



Royal Mail Group

Safety, Health & Wellbeing Guidance

Fire Precautions Guide

# Royal Mail Group Safety, Health & Wellbeing Management System

## Fire Precautions Guidance

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## Introduction

The Royal Mail Group provides operational fire safety guidance to all employees in this Fire Precautions Guide. There is an electronic version on the Safety, Health & Wellbeing Knowledge Database; this replaced the hard copy version “Fire Precautions Guide 2000” which should no longer be used. The electronic format makes it easy and cost effective to modify the guidance document which all employees are required to follow. It has been updated to reflect the modern approach to fire safety.

The electronic Fire Precautions Guide covers a series of subject areas giving primary guidance. A copy is held in the Emergency Preparedness section of the Knowledge Database where relevant links to further guidance documents, briefing notes and templates required for the effective management of fire safety can be found.

### 1.2.1 About Fire Safety

Royal Mail Group is committed to continuing to achieve high standards of fire protection and prevention for everyone who works in or visits our premises. These standards are not easily acquired and require constant attention at every level throughout Royal Mail Group.

Practising good fire safety management, maintaining constant safety awareness and good practice will ensure that we continue to work in a safe environment.

#### Fire Risk Assessment

The Unit Manager (PiC) of the premises is responsible for ensuring all fire safety arrangements are satisfactory. The Fire Risk Assessment records and demonstrates how those arrangements are managed.

#### Premises Fire Evacuation Plan and Premises Fire Safety Policy

The purpose of the fire evacuation plan is to ensure people know what to do in the event of a fire and ensure a safe evacuation. The Premises Fire Safety Policy demonstrates how the fire safety arrangements within the premises will be managed.

#### Fire Safety Management

When we talk about fire safety our first thoughts tend to be towards fire doors, extinguishers and fire alarms; often we do not consider the other aspects such as planning, communication and organisational issues which underpin good safety practice.

The face of fire safety has changed and is now a system of management and responsibilities requiring leadership and commitment at all levels.

#### Fire Risk Assessment Review

Fire safety precautions should be constantly reviewed to ensure bad practices and new hazards are quickly dealt with and the risks quickly controlled. Similar to carrying out a fire risk assessment, the fire risk assessment review (OFRA Review) assesses whether control measures put into place under the fire risk assessment are being sufficiently managed and adhered to.

It will be necessary to re-write the fire risk assessment if it is no longer sufficient in the light of changes to the work place, changes in working practices, in the event of an associated incident (fire or control failure), a permanent change in Unit Manager or other relevant factors and in any case annually.

## Fire Precautions Guide

In practice, many of the practical aspects of what you have been doing will remain the same and the guide will still continue to show you what standards are expected in RMG.

The Unit Manager (person in control (PIC), or the most senior manager in a multi-user site is responsible for fire precautions compliance on a day-to-day basis and is the designated Fire Precautions Officer (FPO). The Fire Precautions Officer will act with the authority of the Unit Manager (PiC), but the Unit Manager (PiC) will still retain responsibility.

Whoever is appointed as FPO should be competent by training, experience or qualification and should therefore receive initial fire safety training and refresher training at 3 yearly intervals.

This electronic edition of the guide replaces all previous publications. It is issued to help managers to comply with legal responsibilities and business policy.

Information on compliance with the latest Fire Precautions Regulations and carrying out a fire risk assessment is included.

References are also made to the Facilities Help Desk and the new style Volume 3 Site Log Book.

### 1.2.3 Fire Precautions Guide 1 - Introduction - What are Fire Precautions

In the United Kingdom in 2011 just over 380 people died as a result of fire. There were around 11,300 fire related injuries. Losses due to fire was estimated at £3.6m every day in 2009. Life and property losses due to fire continue on a downward trend. A Key factor is better fire safety protection and increased fire safety awareness.

Fire precautions fall mainly into two main categories:

#### 1. In-built fire protection measures

Royal Mail Group Property (RMGP) ensure that the in-built measures are properly designed, installed and maintained to published standards. Royal Mail Facilities Management (RMFM) provides contracts for testing, maintenance of premises services and fire safety equipment and gives technical support and advice to occupiers.

#### 2. Day to day fire safety management

Unit Manager should oversee compliance with day to day precautions in their buildings, monitoring and reporting any faults.

Where a premise has more than one occupier, the PiC for each business unit will be required to ensure adequate joint arrangements are in place to ensure fire safety arrangements for common areas are maintained in a satisfactory condition. The PiC is required to cooperate and coordinate with other occupiers and keep them informed of any significant risks.

Every premise must have an up to date fire risk assessment, which must be reviewed periodically. This is one of the main duties of the Responsible Person under the Fire Safety Order (FSO). Some premises within certain criteria will have Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) carried out by Fire Safety Consultants (FSCs) appointed by Group Property. Following the initial assessment these premises will be re-assessed periodically or at the discretion of the National Fire Risk Manager. At all other times the Unit Manager (PiC) will still be responsible for ensuring the FRA is reviewed annually or where changes occur related to the

premises, work systems, hazards, employee numbers or disposition.

Any action points recorded by the FSCs must be acted upon immediately and any defects reported to the Property & Facilities Management Helpdesk.

#### Using this guide

If you read through this guide it will take you through the main elements of fire precautions item by item. Don't worry if the information goes beyond your particular needs, the guide has to cater for a wide range of buildings of varying complexity and size. Compliance with the guide will help you as occupier and the organisation to meet legal duties and provide a safe workplace.

