the Fire Incident, Near Miss or Other Fire Safety Hazard report form in the Fire Safety Logbook.

Section A of the form must be completed as soon as possible after any such occurrence by the most appropriate line manager/member of staff with knowledge of the circumstances. It must be forwarded to the person in charge of the premises for action and completion of Section B.

The person completing the form is to make clear the nature of the occurrence by circling or highlighting either:

- “Fire Incident” where a fire has occurred.
- “Near Miss” where a fire has not actually occurred but all the components for a fire are discovered, e.g. a quantity of highly flammable liquid is found in close proximity to an uncontrolled ignition source.
- “Other Fire Safety Hazard” where fire safety related hazards might not in themselves cause a fire but could impact upon the safety of relevant persons in the event of a fire, by for example, jeopardising their means of escape – e.g. the discovery of an obstructed fire exit. Defects with fire safety systems and equipment etc should also be reported for remedial action.

7.0 Changes to Premises and Occupation of New Premises

7.1 Building change of use

Where a change of use of building is planned a risk assessment must be carried out to determine if any added fire risks will result from the new activity.

7.2 New build, alterations, extensions, refurbishment and maintenance

All work carried out to OCC properties will be managed by Property & Facilities and commissioned through the SP/consultants with the exception of self-funded work carried out by schools.

7.3 Acquisition of buildings

The SP will be required to request a copy of the Fire Safety risk assessment and action plan for any property to be purchased. Where this information does not exist the vendor should be required to provide it. If the information is not forthcoming they must discuss with the commissioning officer action should be taken. The SP will be required to comment on the

content of the information provided and any action that will be required to ensure that the property is safe to occupy.

7.4 Disposal of buildings

A copy of the current Fire Safety Logbook will be included with the sale details of any County Council properties that are to be sold. If purchaser requests further information the SP will discuss the implications with the OCC commissioning officer.

7.5 Self-funded projects (SFA)

Schools carrying out work to the premises including planned maintenance projects will be required to submit a Self-Finance Application (SFA) to Property & Facilities with details of the proposed work. A completed SFA form must be submitted at least 6 weeks before work is planned to start.

The application will be checked by the Property SP to ensure compliance with building regulations / bulletins and the Fire Safety Order.

7.6 Handover procedure:

7.6.1 New build

On completion of new buildings, prior to handover, SPs are to ensure that a copy of the policy document and the fire safety logbook is provided and that details of the fire precaution systems are recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook. The Premises Manager and appointed representatives of the site are to receive full training in the operation of new fire safety systems to include smoke/heat detectors, fire alarms, emergency lighting, extinguishers, and procedures to include means of escape. Property & Facilities will ensure that this process has been carried out appropriately and that a Handover Checklist is completed by the SP and signed as received by the Premises Manager.

7.6.2 Extensions, alterations, refurbishment and maintenance

On completion of the above work and prior to handover the SP will ensure that details of any additions or alterations to fire precaution systems in existing establishments are recorded in the Fire Safety Folder. The Premises Manager and appointed representatives of the site are to receive full training as detailed in 7.6.1 to cover alteration and additions to equipment and/or procedures. Property & Facilities will ensure that this process has been carried out appropriately and that a Handover Checklist is completed by the SP and signed as received by the Premises Manager.

8.0 Procedures for premises with automatic fire alarms

8.1 During periods when the premises are occupied

When the automatic fire alarm is activated for any reason the following actions must be included in the premises emergency action plan:

- All non-essential persons are to be evacuated from the building.
- Nominated persons with the relevant training should check the fire alarm panel to determine the location of the suspected fire and carry out a sweep of the area to ensure the evacuation of people has taken place plus determine if possible if there is a fire or a false alarm. They must not put themselves at risk at any time – if in doubt get out.
- If fire or smoke, smells of burning or any other indications of a fire are discovered, or there are suspicions of a fire, then the fire and rescue service must be called by dialling 999.
- A nominated person should await the arrival of the fire and rescue service to provide relevant information including details of any persons who may be missing and the extent, location and nature of the fire, along with details of any hazards and dangerous substances.
- If the nominated persons can find no evidence of a fire or smoke, then the fire and rescue service should **not** be called but the alarm system reset (whilst the people evacuated remain outside the building). **If the alarm resets satisfactorily** the building can be reoccupied.
- **If the alarm will not reset** for any reason, the nominated persons should leave the building, dial 999 and inform the fire and rescue service that the premises have been checked, that no signs of fire were found but the fire alarm will not reset. Depending on all the circumstances (eg if there have been similar previous alarms at the premises), the fire and rescue service may decide to either attend the premises or simply advise that the alarm system be urgently examined by a service engineer.

NOTE – The fire and rescue service will not automatically respond to alarms received via an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) during periods that the premises are occupied. If there is a fire or signs of a fire it is therefore essential that a nominated person at the premises calls the fire and rescue service by dialling 999.

8.2 During periods when the premises are unoccupied

When the premises are unoccupied and the fire and rescue service receive a 999 call from a passer-by or automatically via an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC), an emergency attendance will be made. Whilst awaiting the attendance of the key-holder, the fire and rescue service will carry out an external check of the premises.

If the key holder does not attend within 20 minutes to provide access, depending on a risk assessment at the scene, the fire and rescue service may force entry to allow an internal

search of the premises or return to their base station. If the fire and rescue service have left the scene by the time the key-holder arrives, it will be the key-holder's responsibility to make a check of the premises and to dial 999 if they discover a fire or smoke, smell burning or suspect there is a fire.

The fire and rescue service cannot be held responsible for any damage to the premises as a result of these procedures.

9.0 Signs and notices

9.1 Signs

Fire safety signage must be used, where the fire risk assessment deems necessary, to help people identify escape routes, find fire-fighting equipment and fire alarm break glass call points, etc. Where required, the signs must comply with the provisions of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and signals) Regulations 1996 and be consistent in type and design throughout the premises. Such signage must be in pictogram form and may be supplemented by text if considered necessary to make the sign more easily understood.

9.2 Notices

Notices should be used, where the fire risk assessment deems necessary, to provide:

- instructions on how to use any fire safety equipment
- the actions to be taken in the event of fire
- information to assist the emergency services, e.g. location of dangerous substances, locations of sprinkler valves etc.

NOTE – Some signs and notices may need to be duplicated to take account of the occupancy of the premises, e.g. in several languages or at two levels (i.e. for ambulant and wheelchair users). For further guidance on signs and notices see Part 2, Section 6 of the appropriate government guide on the <http://www.firesafetylaw.communities.gov.uk/> page of the Fire Gateway web portal.

9.3 New buildings and alterations

As part of any new building construction or alteration to existing buildings, the county council's Property & Facilities section will, through the SP and in liaison with OFRS and the local authority building control, ensure necessary signage is provided to comply with the current Building Regulations/ Building Bulletin requirements. Those persons in charge of schools that undertake Self- Financed works, will be responsible for complying with this requirement.