



## FIRE POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

Fire safety is the responsibility of everyone working on or visiting the site. All staff, students, contractors and visitors are expected to follow established safety procedures to ensure the safe use of electrical/gas appliances, the safe use, storage and disposal of hazardous/combustible materials and compliance with the requirements of the company's No Smoking Policy.

In addition to the legal fire prevention requirements, advice on specific fire prevention practices is available from Reception.

## POLICY

It is the policy of the company to ensure that all staff, students, contractors and visitors are protected from the risks of fire. With this in view, appropriate fire prevention/precaution measures shall be taken. Also, appropriate evacuation procedures shall be developed, implemented and periodically tested. All persons shall be provided with sufficient and appropriate fire awareness training and instruction. All premises shall comply with relevant fire safety legislation and recognised good practice.

## LEGISLATION

**The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) is now the primary legislation for fire safety.**

**The Fire Safety Order** builds on the 1997 Regulations in that it applies not only to persons at work, but to all persons lawfully on the premises and those not on the premises that may be affected by fire on the premises. As with the earlier Regulations, risk assessment is used as the basis for compliance and the **"Responsible Person"** on the premises is held liable in case of any breach.

The main emphasis of the changes will be to move towards fire prevention. Fire certificates will be abolished and will cease to have legal status. Under the RRFSO the 'responsible person' for each premises will be required to carry out an assessment of the risks (risk assessment) of fire. The responsible person must carry out a Fire Risk Assessment which will focus on safety in case of fire for all relevant persons.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Ultimate responsibility falls to the Principal/ Acting Principal, but all departments have responsibility for ensuring that arrangements for managing Fire Safety are in place and regularly monitored. **Responsibility cannot be delegated, however functions related to that responsibility may be delegated.**

The Fire Safety Officer is responsible for conducting fire risk assessments, providing advice, training, promulgating, monitoring and auditing standards and procedures.

The Operations Manager is responsible for the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy where it applies to building structure.



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The Operations Manager is responsible for acting upon the recommendations and requirements of fire risk assessments and fire safety linked to a particular process or procedure under their control, and for ensuring that all persons under their supervision are trained and given adequate instruction in the case of fire. They are also required to appoint suitable responsible persons to undertake all necessary fire arrangements and procedures.

Personnel with management responsibility shall ensure that all local precautions and procedures are followed, and that persons under their supervision are trained and given adequate instruction in the case of fire.

Staff must comply with all instructions given to them in regard to fire safety and any other fire procedures as required by supplementary codes of practice. *Failure to comply with such instruction may lead to disciplinary action being taken by the company.*

Staff must also report any observed shortcomings in fire precautions to their Head of Department.

Students and visitors must comply with all instructions given to them in regard to fire safety and any other fire procedures as required by supplementary codes of practice. *Failure to comply with such instruction may lead to disciplinary action being taken by the company.*

Contractors working on behalf of, or on property owned by the company must comply with the company's Contractor's Information Sheet and obey all instructions given to them in regard to fire safety by authorised personnel. They must also ensure that all personnel for whom they are responsible are adequately trained and instructed in fire safety procedures and arrangements.

## **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Fire Risk Assessments for the company are undertaken by the Fire Safety Advisor. It will ultimately fall to the "responsible person" or persons for that premises to comply with the significant findings of the Fire Risk Assessment completed on their behalf.

The Fire Risk Assessment pays particular attention to those at special risk, e.g. disabled persons and those with special needs, and must include consideration of any dangerous substance liable to be on the premises.

The risk assessment will help to identify risks that can be removed or reduced, and the nature and extent of the general fire precautions needed to protect people against the remaining fire risks.

The risk assessment will have to take into consideration the effect a fire may have on anyone in or around the premises. This will need to be kept under regular review.

**All staff identified in the emergency plan (see page 6) that have a supervisory role in the event of fire should be given details of the Fire Risk Assessment.**



## **WHAT IS A FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT?**

It is an organised and methodical look at your workplace, office, shop, etc., the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises. What is the aim?