SUMMARY TABLE OF OCCUPIER/RESPONSIBLE PERSON/RMG FACILITIES MANAGEMENT DUTIES		
Fire precautions task	Occupier duties	Facilities Management duties
Appoint FPO; Produce and maintain emergency fire evacuation plans; occupier liaison; Fire evacuation drills, employee briefing and training.	Ensuring that appropriate precautions are in place and maintained up to date. Ensure emergency procedures are tested and tests recorded and all employees receive appropriate fire training. Training must be recorded and record placed in Vol. 3 of Site Log Book	Advice to occupiers
Risk assessment/ fire hazards and ignition sources.	Initial assessment/ record results/ monitor/ review/ report and act on defects and deficiencies.	Advice to occupiers. Obtain specialist services where required.
Escape routes and exits.	Keep clear, well maintained & unobstructed. Ensure faults are reported to property and facilities help desk	Provide and maintain.
Fire Safety Signs/Notices	Ensuring they are in place & maintained in good condition. Report defects to property and facilities help desk.	Provision and fixing of new/replacement signs.
Portable fire fighting equipment	Check equipment is serviced yearly, maintained in place and unobstructed.	Provision and maintenance
Emergency escape lighting.	Visual inspection & check/key switch test. Record tests in Vol. 3 of Site Log Book	Installation, service and maintenance.
Fire alarm systems and other fixed fire installations.	Visual inspection and check /weekly test of alarm call points.	Installation, service and maintenance.

#### 1.2.4 Fire Precautions Guide 2 - The Chemistry of Fire

Heat, Fuel and Oxygen are known as the elements of fire and under normal circumstances all need to be present for a fire to start or continue burning. This is often expressed as the triangle of fire. Remove one of the sides and the triangle will collapse or remove one of the elements and the fire will go out. This simple explanation can be used as the base on how to prevent fires or how to extinguish them.

The following are good examples of what makes up the individual sides of the triangle.

- **Fuel:** Wood, paper, plastic, oils, petrol, cotton. Chemicals can also make good sources of fuel and packaging should be checked for any hazard signs.
- **Heat** (a source of ignition): Portable heaters, cooking appliances, gas guns, electrical short circuit, light cigarette ends, friction, disc cutting and grinding etc.

- **Oxygen:** 20% of the air we breathe is oxygen, also found in gas cylinders in medical rooms, resuscitation equipment and cutting and welding equipment etc. Some chemicals contain oxygen and may assist combustion. Check packaging safety signs and segregate chemicals where required.

Combustion occurs when all three ingredients are present. Removal of one of the 'sides' or ingredients collapses the process and the fire is either extinguished or does not occur.

### 1.2.5 Fire Precautions Guide 3 - What the law requires

If a statutory enforcement notice is received at your building or office, you must take immediate action to comply with the notice. Failure to comply with requirements of the notice will result in legal proceedings processed through courts.

- REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005
- FIRE SAFETY (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2006
- FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2010

The Fire Precautions Act 1971 and Fire Precautions (Work Place) Regulations 1997 (As amended) was removed and replaced by the regulatory reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. All fire certificates and exemption certificates ceased to have effect on any premises to which they had been issued. Fire safety laws in relation to Scotland and Northern Ireland have also been reviewed and brought into force closely following the above Order.

This new order applies to all premises except a single private residential dwelling and requires the Responsible Person (Unit Manager (PiC)) to make adequate fire safety arrangements with regard to the size and nature of the work place. The Unit Manager (PiC) will be required to show that they have in place, effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures. All premises are therefore required to have in place adequate:

- Risk assessments
- Means of escape
- Emergency lighting
- Fire fighting and fire detection equipment
- Warning in the event of fire
- Emergency procedures
- Arrangements for maintenance of equipment
- Systems for recording and reviewing fire safety arrangements
- Arrangements for training and information to staff

Under this order the Unit Manager (PiC) must take into account the following where young persons (i.e. those under 18 years of age) are employed to work:

- The inexperience or lack of awareness of risk and immaturity of the person
- The nature and degree of the exposure to physical and chemical elements
- The form or range of work equipment
- The extent of safety training
- The organisation and processes of the activities
- Note: A separate Fire Risk Assessment must be carried out where young workers are employed. (16 and 18 years of age).
- Building Regulations are dealt with at construction stage and local managers need take no further action.

Fire certificates will not be issued under these new regulations.

#### Enforcement of the Regulations and Legal Notices

Fire authorities will enforce the regulations and will advise the organisation if they think further precautions are needed. Failure to comply with the regulations that places anyone at serious risk is a criminal offence. The following legal Notices may be issued:

#### Enforcement Notice

These are issued if, in the opinion of the fire authority, there has been a failure to comply with any part of the fire safety order. The notice will state the part of the order that has not been complied with, why they consider it has not been complied with, what steps must be taken and the minimum time required rectifying the offence.

#### Examples where Enforcement Notices are issued

Fire doors and exit routes obstructed by Yorks, ALTs, mail sacks etc.

Combustible items stored on exit routes and beneath stairs.

Fire doors wedged open, damaged, badly fitted, locked, self-closures requiring adjustment, not operating or damaged, damaged or missing smoke seals.

#### Prohibition Notice

Where in the opinion of the fire authority the use of the premises involves or may involve a serious risk, the use of the premises or part of the premises can be prohibited or restricted. A prohibition notice takes immediate effect and remains in force until removed either by the court or the Enforcing Authority.

#### Alterations Notice

Alterations Notices are issued generally in the case of high risk premises requiring the responsible person to advise the Fire Authority of any changes prior to them taking place and to satisfy them that appropriate precautions have been put in place to maintain safe use. Alterations notices may also be issued to any premises where it is believed any change to the present situation could increase the risk to life.

#### Action on receipt of a Statutory Notice

From time to time the Fire Authority may issue enforcement Notices following visits to any Royal Mail premises where offences have been found. Enforcement notices issued to large organisations such as the RMG are addressed and sent to the Company Secretary. In the case of Royal Mail Group, these will be sent to Royal Mail Group, 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

It is not the Company Secretary's responsibility to action any of the items on the notice but to ensure it is directed to person who does, "The Responsible Person". In all cases the notice will be forwarded to the Unit Manager (PiC) and the Accident Management Unit by RMG Legal Services for any actions that are required on the notice.

