



Fire Precaution Policy

Contents

Part 1: Fire prevention

References
Introduction
Fire Risk Assessments
Strategy for Fire Prevention
Issue of General Fire Notice
Staff Training
Control of Risk: Training of Staff & Instruction of Students
Fire Drills
Testing of Fire Alarm Systems
Emergency Lighting
Emergency Exits
Fire Alarms
Firefighting Equipment
Fire Instruction Notices
Fire Prevention Checks
Housekeeping
Refuse & Rubbish
Flammable Materials
Electrical Appliances
Controlled Burning
Paint Solvents
Buildings used for Entertainment
Kitchens
Disabled Persons
Vandalism & Damage Limitation
Curtains, Furnishings, Art Displays & Decorations
Storage
Electricity
Fire Doors
Contractors
Fire Routine
Advice on the Procedure in the event of Fire
Fire Records
Publication of Fire Instructions



Part 1: Fire Prevention

References

Fire Precautions Amendment Regulations 1999
The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981
The Health & Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974
Fire Precautions Act 1971
DES Building Bulletin No7: Fire & Design of Education Buildings
Assessment of Fire Hazards from Solid Materials and the Precautions Required for their Safe Storage & Use
CLEAPSS 1988
The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1993
A Guide to the CIMAH Regulations 1984 – Further Guidance on Emergency Plans
A guide to the Public Information for Radiation Emergencies Regulations 1992

Introduction

The prevention of fire is of vital importance. Most fires are caused by carelessness and ignorance. A high standard of fire consciousness will prevent this. It is the responsibility of all personnel to become conversant with these instructions.

Upon the outbreak of fire the saving and preservation of life takes precedence over the salvaging of property. A member of staff's first and over-riding duty is of course to look after the children or persons under their charge and this will mean the evacuation of the building. No attempt should be made to fight fire until their safety is assured, and then without exposing any person to risk.

The school site manager is to be informed of all fires, no matter how small.
A fire is not considered extinguished until such time as it has been inspected by the site manager.

Fire Risk Assessments

The Fire Precautions Workplace Amendment Regulations 1999 came into force on 1st December 1999. This ensures that employers are responsible for ensuring appropriate fire precautions which include:

1. Appropriate fire detection and firefighting equipment that is accessible and simple to use
2. Nominated employees to implement fire-fighting measures
3. Provision of adequate training and equipment for those appointed
4. Arrange for any necessary contacts with external emergency services
5. Provide adequate emergency escape facilities

In order to do this, employers should carry out risk assessments and revise them from time to time. It should identify any person especially at risk in a case of fire, i.e. a person who is deaf, blind or disabled etc.



An emergency plan to evacuate the premises should be created providing for the calling of the fire brigade allocating individuals who are responsible for supervising, controlling and putting into effect the plan. Fire drills must be carried out in accordance with the emergency plan and modifications made. It is important that any actions arising from the fire risk assessment forms part of the overall health and safety policy for the school to ensure that the management of all health and safety risks are considered together.

There are no hard and fast rules about how the assessment should be carried out. The important thing is that it should both be practical and systematic to ensure that the whole of the workplace is examined, including every room or area, particularly any area not often in use.

Strategy for Fire Prevention

Management strategy for fire prevention may be classified as follows:

1. Everyday management and vigilance by staff to ensure that potential hazards are kept under control to prevent the occurrence of fire
2. Alarm, evacuation and emergency action backed up by notices, drills and practice to ensure that correct action is taken in the event of an outbreak of fire

A strategy should also include:

1. Planning for the actions to be taken in the event of fire:
 - Training of staff, including any specially delegated function
 - Provision of instruction to pupils
 - Display of appropriate fire instruction notices
2. Control of risks associated with activities or processes which may cause or adversely affect any outbreak of fire, e.g. process, storage, gas, electricity, contractors on site, vandalism
3. Check on existing structural precautions, and seeking further advice where there are thought to be deficiencies
4. Monitoring the effectiveness of precautions, e.g. analysis of evacuation drills, annual review, by checklist

Issue of General Fire Notice

The issue of general fire notices to staff will take place during induction. It is imperative that this document is issued and explained in detail to an employee in the same way as details of pay, work hours and holidays would be explained. This requirement applies to all staff.