- To identify the hazards and reduce the risks of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable
- To decide what physical and management policies are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your building if a fire starts
- HAZARD = anything with the potential to cause harm
- RISK = the chance, high, normal or low of harm occurring

## **THE FIVE STEPS TO CREATING A FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **1. IDENTIFY THE FIRE HAZARDS**

- Sources of ignition
- Sources of fuel

### **2. IDENTIFY PEOPLE AT RISK**

### **3. EVALUATE, REMOVE, REDUCE AND PROTECT FROM RISKS**

#### **Preventative measures**

- Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring
- Evaluate the risk to people from fire
- Remove or reduce fire hazards
- Remove or reduce the risk to people

#### **Protective measures**

- Detection and warning
- Fire fighting
- Escape routes
- Lighting
- Signs and notices
- Maintenance



4. RECORD, PLAN INSTRUCT, INFORM AND TRAIN

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

5. REVIEW

- Keep assessment under review
- Revise where necessary

*Frequency of review will depend on building usage, size, and complexity of any changes of use or layout of the building.*

## **PROCEDURES/GUIDANCE**

### **GENERAL STAFF INSTRUCTION**

All staff must be familiar with the fire procedures as required by the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and all current Fire-related legislation.

Fire procedures are posted throughout the College and can be found on exit routes normally adjacent to fire alarm call points or portable fire equipment.

All staff must ensure that they are familiar with the alternative means of escape in case of fire by walking the routes from the area in which they are employed.

Staff should get to know their assembly points indicated on the Fire Action notice for the building.

Departments are responsible for ensuring all students/staff receive suitable Fire Safety induction training within their first 48 hours with the company.



## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN**

**The Responsible Person** for each building will ensure that a written emergency evacuation plan is produced detailing:

- Action to be taken by person discovering a fire
- How the Fire Brigade is called and who is responsible
- Fire warning system (description of bells/sirens/voice) and location of panels
- Evacuation procedures (procedures to be followed)
- Key escape routes (how access can be gained, details of unusual routes)
- Assembly points
- Duties and identities of employees with specific responsibilities
- Arrangements for safe evacuation of persons identified as being especially at risk from fire
- Fire-fighting equipment provided (fixed) location and details
- Specific arrangements for high fire risk areas
- Procedures for liaison with the Fire Brigade (who, where, what, etc.)
- Training required by employees, and arrangements for giving such training

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

The following is the emergency evacuation procedure for all buildings (excluding residences which have a separate procedure).

### **On discovering a fire**

- Sound the fire alarm
- Attack the fire - if safe to do so - using the appliance(s) provided

### **On hearing the alarm**

#### **DO**

- Exit quickly and calmly
- Go directly to open air
- Close the door behind you
- Leave the building by the shortest route available
- Report to the designated assembly point

#### **DO NOT**

- Re-enter the building or enter an adjacent building unless directed by a senior member of staff.
- Stop to collect personal belongings
- Use lifts

Instructions given in an emergency evacuation by the nominated staff must be followed, and breaches of these procedures will be considered serious and may be dealt with under the company's Disciplinary Procedures.



## **DUTIES OF TEACHING STAFF**

Teaching staff will draw the emergency evacuation procedures to the attention of their students at the beginning of every term.

In all teaching rooms and pooled rooms the teacher is responsible for the safety of the students in their charge. This must include advising them of the actions to be taken in the event of a fire, including activation of the alarm, emergency exit routes and location of assembly points.

Staff and students are requested to familiarise themselves with the procedure; if necessary teaching staff will conduct students through a simulated evacuation.

- Upon hearing the fire alarm, all classroom activities will cease, and the teacher will direct students to the quickest escape route and to their assembly point
- Ensure all power and gas supplies directly involved in activities are turned off before closing the door as they leave the room
- Once outside, teachers should assemble the class at the assembly point. Any missing student(s) should be reported to the Evacuation Controller (EC) immediately who will be positioned at the assembly point. The EC is identifiable by a high visibility jacket.
- All Staff have a responsibility to encourage the movement of people away from College buildings to the assembly points.
- No person may be allowed to leave the assembly point until directed to do so by the EC or Fire Officer in charge.

## **ACTION BY CARETAKERS/PERSONS IN CONTROL OF PREMISES**

### **Premises linked to call handling centre via autodialler**

In the event of the fire alarm being activated the call will automatically be routed to the Fire Brigade by the call handling centre.