The Fire Authority must give a minimum of 28 days notice, from the date the Notice is served, to allow any failures to be rectified. Any decision to challenge a Fire Authority Notice must be made within 21 days. It is therefore essential that where a Notice has been received at the premises immediate action is taken.

When a Local Authority serves an Enforcement Notice directly to a site following an inspection, the manager with person in control responsibilities (PiC) must, in the first instance, notify the Accident Management Unit, P/L 5276 7291 or Std 01902 877291 address The AMU North West Midlands Mail Centre, Sun Street,

Wolverhampton, WV1 1AA or email [jag.ray@royalmail.com](mailto:jag.ray@royalmail.com). In addition, hard copies of the letter/notice must be sent to the Accident Management Unit.

Additionally, the Unit Manager (PiC) should notify the Regional Safety Director and their immediate line manager. If the notice relates to Property issues, then the Unit Manager (PiC) must notify the Property and Facilities Management Helpdesk on 0844 800 9191 and log the work/fault.

#### FIRE CHECK

- All workplaces, irrespective of use or numbers of employees, require adequate fire precautions based on a risk assessment.
- Day to day process hazards and activities which could create a fire problem need to be identified and controlled so that no-one is significantly at risk.
- If a statutory enforcement notice is received, you must take immediate action to comply with the notice. Failure to comply with requirements of the notice will result in legal proceedings processed through courts.
- Note: A fire certificate issued under the previous legislation may provide useful information but will not in itself be adequate as a fire risk assessment, for this purpose the Operational Fire Risk Assessment (OFRA) form has been provided.

#### **1.2.5 Fire Precautions Guide 4 – Appointment of a Fire Precautions Officer & Summary of Tasks**

The Unit Manager (PiC) is the designated Fire Precautions Officer may designate the duty and nominate an FPO to undertake the role. Whoever undertakes the duty should be competent by qualification, training or experience. FPOs are not required to be experts or become involved in fire fighting, their function is to ensure the premises is maintained in a compliant and safe condition.

They need to be aware of basic requirements and how to arrange for deficiencies to be put right. At large sites with several occupiers one person should take the lead role and co-ordinate activities with other occupiers. The main tasks and frequency are summarised below. They need not all be done on the same occasion but should be completed within a reasonable time limit. Periodically a full check should be carried out to ensure everything is in order.

#### Summary duties of the Fire Precautions Officer

##### On appointment

- Ensure the fire risk assessment pro-forma contained in the Site Log Book is completed.
- Discuss and agree findings where necessary with other occupiers, line manager or safety adviser. Implement remedial action where possible.
- Report any faults to the Help Desk.
- Advise employees on fire precautions and fire action plans

##### Daily

- Ensure that escape routes are clear and unobstructed and exit doors are unlocked.
- Check fire alarm panel for fault signals – report/record any faults.

##### Weekly

- Check all escape routes and access to fire extinguishers and hose reels are unobstructed and that housekeeping is satisfactory and accumulated waste materials are kept to a minimum.
- Ensure that the fire alarm and other fire installations (such as sprinklers) are tested & results recorded in the Site Log Book. Alarm call points must not be obstructed.

##### Monthly

- Check that fire exit signs and other fire safety signs are in place and visible.
- Visually check the condition of all fire extinguishers and hose reels.



- Check that emergency lighting has been tested & results recorded.

Every 6-12 months

As appropriate:

- Arrange a fire drill, check operation of emergency fire action plans record results in log book.
- Arrange for fire crew to visit large buildings for familiarisation purposes.
- Check engineers have carried out tests and inspections of emergency lighting, fire alarms and fixed fire-fighting equipment & that the records in the Site Log Book are correct.

#### 1.2.6 Fire precautions guide 5 – recording information – the site log book

The Site Log Book has been issued to every location and is to be used for recording all facilities information centrally. Volume 3 of the log book is dedicated to fire safety and contains the forms needed to record information to show compliance with fire safety legislation. The information and records contained in this volume provide proof to the Fire Brigades on how we are complying with our duty under the fire safety order.

These records include testing of safety equipment such as fire alarms and emergency lighting, fire training and drills.

##### Guidance

Service/maintenance engineers must record visits to check, inspect or repair fire installations.

**All records should be kept for a period of at least 12 months from the date of last entry.**

More importantly the Fire Risk Assessment, Fire Risk Assessment Review, Premises Fire Action Plan and Premises Fire Safety Policy all of which are required for inspection by visiting fire officers.

The Site Log Book issued to all locations and contains all the forms required for occupiers and contractors to record the information.

#### 1.2.7 Fire Precautions Guide 6 – Fire Risk Assessment

The Fire Risk Assessment has been a legal requirement since the introduction of the Fire Precautions (Work Place) Regulations and now continued under all UK Fire Safety Legislation.

The Fire Risk Assessment has been a legal requirement since the introduction of the Fire Precautions (Work Place) Regulations and now continued under the Fire Safety Order.

##### Step 1 identify hazards

Identify any potential source of ignition and combustible materials close to the source which could become ignited and cause a fire.

##### Step 2 identify those at risk

Identify the location of anyone in or around the premises who might be exposed to a higher than normal risk if there is a fire, e.g. persons working in areas below ground, or in a lone working situation. Those working in the vicinity of building alterations, or using heat producing equipment, for example in a kitchen or workshop, using sleeping accommodation provided on the premises of a residential centre or college are further examples.

Particular attention should also be given to those requiring assistance during any evacuation from the building or premises. This may include any person with disabilities, elderly, a parent with children or those

with cognitive disabilities.

