



3.17 FIRE EVACUATION

Guidance and Procedures

This section outlines standard arrangements for use within as many as possible of the premises within the Council. By using similar systems of emergency evacuation, employees will be able to follow the standard procedure whichever building they happen to be working in at the time of emergency, and any possible confusion will be reduced to a minimum.

Any variation to this standard procedure must be made known to those employed on the premises by management by means of circular, notices, and inclusion in Corporate Group safety policies. **BUT, UNLESS YOU HAVE RECEIVED ANY SUCH INSTRUCTIONS, WHEN YOU HEAR THE FIRE ALARM, EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY.**

Fire Risk Assessment

Heads of Service must ensure that for buildings for which they have a responsibility a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment has been undertaken by a competent person. This Risk Assessment will support evacuation issues. The document must be maintained in a retrievable format and made available to the Corporate Health and Safety Team and the Fire Authority on request. Arrangements must also be in place for ensuring that all new employees are instructed in fire and emergency procedures within their respective areas of operation.

Fire Procedure Notices

An adequate number of notices, concerning the action to be taken in case of fire, will be placed around the building. It is also advisable for more detailed information concerning fire drill procedure to be given to all members of staff prior to each fire drill. This action will help to ensure that all staff will be fully aware of the fire drill procedure.

Raising the Alarm

Where automatic fire detection systems are in place the alarm will be triggered, in the event of fire, and the evacuation procedure will be implemented.

Where no such automatic detection systems are fitted the raising of the alarm will be done manually.

On hearing the Fire Alarm **everyone** in the building is required to evacuate the premises. Visitors to premises must be escorted outside by the employee being visited at the time.

Evacuation Wardens

The person responsible for any premises or parts of premises must ensure that a sufficient number of Evacuation Wardens are available and trained, to take charge of defined areas of the building. The nominated employees must liaise closely with each other to ensure that cover exists in the event of any individual Warden's absence due to sickness or holiday. Each Evacuation Warden is issued with a white safety helmet, for ease of identification. However, the Evacuation Warden's function is not to shepherd employees out of the building - the individual employee must follow evacuation procedures without unnecessary prompting.

The Role of the Evacuation Warden

If any reported outbreak of fire proves to be severe, Evacuation Wardens must not place their lives in danger. In all other cases the Warden will close the door of the area concerned, sound the Alarm, if this has not yet been done, call the Fire Brigade, and carry out the procedure for the evacuation of the building.

The Evacuation Warden will then quickly inspect all offices, toilets, tea-rooms, elevators in their allocated area, in order to ensure that no person, particularly anyone who may have difficulty in moving, is left behind. Any members of the public who may be within the building at the time of the emergency will be escorted to safety. All doors will be closed on completion of evacuation.

If there is an elevator in the building it is not to be used as a means of escape as a fire may cause an electrical fault, thereby causing the elevator to stop between floors with little chance of being winched to safety.

When the building has been cleared the Evacuation Wardens will report to the Evacuation Controller who will be responsible for checking off the total list of all sections. This information can then be given to the emergency services when they arrive. Heads of Service will also need to be kept informed.

Once the emergency is over Evacuation Wardens will ensure that any used fire extinguishers are quickly serviced and recharged.

Assembly Points and the Roll Call

Where possible a roll call should be undertaken, however in situations where there is a large number of staff who are peripatetic and or flexible working arrangements exist it may not be possible. In these situations the role carried out by the Evacuation Wardens will suffice to ensure an adequate evacuation of all employees and visitors from the building.

A safe assembly point or points must be selected where the complete staff or defined sections may assemble after evacuating the building. For larger buildings it may be necessary to display notices showing diagrams of the whole assembly area so that those concerned may know at which section of the assembly area they are required to attend.

In larger buildings, where it is found to be necessary to exhibit copies of the assembly point area, and the positions to be taken up by each separate section of personnel, a small personal copy of this plan should be given to each employee.

Car Parking Restrictions

Any car parking restrictions that may be in force around a building must be strictly adhered to so as not to cause unnecessary danger during a fire, and so that Fire Tenders have immediate and clear access.

Fire evacuation exercises should be undertaken at regular frequencies. These are identified in the fire logbook at each premise. The Occupational Health & Safety Team will be available to advise and assist where necessary.

In the event of an evacuation of any premise due to fire or any other emergency the Occupational Health & Safety Team must be notified immediately.