Staff Training

The site manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff in the premises are trained in accordance with the requirements of the school.



Every member of staff will receive instruction in fire precautions during induction. This training will be recorded in the training section of the fire log book.

After the initial instruction all members of staff will receive an refresher once in every 12 months.

Control of Risks: Training of Staff & instruction of Pupils

Employees

1. The training of all employed persons forms an essential part of the school's fire precautions.

The aim should be to ensure that all staff receive training in a basic appreciation of the risk of fire and the action to be taken in the event of fire, including instruction appropriate to their responsibilities in an emergency.

2. Instruction and training for all will include the following points:

- a) the action to be taken upon discovering a fire
- b) the action to be taken on hearing the fire alarm
- c) the method of raising the alarm, including location of call points, use of internal telephone system and location of external telephone
- d) the correct method of calling the fire brigade
- e) the location and use of firefighting equipment
- f) knowledge of escape routes
- g) evacuation method for the building, location of assembly point and method of accounting for persons
- h) stopping machinery, activities and isolating power and fuel supplies where appropriate
- i) appreciation of the importance of fire doors and the need to close all doors and windows at the time of a fire or on hearing the alarm

Pupils

Pupils should be instructed at the start of their attendance at the school to enable them to:

1. Identify the fire alarm
2. Know the action they should take on hearing the alarm
3. Know the location of the assembly points
4. Know what to do if not in a supervised group, in the event of fire

These points should be included on the fire notice and reinforced during practice evacuations.

Fire Drills

Fire drills will be carried out at least once in every term. The exercise will include a simulated evacuation drill with the assumption that one escape route is not available. Each exercise will be started by a predetermined signal, i.e. activating the fire alarm and the whole premises will be checked as if an emergency has arisen. This fire drill can be combined with the instruction given to staff. When a fire drill is held it will be recorded in the fire log. All staff must participate in at least two drills per year.



Testing of Fire Alarm System

The emergency lighting is to be examined weekly by The site team. The log book will be completed indicating any defects and these will be brought to the attention of the group bursar immediately. This lighting will also be checked by an electrical contractor annually.

Emergency Lighting

The emergency lighting is to be examined weekly by The site team. The log book will be completed indicating any defects and these will be brought to the attention of the group bursar immediately. This lighting will also be checked by an electrical contractor annually.

Emergency Exits

All emergency exits are to be kept clear and free from obstruction at all times. It is the responsibility of the site manager to ensure staff are fully aware of the contents of these instructions and know the location of all fire exits and the assembly point in the immediate vicinity.

Fire Alarms

Types

1. Central alert - operated from administration
2. Single stage electrical fire alarm - operated by release button
3. Telephone

Alternative Alarms

1. Should there be no official fire alarm in the vicinity, the person finding the fire is to raise the alarm by shouting, "Fire, fire, fire".
2. The fire alarm is to be raised no matter how small the fire.

Firefighting Equipment

Fire Extinguishers

There should be the correct type of fire extinguisher at each 'Fire Point' dependent upon the location.

Fire Blankets

Fire blankets held are classified as: light duty. Suitable for dealing with small fires in containers of cooking fat or oils and fires in clothing.



Fire Instruction Notices

Printed notices should be conspicuously displayed at all fire points stating concisely what staff and others should do if a fire is discovered or if they hear the alarm. The notices should be permanently fixed in position and suitably protected to prevent loss or defacement.

Fire Prevention Checks

The site manager is to ensure that regular fire prevention checks are carried out.