#### Step 3 evaluate, remove, control, avoid and protect from risk

Decide on the measures necessary to minimise the risk by removing, reducing, controlling, avoiding or monitoring the hazard, for example by removing combustibles, or ensuring heat producing equipment is used safely.

#### Step 4 plan, inform, train and instruct

Planning will be a key component in providing sound fire safety strategy for your premises and the production of your Premises Fire Action Plan. To create an effective emergency plan you will need to know what your hazards are and how to control them and how you must react when those controls fail.

Ensure that there is a Fire Evacuation Plan which takes account of any particular hazards or working locations and that people are informed about it and trained in what to do if there is an emergency. Small premises may only require a simple evacuation plan but as the premises increases in size and numbers of staff, so does the necessity to provide a more comprehensive and effective plan.

Once the fire evacuation plan has been agreed, ensure all staff is familiar with what they will be expected to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. Responsibilities should be made clear and practiced when carrying out fire drills.

Clear instruction must be given to all employees, visitors and contractors. Clear instructions posted throughout the premises in prominent positions. Consider language differences and if alternative notices are required or larger print for those with visual impairment. Liaise with other occupiers where necessary to agree and ensure common or shared areas of the building are accessible at all times.

#### Step 5 record and review

Record the findings of your fire risk assessment and ensure you identify what measures you have in place in the comments section under each heading of the Operational Fire Risk Assessment form (OFRA).

Record the problems identified (if any) and remedial action taken by completing the action sheets at the rear of the OFRA. Property defects must be reported via the Property and Facilities Management Helpdesk.

Keep assessment under review and revise where necessary.

Update Risk Assessment if conditions change and review it at least annually. Keep it available for inspection by the fire authority.

Remember, always download the latest copy of the template OFRA or FRA Review from this page to ensure you have an up to date copy.

When you have a satisfactory Risk Assessment or if completed by one of the fire consultants you should only need to complete the FRA Review document unless there are major changes to the building, numbers of employees or work process.

### **Fire Precautions Guide Section 7**

Fire Precautions Guide Section 7 has a number of sub heading giving information and guidance on the typical causes of fire

### 1.2.8 Smoking

Since 2007 smoking was banned in all public indoor spaces in the UK. This includes all places of work, public houses, restaurants, nightclubs and other places of entertainment. Smoking is still allowed outdoors, at home, in prisons, care homes and designated hotel rooms. Those caught smoking in a banned area can face fines of £50. For any person in charge of public premises you can expect to face a £2,500 fine if you fail to stop someone smoking. You can be charged on-the-spot fines of £200 or Court Fines of up to £1000 if you fail to display no-smoking signs. This also applies to any person in our buildings or premises.

The Royal Mail Group has a strict no smoking policy within any building, smoking only being allowed on the premises in designated areas. Care must be given when selecting a suitable location as a smoking area with the following points should be taken into consideration.

When designating a smoking area consideration should be given to the following points.

- Away from any storage areas or combustible materials.
- More than 4 metres from any opening into a building.
- Use non-combustible floor mounted ashtrays.
- Avoid windy areas of the building, lit cigarette ends can be blown for considerable distances and still cause a fire hazard.

Cleaning staff should be instructed to empty butt bins regularly and not allow them to become overfull. Always empty butt bins into a metal container and allow to stand for at least 12 hours before disposing into waste bins. Enclosed ashtrays are preferable; plastic bins and bin liners are not to be used.

In out of sight areas, rubbish provides the fuel and lit cigarettes an ignition source. Oxygen is a component of air; so all three elements of the fire triangle are present.

People tend to smoke in the worst possible places – out of sight areas where discarded smoking materials can fall into hidden places along with other rubbish where a fire could grow undetected.

A careful watch should be taken where discarded cigarette ends are found away from designated smoking areas. Remind employees about the dangers of fire from carelessly disposing of lit cigarettes and their responsibility towards preventing fires by exercising good safety practice.

The Smoking Guide can be found on PSP – Policy and Information – Health Overview – Smoking Guide

### 1.2.9 Electrical Sources Wiring and equipment

All electrical equipment and wiring must be maintained in a safe condition and not overloaded – defective or overloaded wiring or faulty appliances are a frequent cause of fire.

Inspections should be carried out periodically by competent engineers.

Mains operated electrical equipment should not be used on official premises unless tested/inspected by electrical engineers. If you are worried about the safety of electrical installations or equipment report this to the P&FM Helpdesk.

#### Portable heaters and chiller units

Portable electric heaters and chiller units should be located and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

Sufficient clearance is to be maintained around the appliances to allow proper air circulation and prevent heat output impinging directly onto a combustible surface such as fixtures, fittings, furniture or upholstery.

Portable radiant bar electric fires are not permitted.

#### Fans and motors

Extract fans in all locations should be checked periodically by engineers for accumulations of dust, etc., which can block the air inlet eventually leading to overheating and then a fire.

Electric motors which have blocked ventilation slots or worn components are a potential fire source if not properly cleaned and maintained.

#### Lighting

Filament bulb lamps run hot, fluorescent tubes less so, but in storage areas or rooms make sure that boxes, papers or other combustibles are kept at least 150 mm clear of the lamps or starters.

#### Battery charging

Battery charging generates both heat and fumes. During the charging process both Hydrogen and Oxygen are generated creating a potentially flammable atmosphere.

Battery charging should only be carried out in specially designated areas. All electrical and ventilation equipment must be maintained in good working order to minimise the risk of arching from bad connections and ensure adequate air flow to prevent a build-up of fumes.

Storage and refuse should not be permitted in or around charging areas creating a possible fuel source in any fire situation.

#### Lightning

Lightning is potentially a massive ignition source and has been responsible for some very destructive fires. There is not much that can be done about this (so don't include it on a risk assessment) but ensure that where a lightning protection system is installed on the building, it is properly maintained and undamaged.