*An autodialler is a device which automatically rings a call handling centre and relays a pre-recorded message when the fire alarm operates.*

### **The back-up call**

Automatic fire alarm activations will attract a predetermined attendance from the Fire Brigade of ONE fire appliance only at non-residential premises and two to student accommodation.

In the event of fire alarm activation at any company building, should the incident turn out to be real, e.g. smoke/flames confirmed or a double knock (more than one detection device activated) then a second direct call to the Fire Brigade on 9-999 must be made immediately. Unless a fire situation is confirmed there will not be quite the same sense of urgency by responding fire appliances.

The back-up call confirming a genuine incident will ensure that two appliances attend all buildings with the utmost urgency.



### **Building evacuation**

- The Evacuation Controller will position him/herself in a place of safety, don the Evacuation Controller (EC) high visibility jacket and await the arrival of the Fire Brigade
- On the arrival of the Fire Brigade, the EC must inform the Fire Brigade Officer-in-charge (OIC) of any persons reported missing and their location if known, and all information in relation to the fire
- Remain at the Fire Control Point until told to stand down by the Fire Brigade OIC
- Check-in each Fire Warden as they arrive and make a note of their report as they arrive
- Delegate specific duties to fire wardens as appropriate
- Pass any relevant information to the Fire Brigade OIC on request
- The decision to re-occupy the building will be taken by the EC after the Fire Brigade confirms it is safe to do so

### **EVACUATION CONTROLLERS**

Each building shall have an Evacuation Controller appointed by the Operations Manager. In the event of an evacuation of any building, the EC will liaise between the company and the emergency services.

Should an evacuation take place in the absence of the EC, the deputy EC will take charge. In the absence of both, the first Fire Warden to arrive at the fire control point will assume the duties of Evacuation Controller for that particular evacuation.

At the fire control point (normally the master fire panel for the building) will be an “Information for Fire Crews” box, which will include plans and other relevant information relating to that building. It may also include checklists relevant to the evacuation under way.

### **FIRE WARDENS**

Fire Wardens are appointed by the Heads of Department to assist in the safe evacuation of all staff and students present from pre-designated areas of the building.

In large buildings where numbers of people are significant, it is not practicable to have a roll call or keep a formal fire register. Similarly, in most College premises, a significant proportion of people are 'mobile' at any given time. All but the smallest of premises will require Fire Wardens, and sufficient numbers should be appointed to ensure that no individual has to check an area greater than it would take around a minute to cover.

The company has implemented such a system in most of its buildings and Fire Wardens have been trained to assist staff and students evacuate buildings when the fire alarm sounds.



### **Fire Wardens - role and responsibilities**

- **Fire Safety Awareness**  
Ensure good housekeeping practices are carried out
- **Fire-Fighting Equipment**  
Ensure visual checks are carried out to identify any damaged equipment
- **Escape Routes**  
Ensure all escape routes are clear of obstructions and signs are not damaged or obscured
- **Mandatory Fire Notices**  
Ensure all fire doors are clearly signed 'Fire door keep shut'
- **Fire Safety Signs – e**  
Ensure all fire safety signs are legible and not damaged
- **Fire Assembly Point**  
Ensure you are aware of the location

### **Training – make sure you know:**

- How to visually check your designated area (this should take no more than 60 seconds)
- The procedures for calling the Fire Brigade
- The evacuation procedures for occupants to reach assembly points
- How to alert members of the public and visitors, including directing them to exits
- How to open all escape doors, including those with special mechanisms
- How to stop machinery and isolate power supplies (if within your area of responsibility)
- The standards and working practices for safe use of flammable materials
- How to report incidents, e.g. leaks, spills, faulty equipment, door closers, etc.

### **Special responsibilities**

You may be asked to assist occupants with special needs – ensure you know:

- Where the temporary safe areas are
- The evacuation procedures for occupants with special needs
- The safety procedures for manually lifting or guiding occupants

In the event of an evacuation

- Wear your high-vis jacket
- Check your designated area
- Report to Evacuation Controller
- Await further instructions/duties

It must be stressed, however, that Fire Wardens are not trained firefighters. Their main function is to assist the progress of the evacuation and to report its progress to the Evacuation Controller.



## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES FOR DISABLED PERSONS**

Every individual with a disability which may affect their ability to recognise that an emergency is taking place or to evacuate a building unaided will have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan drawn up (PEEP).