Checks are to include:

1. Unnecessary lights/electrical appliances (TVs, videos, microwave ovens etc.) are to be switched off and where possible, unplugged.
2. Convector heaters are to be inspected regularly.
3. Designated smoking areas, staff rooms, waste bins, etc.

A fire prevention check is to be carried out in all areas at the termination of the day's work prior to premises being vacated.

The following precautions are to be observed:

1. With the exception of essential systems which must continue to operate after normal working hours, all electrical appliances and lighting systems are to be switched off and disconnected by a person nominated for this purpose.
2. Waste paper bins are to be emptied and the contents removed from the building.
3. All parts of the school are to be inspected by the cleaners after departments have been closed for the day. He/she is also to ensure that electrical equipment have been switched off and that all doors are closed.
4. Windows and inspection apertures are to be left free from obstruction. To facilitate detection of a fire from outside prior to vacating rooms or premises at the end of the day all curtains should be drawn apart, other than when security requirements dictate.

Housekeeping

Tidiness and cleanliness are essential fire prevention measures. The accumulation of rubbish and waste material is to be kept to a minimum; it is to be cleared away each day on the cessation of work and removed to a safe location outside and away from buildings for early disposal.

Paint materials, used stencils, oily rags, oily overalls, etc. are subject to spontaneous ignition. Such items should be removed to a safe external location on cessation of work. If this is impractical they must be deposited in close-lidded, non-combustible containers, placed well away from stores and other combustible material. The storage or accumulation of combustible materials in roof voids, under stairs and similar spaces is forbidden.



Refuse & Rubbish

Refuse or rubbish must not be permitted to accumulate in or around the school. Disposal is to be undertaken at regular intervals at central collection points. Smouldering or burning refuse is not to be disposed of at refuse collection points.

Flammable Materials

Flammable materials are not to be stored near any form of heating.

Electrical Appliances

When using electrical appliances, the following rules should be adhered to:

1. They are to be switched off and unplugged when not in use.
2. The use of multi-plug adapters is prohibited.
3. They are to be fitted with the correct plug for the socket provided. Plugs are to be undamaged.
4. Temporary wiring and extensions are not to be used.
5. Inspection lights are to be of an authorised pattern and fitted with a guard.
6. Electrical faults are to be reported immediately to the group bursar.
7. Fuses that have blown must only be replaced after establishing the cause for the blowing, with fuses of the correct rating.
8. A fuse should never be replaced with one of a higher rating.
9. Flexible cable to fittings should be as short as possible and should be inspected regularly and replaced if worn.

Controlled Burning

Burning of any sort is forbidden.

Paint Solvents

Paints and solvents suitably marked are to be segregated in properly prepared stores, which are to be clearly signed.

Paint stores are to have electrical fittings of the approved safety pattern.

Floors of paint stores are to be covered with sand.

Buildings used for Entertainment

Premises are to have adequate means of escape in case of fire. These are to be clearly indicated and are to be unlocked and unobstructed. An adequate number of stewards or ushers are to be available.



Decorations are not to be put up without the advice of the site manager; any decorations which increase the fire risk are prohibited.

Decorations are not to be pinned or wired to any form of electrical wiring.

Naked flame is not to be used as a means of illumination, however, if candles etc. are necessary for decor or stage productions they are to be fixed in candlesticks with a heavy base and must not be so positioned as to present a fire hazard.

Any temporary staging is to be secure and is not to obstruct fire exits.

Supplementary wiring is only to be carried out by a qualified electrician and following consultation with the site manager.

A sufficient number of fire appliances are to be available to deal with an outbreak of fire.

Adequate supervision of children's entertainment is essential. At parties and cinema shows sufficient personnel are to be available to act as marshals to control and evacuate the children to safety.

The site manager is to be notified of any special occasions or celebrations involving extra decorations or any fire risks.

Kitchens

In order that losses by fire are kept to a minimum and that catering facilities are not jeopardised a high standard of fire precautions in kitchens is of paramount importance. Catering staff should be fire conscious and are to be trained in the action to be taken when a fire occurs.