Lightning conductors are required to be tested and certified annually.

Electricity supplies must be safely maintained and not overloaded

### **1.2.10 Flammable Liquids and Gases**

Flammable liquids can ignite easily - this depends on the flash-point. The lower the flash-point the higher the risk of ignition!

#### Liquids - reducing risks

Flammable liquids should be used with care. Stocks should be kept in a purpose-designed metal cabinet that is suitably marked to indicate the hazardous nature of the contents.

Cleaning rags should not be left lying around and should be disposed of in a metal bin with a tight-fitting metal lid immediately after use.

In vehicle workshops, non-combustible absorbent granules should be used on any oil spills.

Be aware, it is the vapours from the liquid that ignites and burns not the liquid itself; therefore empty containers can be just as dangerous as those containing flammable liquid.

The findings of any COSHH risk assessments and manufacturer's instructions relating to fire and control measures must be adhered to.

#### Combustible/explosive gases

Bottled liquefied gases (LPG) such as Butane or Propane are often used in temporary heating or cooking equipment or for powering forklift trucks in warehousing areas and for contractor's equipment. All are potentially explosive and will ignite easily.

LPG being heavier than air can enter drains, workshop service pits or low lying areas. Reducing the danger in the use of such gases depends critically on observing safety rules and good practice and effective maintenance routines. Most incidents are caused by careless use of equipment or poor maintenance. Temporary heating gas bottles should be adequately secured and guarded. Cylinders should not be permitted to remain inside the premises after working hours unless in a recognised, adequately ventilated suitable storage location in open air.

Some adhesives contain highly flammable substances such ethyl acetate which quickly vaporises to help speed up the drying process. These flammable vapours are heavier than air and can be easily ignited by a small spark or flame. Always ensure the area is free from ignition sources and keep the area well ventilated until the smell of the adhesive has gone.

#### Oxygen

Oxygen is worth a mention. It is non-combustible, but is an oxidiser and will support and accelerate combustion. Materials not normally considered combustible may be ignited by sparks in an oxygen rich atmosphere and some substances (such as oils) may ignite spontaneously in certain conditions. Similar precautions and safeguards as for flammable gases would apply.

### **1.2.11 Poor House Keeping and Practices**

Unorganised storage, layout and tidiness has a major effect on fire development. If fire starts in a neatly stacked pile of timber pallets or cardboard, around which is a clear space, it may be contained and extinguished quickly. Badly maintained storage of stock, waste and redundant equipment can easily hide ignition sources or help spread a fire.

#### Storage areas – security

Sacks, paper, shredded waste, pallets, tyres etc. may need to be stored in quantities which if ignited, could spread quickly to the building and result in a serious fire. Storage areas for such materials must be secured to guard against casual intruders as well as other ignition sources.

Wheeled bins should not be allowed to overflow to the extent that the bin lids cannot be closed. Many of the larger wheeled bins are designed that when the lid is closed any available oxygen will be used up and extinguish the fire.

Combustible materials should not be stored against external walls or perimeter fencing outside a building. Many buildings have been badly damaged by fire spreading from materials stacked too close to windows, doors and other vulnerable areas of the building.

Service installations – It is good practice not to allow refuse to accumulate within the catch pit area of tanks containing diesel fuel or heating oil. Oil saturated paper, rags, leaves etc are highly flammable. If quantities of water build up within the catch pit it should be reported as a fault so that arrangements can be made to safely drain it to ensure any oil spills are contained in the catch-pit.

Gas or electrical intake sub-stations or computer server rooms, which are under the control of the

organisation, should not be used for storage of combustibles. Electrical intake and server rooms require air to circulate and keep switchgear cool.

Flammable stores must be kept secure. Where required, materials should be segregated and only suitable containers used and sealed after use. Badly sealed containers allow flammable vapours to escape and create a serious danger of fire and explosion.

#### Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is a vital ingredient of fire safety. Housekeeping standards affect fire safety because fires need fuel. A build-up of redundant combustible materials or rubbish provides convenient fuel – whether for the arsonist, the carelessly discarded cigarette or match, or the spark from the contractor's welding/cutting gear.

Bad housekeeping leads to:

- blocked fire exits;
- obstructed escape routes;
- difficult access to fire alarm call points, extinguishers and hose reels;
- obstruction of vital signs and notices;
- a reduction in the effectiveness of automatic fire detectors and sprinklers

#### **1.2.12 Arson**

Malicious acts by outsiders or even employees cannot be ruled out. They can however be discouraged and the potential for damage reduced by some simple precautions.

#### Burning ambitions

Arson by outsiders can be prevented by good security in line with normal business practice.

Prevent easy access by ensuring external doors and windows are kept closed, always challenge people without ID, check boundary security and access gates are in good condition and secure.

#### Deprive them of fuel

Security against fire-raising may be slightly different from normal business security. For example, access by children to a remote part of an open yard may not be regarded as a risk to the business but it could result in arson, particularly if there are pallets, rubbish, tyres or other combustible materials lying about.

As part of the risk assessment it is important to look out for obvious weaknesses, sources of ignition and possible fire hazards, such as:

- inadequate security;
- smoking in places where it is banned or could be a danger;
- poorly maintained electrical equipment or installations;
- oil-soaked rags or cloths;
- grease deposits in kitchens;
- accumulation of rubbish, waste materials and storage, in unsuitable locations, e.g. staircases, corridors, plant and electrical intake rooms, or external areas close to the building;
- careless use of cutting, welding or heat-producing equipment;
- dangerously sited or unsuitable portable heaters;
- unsecured flammable liquids;
- the risk assessment pro-forma should be completed which identifies the hazard and the action taken to control it (see Volume 3 of the Site Log Book);
- deny the potential arsonist ready access to fuel, or at least keep the fuel away from buildings.