PEEPS are required by:

- Anyone who could have a problem escaping in an emergency
- Persons with temporary impairments, e.g. pregnancy, injuries, broken leg, etc.
- Persons with long-term impairments, e.g. hearing, sight, ambulatory, cognitive
- Others (children)

The PEEP will be produced in conjunction with the Health and Safety guidelines. This evacuation strategy will be specific to the needs and abilities of the individual in question.

### **Staff/Students**

The senior member of staff will be responsible for undertaking the PEEP. This will be the Operations Manager, Senior Porter or Director of Academic Programmes.

### **Visitor/Contractor**

The person being visited/work unit in control of area is responsible.

### **Wheelchair users with mobility impairment**

The wheelchair user must notify their tutor/manager of the details of their PEEP. If, due to the nature of the illness/injury, the individual cannot be removed from their wheelchair without risk of serious injury, the Health and Safety representative must be advised immediately.

It is essential that wherever possible Evacuation Controllers are aware of staff, students or visitors to the building who have specific emergency evacuation needs.

### **Deaf/Hearing-Impaired Persons**

There are few visual fire signals. Deaf or hearing-impaired individuals who are likely to be working in an isolated area are encouraged to advise an appropriate member of staff, so that they may be notified of any alarm. In certain student accommodation blocks, vibrating pillows can be requested for deaf/hearing impaired persons.

Departments in which hearing-impaired staff are located should consider the installation of a flashing fire beacon to alert the individual to the activation of the alarm system.

### **Blind/Visually-Impaired Persons**

Blind/visually-impaired persons are advised to locate evacuation and assembly points in their early days in the College and should make contact with the Evacuation Controller for their building to be advised on the fire evacuation routes from that building. It is essential that this takes place immediately on arrival at College rather than wait until an evacuation takes place.



## **FIRE PRACTICE DRILLS**

Regular fire practice drills will be held termly or with the arrival of each new course of students. These will normally take place in the first three weeks of term. The drills will monitor the effectiveness of the local evacuation procedures and, where necessary, identify required changes. They will also time the evacuation and compare the time to a previously determined acceptable time for the particular building, based on national standards and accepted good practice. In cases where the evacuation takes longer than the expected time, a second drill may be carried out at a later date.

Fire practice drills will be conducted by the Site/ Premises Officer or EC.

Student accommodation will receive a drill in the first term, but may be evacuated again at a later date to prevent resident complacency. The outcomes must be recorded in the Fire Log Book and any problems or shortcomings must be acted upon.

When planning fire practice drills the following should be considered:

- The EC or the deputy EC an opportunity to take charge
- Make an exit route temporarily unavailable (as if the location of the fire was at that point)
- Practise using any unusual means of escape routes that are not normally used
- Take the opportunity to practice PEEPs and see if they actually work

## **FIRE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

Fire doors must be kept closed at all times (unless they are doors which automatically close when the alarm is sounded) to maintain compartmentalisation of the building and to prevent the spread of the fire and/or toxic smoke.

Corridors, stairways, landings and escape routes must be kept clear at all times of anything likely to cause a fire or accident or to impede evacuation in an emergency. Everyday objects such as boxes of paper left on an escape corridor pose serious obstacles during an emergency evacuation.

Hazardous materials must be stored, used and disposed of in accordance with all legal requirements and safe working practices.

All fire-fighting equipment must be kept free from obstruction and be readily available for use in an emergency. Portable fire-fighting equipment must not be removed or repositioned without prior authority. Any obvious or suspected damage to, or misuse of, a fire alarm or fire-fighting equipment must be reported immediately.