Disabled Persons

Special precautions may be required when disabled persons have access to a building. Where possible they should be located within a building so that they are able to evacuate with the minimum of assistance. This will normally mean location on the ground floor. However, consideration must be given to any steps or other changes of level which may need to be crossed.

Vandalism & Damage Limitation

Fire caused by vandals or persons breaking into a building intent on causing damage are a constant risk, and this type of fire is probably the greatest risk facing the school. Such fires are often started at night or during holidays, and result in extensive material damage, and disruption of pupils' education.



The opportunity for reducing such vandalism lies part in the long-term development of a good relationship with neighbours, and part in the security of the premises, by ensuring the windows and internal doors are properly secured when the building is unoccupied.

Combustible materials should not be left where they are immediately accessible to intruders, and flammable liquids, which may be used as accelerants should be stored securely.

Structural fire precautions incorporated to assist escape from buildings will also reduce the spread of fire. All fire and smoke doors should be closed when premises are vacated (closing of all doors and windows is recommended to limit spread of smoke damage).

Curtains, Furnishings, Art displays & Decorations

Care should be taken when choosing curtains, furnishings and fittings. Inherent or tested fire retardant materials should be used whenever possible.

Art displays and other decorations of a combustible nature can increase the spread of fire considerably.

Accordingly, the quantity and location of such displays is critical in reducing the fire loading.

1. Displays should not be placed on escape routes or block exits.
2. Sources of ignition, such as light bulbs should not be placed near the displays.
3. Expanded polystyrene and other plastics produce large amounts of toxic, black smoke and considerable heat. They should not be allowed on escape routes.
4. In corridors or on staircases, wall displays made from combustible material should be limited to 20 per cent of the available overall surface.

Storage

Readily combustible materials such as paper, should be stored in designated areas where they will be secure against unauthorised entry. These areas must be free of sources of ignition, such as heaters and suspended lighting units.

Flammable liquids must be kept in purpose-built storerooms or cupboards provided with ventilation.

All persons handling such material should be aware of the dangers.

Electricity

All electrical apparatus should be installed by an approved contractor, using the correctly rated fuse. If a fault occurs get it repaired before continuing. Electrical installations should be checked regularly as electrical faults are a major cause of accidental fires.



All electrical equipment not required to be used out of hours should be switched off and the plug removed from the socket. All portable electrical equipment is to be checked annually by external contractors.

Fire Doors

Fire doors have at least one of two functions:

1. To protect escape routes from the effects of fire so that occupants can safely reach a final exit
 2. To protect the contents and/or the structure of a building by limiting the spread of fire
- Neither of the above functions will be satisfactorily undertaken unless the door is a good fit in the frame, the self-closing device is working efficiently and the door is not wedged or held open.

Even if a door is not a fire door it may reduce smoke and heat damage so at evenings and weekends all doors should be left in the closed position.

Contractors

Building contractors bring a large number of ignition sources to the school. Tar boilers, blow lamps, welding equipment and liquefied petroleum gas bottles all give rise to a higher fire risk. Ensure that all contractors entering the premises are aware of the fire precaution measures and procedures, should a fire occur.

At the end of the day, no building materials should be left outside where vandals can use them to damage the premises.

The group bursar should be made aware when hot cutting work is to take place for both the safety of the pupils and the school.

Fire routine

The purpose of the fire routine is to establish what action is to be carried out in the event of a fire. It should be in the form of a written notice and cover the basic facts below.

1. What to do if you discover a fire
2. What to do when you hear the alarm of fire
3. Evacuation
4. Assembly
5. Roll call
6. Calling the fire brigade
7. Special needs of cleaners, disabled, etc



Advice on the Procedure in the event of a Fire

At time of emergency:

1. If you discover a fire or one is reported to you - operate the nearest fire alarm call point by activation.
2. If you hear the fire alarm – evacuate the premises immediately, as detailed in the evacuation procedure for the School.