### 1.2.13 Heat producing equipment

There have been many recorded instances of fires starting in commercial premises during construction and maintenance works, with the cause being directly related to contractors carrying out hot works and not adopting strict hot work procedures.

Prior to any contract being issued, which may involve hot working, Group Property Programme Managers require all contractors to supply a detailed safe system of work and provide a suitable permit to work system. Although this removes most of the responsibility from the Unit Manager (PiC), there is still a requirement to ensure any work is being carried out safely and closely following the contractors own guidelines.

In any instance where there is doubt over the safety of the work being undertaken, the contractor must be asked to stop work until you are satisfied that a safe system of working has been put in place. In extreme cases you may have to ask the contractor to leave the premises where he refuses to comply or cannot comply with the requirements of the safe system of work. In all cases where you have stopped any work being carried out you must contact the P&FM Helpdesk.

### 1.2.14 Fire Precautions Guide 8 – Emergency fire action planning

An emergency fire evacuation plan relevant to the size of the building, number of people and the level of risk is required for any building occupied by Royal Mail Group employees.

In any premise where two or more Fire Wardens are required either by the findings of any risk assessment or due to size and layout of the building a written Premises Fire Evacuation Plan (PFEP) will need to be provided and must be kept on file in Volume 3 of the Site Log Book.

The extent of the detail required will be dictated by the size and nature of the premises, the number and type of employees and the business critical element of the process carried out. The current UK legislation requires all premises to have an emergency fire plan detailing the responsibilities and actions taken by all employees in the event of a fire or the alarm being actuated.

The Premises Fire Evacuation Plan must detail action taken in the event of a fire, those who have fire safety duties and the areas to which they are responsible. The extent of the detail required will be dictated by the size and nature of the premises, the number and type of those at risk.

Due to the many variations of type and size of premises it has been accepted that three types of Emergency Fire Evacuation Plan will be used according to size of premises and business critical element and known as the Premises Fire Evacuation Plan (PFEP). These will be classified as either

- Level 1 Small/Low Risk
- Level 2 Medium Risk
- Level 3 High Risk/Large Complex Sites.

#### Fire Instruction Notice

Fire Instruction Notices detailing staff/key personnel actions should be displayed throughout the premises in prominent positions in employee accessed areas. These A4 size notices will be more detailed than the normal fire action notice usually found at fire alarm call points.

Fire Instruction Notices should give brief details of agreed procedures for your premises and what actions

key personnel take in the event of a fire. These instructions will normally be standardised for your premises, variations or specific instructions may be included at strategic locations to account for the size and layout of the premises, location of key personnel or persons specifically at risk or requiring assistance. These should be simplified action points giving clear instruction in the event of fire or fire alarm actuation.

#### Fire Action Notice



Fire action notices should be displayed by all call points and other prominent positions such as notice boards throughout the building.

The fire action notices should be simple and cover the following points;

#### 1. What people should do if they discover a fire, normally:

- Raise the alarm by warning others and/or by use of 'break glass' alarm points.
- Call the fire brigade (the brigade make no charge for attending a fire call made in good faith).
- Leave by the nearest fire exit closing doors behind you.
- Inform the Incident Officer why the alarm has been sounded.
- Go to the pre-determined assembly point and wait further instructions.

#### 2. What people should do if they hear the fire alarm:

- Evacuate the building and proceed to a pre-determined assembly point. The location of the assembly point should also be shown on fire action notices.
- Follow the Fire Warden's instructions.
- Remain at the assembly point until otherwise instructed.

A standard Fire Action Notice can be ordered via the P&FM Help Desk and supplied by Chubb Fire.

#### People with disabilities – key points



Emergency fire action plans must take into account the needs of any people with a physical or sensory impairment.



A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) should be drawn up and agreed with employees who require assistance. Specialist advice may be required for certain situations. The PEEP form and guidance notes can be found on the SH&W Knowledge Database under the Fire Standard in Emergency Preparedness.

Include any special measure in your premises Fire Risk Assessment.

Ensure you have an overall strategy for locations where visitors or customers may need assistance. Employees will need to be carefully briefed on any arrangements in place for them.

All plans should be tested for effectiveness, and kept under review.

Prior to making any firm decisions about what you need to do first discuss with the person or group concerned and find out how best you can assist them. Introduce them to those who will be assisting and ensure what is required is fully understood. Remember dignity and independence in effecting any assisted evacuation should not be overlooked.

Most buildings have identified or dedicated refuge areas. Generally these are situated within a protected fire escape route and are to be used as a temporary place of safety until an assisted evacuation can be carried out. No person should remain at a refuge point for more than a few minutes before being assisted out of the premises.

**Do not leave anyone unattended who has one of the following conditions.**

#### Physical Impairment

This could include wheelchair users or people with impaired mobility through illness or pregnancy.

- By agreement, nominated employees should be appointed to work adjacent to people with a serious impairment so that they can assist them in getting out of the building to the assembly point. These are known as Assistants or Buddies'.
- In multi-storey buildings without a special fire evacuation lift, the use of a dedicated evacuation chair may be required – in which case a sufficient number of assistants should be appointed and trained in correct use of the evacuation equipment and methods of carrying – organisation such as St John's Ambulance Service or the equipment supplier can provide training.
- Where special 'Evac chairs' are provided, they must be kept in or near the person's work area so as to be ready for use. In case of emergency they should proceed to a designated safe refuge area such as a staircase or lift lobby. This must be large enough to permit the unimpeded exit of other employees. One or more colleagues should remain on hand to provide assistance in reaching the assembly point.
- Lifts are not to be used unless confirmation is obtained that they meet the necessary technical and safety requirements for use during a fire – seek advice from the P&FM Helpdesk.

