

5. Fire Precautions

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Policy

The Board of Directors and the Chief Executive of the Society recognise the dangers that can arise in the event of fire. In order to fulfil their responsibilities for protecting colleagues, customers and visitors from fire hazards, they have adopted the following procedures.

Training

All colleagues will receive induction training that includes fire and emergency procedures when they join the Society. Ongoing site specific training will be provided, such as is required to ensure that colleagues are fully aware of the actions to be taken in the event of fire. Formal annual refresher training will be carried out at sites via the colleague Fire Safety Training Record - *Located on the Health & Safety Intranet page.*

Strategically placed notices and instructions describing the actions to be taken in the event of fire and to clearly indicate emergency exit routes will support training.

Site managers should note that all new colleagues should be told the following on their first day at work.

- Location and operation of the nearest fire exit and alternative fire exits.
- Procedures following the sounding of the audible warning.
- Assembly point in case of evacuation of the premises.

Housekeeping Standards

Waste products and general waste should not be allowed to accumulate to levels that could represent a fire risk. Packaging, waste or rubbish should be regularly moved to a safe storage area prior to disposal or collection. If waste materials are stored within the building, they **must not** be close to any ignition source, such as boilers, heaters, battery chargers and electrical sources.

Waste materials and containers **must not** block or obstruct fire exits, access to fire hydrants or fire brigade access routes.

Fire Fighting Equipment (FFE)

Fire fighting equipment will be provided in accordance with legal requirements as a minimum standard.

Any such equipment will be subject to an annual inspection. Records of all FFE, its location and findings of inspections will be maintained and stored with each site specific fire risk assessment in the site fire log.

Daily Fire Safety Checks

Every colleague within the business can contribute to ensure fire safety standards are maintained. Some of the visual checks that can be made whilst carrying out your normal duties include ensuring:

- Escape routes and fire exits are freely available for use (not locked, chained, bolted or obstructed).

- Gangways, corridors, passageways etc., leading to escape routes and staircases are free from obstructions and combustible materials are not stored on escape routes and staircases.
- All internal fire doors are kept shut and not wedged open.
- All alarm call points (break glass etc.) are kept clear of deliveries and stock items.
- Space heaters are safely positioned, and no radiant parts exposed.
- Enclosed staircases are clear of combustible material – this includes underneath.

It is the site manager's responsibility to ensure that appropriate checks are made in accordance with the fire regulations and that the checks are completed and recorded on C365 Compliance portal.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

Every Society premises must have a written plan and procedure detailing the arrangements for emergency evacuation in the event of fire or similar emergency. The 'Emergency Evacuation Plan' can be located on the Health & Safety Intranet page under Forms & Information.

It is important that all colleagues make themselves familiar with the evacuation plan in advance (copies should be placed on internal notice boards and in the manager's office and new starters shown their position on the first day).

All colleagues should know about the following emergency procedures:

- If they discover a fire, they should immediately break the glass in the nearest alarm call point (these are usually situated near to the fire exits). The sounding of the alarm should never be delayed.
- Nominated colleagues (or fire marshals) are designated to dial 999 and summon the emergency services.
- Lifts **must not** be used.
- If members of the public are on the premises, colleagues should request that they leave the building immediately. They should not shout 'fire' as this may cause panic and possible injury. Members of the public should be directed to the nearest fire exit.
- Colleagues should not run, but stay calm (if you panic, people around you will panic), walk calmly to the nearest fire exit and vacate the premises.
- They should make their way to the agreed fire assembly point and wait for everyone to be accounted for.
- They **should not** stop or deviate from the escape route to pick up personal belongings.

Fire Drills – Manager's Responsibilities

It is the site manager's responsibility to ensure that colleagues are fully aware of what they need to do in the event of an evacuation at their site. This can be achieved by ensuring the site carries out at least one fire drills per year and colleagues complete the annual fire drill quiz on iLearn. The primary concern of any emergency evacuation is to ensure that all occupants of the building reach a place of safety as quickly and as calmly as possible.

When organising a fire evacuation drill the following criteria should be followed:

- If possible, carry out the drill when the least disruption is likely to occur.
- Generally, colleagues should not be informed that a drill is to be conducted. Colleagues should be made aware that the alarm will never be sounded for a surprise test that does not require evacuation.
- A suitable person should be appointed from each floor or department to check that their areas are clear (toilets, meeting rooms, rest rooms etc.).
- Check that the assembly point is clearly marked or that colleagues know the location prior to the drill.
- Time the evacuation – more than three minutes could be putting people's lives in danger. (Within four or five minutes of a fire starting it can reach 800 / 900°C; this kind of temperature can melt glass and aluminium and turn them to liquid. At 400 / 500°C, steel can begin losing its weight bearing capacity).
- If your fire alarm system is linked to a surveillance or monitoring station, inform them you are going to carry out an evacuation drill.
- It may be useful to ring the local fire brigade (do not dial 999) to inform them an evacuation drill is taking place (a member of the public may ring 999 thinking it's a real fire).
- Ensure that you inform any contractors or visitors on site.
- Ensure all fire exits are used; this gives you and colleagues a clear understanding of evacuating from around the site.
- Have a clear system for ensuring no one re-enters the building until it is safe, and they are told to do so.