## **MEANS OF ESCAPE ROUTINE INSPECTION**

**DAILY:** the premises should be inspected at the start of each working day to ensure that:

- All exit doors and gates are unlocked and readily available for use, or are capable of being opened quickly and easily in the event of a fire
- Any chains or other removable fastenings are removed from exit doors and hung in their marked storage positions
- Any emergency fastenings are working efficiently
- Any doors, gates or shutters that are required to be locked in the open position are so locked
- All escape routes and exit doors are clear of any obstructions, including shutters or sliding doors
- Fire doors are not held open except with approved devices
- There are no obvious fire hazards in escape routes, such as accumulated waste
- Any evacuation lifts for disabled persons are working
- All defects reported, logged and programmed for remedy

**SIX-MONTHLY:** fire doors should be checked to ensure that:

- Intumescent strips and smoke seals are undamaged
- Doors-leaves are not structurally damaged or excessively deformed
- Gaps between door leaf and door liner are not so small as likely to bind, or so large as to prevent them from being effectively fire and smoke-stopping
- The hanging devices, securing devices, self-closing devices and automatic release mechanisms are operating correctly

## **TESTING AND MAINTENANCE**

### **Fire Alarms**

The fire warning system should be tested weekly using a different call point for each successive test. The duration of the test need only be sufficient to check that the system operates satisfactorily. Any defects must receive immediate attention. A record of tests must be kept in the Fire Log Book.

### **Automatic detectors**

Automatic heat and smoke detectors should be tested in the manner and at the intervals recommended by the manufacturers of the equipment.

### **Portable fire extinguishers**

All portable fire extinguishing equipment shall be tested by an accredited agent annually.

### **Emergency lighting**

All emergency lighting systems should be regularly tested and properly maintained to an appropriate standard. Most existing systems will need to be manually tested. Some modern systems however have self-testing facilities that reduce routine checks to a minimum. Typically testing would include:

- A daily visual check
- A monthly function test for a maximum of one quarter of the rated duration of the lighting
- An annual full discharge test (for units over 3 years old)

Results of the periodic tests must be kept in the Fire Log Book.

### **TRAINING, INSTRUCTION AND INFORMATION**

All new members of staff shall be given local fire safety induction training by their Head of Department in the first week of employment. This will include identification of escape routes, locations of fire extinguisher(s), call points and assembly points and any local hazards of which they need to be aware.

The Head of Department shall ensure that Fire Wardens have been appointed and trained by the appropriate department.

Students will be advised of the relevant precautions and procedures for their specific residence, and will be made aware of the dangers and penalties associated with tampering with fire safety equipment.

Evacuation Procedures and Assembly Points shall be displayed on Fire Action Notices located at strategic points throughout the College.

### **NEW BUILDINGS/ALTERATIONS**

When new buildings or alterations are being planned, the Project Manager shall ensure that the requirements of relevant fire safety legislation/recognised standards are considered, and that the proposed building/facilities meet the requirements.

### **SPECIAL/SPECIFIC PROCEDURES**

In some cases (e.g. residences, chemical stores, gas isolation, experiments, shutdowns, etc.) there may be a need to have special/specific procedures in place. These procedures will be produced by the relevant department in conjunction with the company's Health and Safety Advisor. The relevant department will ensure that members of staff have been trained/briefed on the procedures as appropriate.

### **DSEAR: The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations 2002**

Areas and activities which come under DSEAR must be risk-assessed in accordance with current legislation.



## **MONITORING AND AUDIT**

Heads of Department shall confirm that those to whom they have delegated functions carry them out as part of their day-to-day duties, ensure that fire safety precaution and prevention measures are in place and are working as they are intended to.

The Fire Safety Officer shall monitor local arrangements for the provision of training, etc. to ensure that they work satisfactorily.

A yearly Fire Risk Assessment will be carried out by a competent person.

## **FIRE LOG BOOK**

A dedicated Fire Log Book must be kept and maintained at the College. They should not be held at any other premises and should be made available for inspection by the Fire Authority at any time. The Fire Log Book should include:

- The fire emergency plan
- A list of responsible persons
- Details of routine staff training
- A record of fire drills
- A record of fire alarm tests
- A record of emergency lighting tests
- A record of inspections of means of escape

Details of servicing, maintenance sheets and other related paperwork should not be filed in the Fire Log Book.

## **REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENTS**

Operational or Security Staff who become aware of a fire-related incident shall report it as soon as possible to the Fire Safety Officer.

When appropriate, the Fire Safety Officer shall carry out an investigation and make recommendations in accordance with Health and Safety Policy/Fire Policy.

*A fire-related Incident includes actual fires (no matter how small), false alarms, misuse and vandalism of fire or fire-related equipment.*

Data provided by completed incident forms and subsequent investigations shall be analysed periodically to identify trends and make recommendations.