#### **Note:**

- Any person nominated as an assistant must receive adequate training as to the extent of assistance required. Where required a manual handling risk assessment must be carried out.
- A refuge is a temporary place of safety in a protected area and any person waiting assistance must not be left by them self.
- It is the responsibility of the Unit Manager (PiC) to ensure adequate procedures are in place to assist anyone to safety, not the fire brigades.
- A sufficient number of trained staff should be available to cover for all types of leave.
- Ensure you have completed the "Individual Assessment of Persons Specifically at Risk" available on the intranet or through the CSR helpdesk.

‡ For further information on training Assistants, advice should be sought from the Accessibility Resource Centre Tel: 0114 2414731 Email: [arc@royalmail.com](mailto:arc@royalmail.com)

### Impaired Vision

Familiarity with all the escape routes and exits is essential.

- Larger exit signs, suitably illuminated by artificial lights may be necessary.
- Avoid poorly lit areas on escape routes – achieve a good balance in all areas. Change in floor levels should be clear and obvious.
- Provide tactile surfaces or other adjustments, consult employees/seek advice from P&FM Helpdesk.
- Assistants should be nominated to provide guidance to assembly point.
- Guide dogs – control to remain with owner.

### Impaired Hearing

- Partially impaired – no special provision in addition to existing fire alarm systems is usually necessary. Assistants should be nominated to ensure the person has been alerted and relay any other instruction.
- Profoundly deaf – consider provision to employee of personal vibrating alert device actuated by fire alarm system. Fire alarm conversion to visual signal devices can have unwanted side effects – this should be a last resort only after consultation with all concerned.
- Remember, alerting devices will only warn the person that they need to leave the building. Assistants/Buddies will need to be appointed to ensure the person is given any relevant information and informed of the situation.
- Induction loop system is not an acceptable means for fire warning.

Note: Any deaf alert systems must be included in the scheduled alarm testing, the results of the tests recorded. Where vibrating alarms are used sufficient replacement batteries should be available and spare units to cover for breakages or losses. In the event of a system failure you will need to have standby arrangements in place.

### Cognitive Disabilities

- This group of people may not have the same perception of risk and may have difficulty in understanding the situation. They may show signs of distress at the sound of the alarm or may not even respond to it. There may be a reluctance to deviate from a set route and only use a route known to them.
- Tell the person what to do if required.
- Assist, reassure and accompany to the nominated place of safety/assembly point.

Where any person is employed with cognitive disabilities, further advice should be sought from the Accessibility Resource Centre. Tel: 0114 2414731 Email: [arc@royalmail.com](mailto:arc@royalmail.com)

## **1.2.15 Fire Precautions Guide 9 – Fire Evacuation Drill**

A fire evacuation drill must be carried out at least once every 12 months and more often if there is frequent turnover of employees or where there is shift working.

Additional drills may need to be held to ensure all employees know how to evacuate the building safely in the event of a fire. Everyone regardless of standing, position or commitment **MUST** evacuate the building and gather at their assembly point when a fire drill takes place. Drills can be unannounced although key people should be warned. The alarm system should be operated in the normal way to begin the evacuation. The opportunity should be used for an employee to actually operate a call point. Employees will normally use a familiar route, simulating a fire blocking a daily used exit route makes the drill bit realistic. It should not take more than 2 to 3 minutes for everyone to reach open air or a place of relative safety in the

building, such as a staircase on their way out of the building.

If the brigade is called to a fire, the Fire Precautions Officer or manager should meet them on arrival with the following information:

- Approximate location of fire.
- If everybody has been accounted for/confirmation the building has been cleared.
- The location of major utility intakes, sprinkler and other fire system controls and any special risk area.

All building occupants should take part in a fire drill at least once a year and record the names of those attending in Volume 3 of the Site Log Book in the training section.

#### **1.2.16 Fire Precautions Guide 10 – Employee Briefing and Training**

All employees must be properly briefed on basic fire precautions for the building and the emergency fire evacuation plan. All employees must be properly briefed on basic fire precautions for the building and the emergency fire evacuation plan. This not only ensures a good safety standard for all employees but is also required by legislation.

They should know what to do:

- If they discover a fire, and the procedure on hearing the fire alarm.

They should also be made aware of:

- the use and location of fire fighting equipment;
- location of alarm call points and how to raise the alarm;
- procedure for calling the fire brigade;
- all escape routes from the building including final exit doors and external assembly points;
- prohibited actions, such as wedging fire-resisting doors open, leaving cooking appliances unattended when in use;
- understand the duties of fire wardens and the importance of complying with their instructions.

New entrants and anyone new to the building must receive induction training as soon as possible. They must view the video "Introduction to Fire Safety" and conducted around all areas of the building. It is important they know and understand the fire protection and fire safety measures and actions of the building.

All employees should receive fire safety awareness training every year and be briefed on the findings of the fire risk assessment. This can be carried out at team briefings. All employees must be instructed in the fire precautions for the building and the importance of swift action if a fire is discovered.

All fire safety training and fire drills should be recorded in volume 3 of the Site Log Book. All building occupants should take part in a fire drill at least once a year and record the names of those attending in Volume 3 of the Site Log Book in the training section.

#### **1.2.17 Fire Precautions Guide 11 – Escape Routes and Exits**

Keeping escape routes clear and unobstructed are essential for your safe escape if a fire occurs.

The escape routes from a building are a vital element of fire precautions. Escape routes comprise clear aisles around equipment, fixtures or furniture and corridors or staircases leading to final exit doors and open air. In multi-storey buildings, staircases, lobbies and other elements of the escape routes are enclosed

by fire resisting construction and self-closing doors. The purpose is to create comparatively safe areas by preventing fire and smoke spreading through the accommodation.

It is vital that all routes and areas are kept free from obstruction, floor surfaces are non-slip, in good condition and free from trip hazards. Corridors and stairwells must not be used as storage areas including temporary storage of flammable items such as cardboard boxes.