Ensure that the Fire Brigade is called by dialling 999.

After the event:

1. Do not re-enter the premises until advised to do so by the senior fire service officer present.
2. If the fire has been extinguished by school staff, except for ensuring that the fire is out, do not disturb any evidence which could indicate the cause of the fire.
3. Ensure that the premises are in safe working order before re-occupying, ie fire doors satisfactory, fire alarm operating, extinguishers re-charged.
4. Statistics have shown that any publicity given to a school fire can result in a second fire. Members of staff are not to talk to the media unless authorised by the head teacher.
5. The site manager is to analyse the procedures followed during the fire to determine whether changes are required.

Fire Records

The safety of a building's occupants cannot be assured by design alone. Any building can quickly become dangerous unless there is foresight in the activities carried out there, and care in the maintenance of it.

The following fire records are to be maintained:

- Persons with special responsibilities
- Fire alarm call point locations and checks
- Weekly fire alarm tests
- Fire alarm fault records
- Fire alarm maintenance inspection
- Emergency lighting maintenance inspection
- Firefighting equipment routine monthly checks
- Fire drills
- Firefighting equipment tests and maintenance by contractors
- Training records
- Visits/inspections by fire brigade

Publication of fire instructions

- These instructions are to be held by all.
- Extracts are to be published in the staff handbook.
- All new arrivals are to have fire instructions brought to their attention.
- Part 2 to these instructions are to be displayed prominently at all fire points and at the telephone exchange.



Those annexes pertaining to specific risks are to be displayed in those places. The classroom fire notice is to be displayed in each classroom.

Appendix A **Displays, Display Boardings & Decorations**

Great care should be taken that educational and display materials, which may be added to a building by the occupants, do not unintentionally cause a fire hazard. The same caution is needed in respect of decorations using combustible materials, for example, Christmas trimmings and 'autumn leaves' displays.

Flimsy materials, natural and artificial, can be readily combustible and increase the risk of fire occurring and depending on quantity and location will increase the possibility of rapid spread of smoke and fire. Blazing pieces may drop over a wide area before persons have a chance to escape.

In determining what is reasonable by way of display materials and/or decorations the overriding consideration is whether persons are likely to be trapped as a result of fire involving such materials.

This is a difficult area for the lay person to assess as it needs an understanding of how parts of their building contribute to escape routes, and how materials, for example display boarding, may contribute to the spread of fire over its surface.

The following guidance can be given concerning materials which form the linings of walls and ceilings (the technical terms are defined in Building Bulletin 7 and British Standard 476, and are essential to understand which materials are acceptable).

- 1. In "protected stairways", "protected corridors" and "protected lobbies" the surface linings should be "class 0", that is non-combustible. The meaning of this is that display boards, and free standing displays should not be incorporated in these areas.*
- 2. In "horizontal circulation area", the linings should be "class 0", except that 20 per cent of the total wall and ceiling area may be "class 2". This means that display boarding may be acceptable in these areas, subject to its area being within the amount given, and that the character of the fire resistance as given in the manufacturers specification is "class 1".*
- 3. In new construction these requirements should have been taken into account at the design stage. However, occupants should ensure that no modifications such as covering or painting which will change the nature of its fire resistance occurs.*
- 4. Where there are any areas of doubt, for example whether a certain material is acceptable in terms of the effect that it may have on fire precautions then the advice of the site manager should be sought.*
- 5. Where displays are provided in other cases they must be located where they are well clear of any source of ignition eg cookers, Bunsen burners etc.*

Where paper, natural or plastic materials are used for decorations or display they should not be suspended from light fittings or near any heat source. Coloured paper must not be placed inside light diffusers for coloured effects.



Cellular plastics (polyurethane foam) presents particularly severe fire risks and should not be used for display purposes.

Appendix B **Electricity**