Any fire doors protecting these routes must be kept closed and maintained in good condition. In open plan situations, operational areas or large rooms, it is important when planning or re-arranging furniture or fittings to make sure that the designated escape path and width is maintained and that the travel distance to the nearest exit is not extended beyond the original distance. Dead-end conditions with one direction of ingress/egress should be avoided where possible.

#### External escape routes

Ensure external routes are kept clear, free from slip and trip hazards. Particular attention should be given to those routes not regularly used as they can often become obstructed by unkempt undergrowth or used as unofficial storage areas. Seasonal changes will often cause problems with falling leaves, snow and ice creating slip hazards and will require regular clearing.

Routes discharging onto traffic systems may require safety signs to warn both pedestrians and vehicle users. Crossing points should be clearly marked.

#### Exit doors generally

In public areas ingress/egress doors should be free of fastenings during opening hours to allow people to leave easily. Elsewhere, during times of occupancy, exit doors are usually permitted to be held on a single quick release security fastening such as a lever operated mortise lock, push bar, thumb-turn latch or similar easily operated device. In high security situations frangible glass covers or domes are provided to permit operation of quick release locks or sliding bolts. Other more secure fittings should only be used out of hours.

At the start of each shift or working day, fire exit doors should be checked to ensure they are unlocked and ready to use in the event of an emergency. Exit doors and fastenings for use only in an emergency can often seize up due to lack of use or maintenance. Each fire exit door should be opened weekly to check ease of operation and that it opens full width. Check outside to make sure there are no obstructions to egress from the building and the escape route is clear and where necessary, properly lit.

Any exit point discharging onto a traffic system must be provided with pedestrian barriers to prevent employees walking directly in to the path of moving vehicles. Signs should be placed to warn both pedestrian and vehicle operators.

#### Corridors, lobbies and staircases

- Keep free of storage and accumulations of unwanted clutter and obstructions.
- Fire check doors not to be wedged open and 'Fire Door Keep Shut' signs to be fixed on both sides.
- Check that self-closing fire resisting doors operate properly and are a close fit in the frame.
- Damaged nosing on stairs or worn non-slip edging can create a slip hazard along with damaged or broken handrails.

Regularly check all escape routes, such as aisles, corridors and staircase to ensure that,

- They are clear and not obstructed.
- All exit doors can be opened quickly and easily. Consideration must also be given to any person with a disability.

- All fire-resisting doors close properly and are not wedged open.
- Floor surfaces are free from trip and slip hazards and floor coverings maintained in good repair.

### 1.2.18 Fire Precautions Guide 12 - Fire Safety Signs and Notices

Fire Safety Signs draw attention to situations or objects which may present a hazard to health and safety, indicate a safe situation, route or give instructions which must be followed.

Safety signs are not meant to replace or substitute accident prevention measures.

Five different types of sign contribute to fire safety in buildings (see examples below).

- All safety signs now have to incorporate a defined symbol or "pictogram". They also have to be a specific shape and colour.
- The inclusion of text in signs is optional.
- Avoid over-provision of signs and note that with 'Exit' signs, various types of standard symbols are acceptable, but they must be of suitable size for the viewing distance.
- Electrically powered signs, such as 'Exit' lights, must also incorporate an appropriate symbol or pictogram.

#### Safe conditions - fire exit signs

Green and white signs with directional arrows are to be used to indicate safe routes, exits, changes in direction and Refuge Areas. They may be supplemented with text if required, i.e. PUSH BAR TO OPEN, normally placed on a door fitted with a panic bolt or latch.

N.B. Larger signs than normal may be necessary in large buildings with extensive viewing distances.



#### Mandatory signs

Blue signs indicate something you must do and will have written instructions on them.



A typical example can be found on both sides of a fire door fitted with a self-closure.

#### Prohibition signs

Prohibition signs inform you on something you must not do. They are easily recognisable being circular white sign with a red border and diagonal line going through the centre.



A pictogram symbol in the centre will instruct on what action you are prohibited from doing.

This example shows smoking is prohibited. They may often be accompanied by a smaller rectangular information sign below.

#### Hazard warning signs

Hazard warning signs are displayed in yellow and black and indicate either a specific hazard such as electricity symbol to indicate danger of electrocution or the exclamation mark used as general warning, caution or risk of danger.



Where required supplementary information may also be included on an accompanying rectangular sign in the same colours to explain the meaning of the sign or may give additional warning information.

#### Fire Action Notice

Fire action notices are general instructions to anyone in the building and should be placed in prominent positions throughout the building, such as at exit points and on notice boards.



Where the building is fitted with a fire alarm it is normal to site these by the fire alarm call points.

#### **1.2.19 Fire Precautions Guide 13 - Familiarisation visits by the Fire Brigade**

To help the local fire brigade to become familiar with the risks within their area, it is a good idea to invite them into a major new facility that they might not be aware of. Prior knowledge can help save lives and reduce property damage. For larger premises the local fire station will arrange for periodic visits by crews who would normally attend in the event of fire.

Local fire officers have the power to issue enforcement notices for any infringements they find. Changes to fire safety legislation have given the fire brigades increased powers and responsibilities with a duty to police premises within their area.

In many instances local fire crews will only attend premises to carry out fire safety inspections and not informal visits. The purpose of these visits will be to ensure the requirements of the FSO are being complied with and being managed properly.

It is therefore important to ensure a manager with sufficient fire safety knowledge of the premises is available to escort the local crews or Fire Inspecting Officer around the premises. Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Risk Assessment Review, Fire Training records and test records must be made available for their inspection.

As an example Fire officers have a statutory right to:

- Inspect fire safety records to ensure fire risk assessments, fire training, and fire drills being carried out and fire safety equipment is being properly maintained and tested.
- Inspect the premises for hazards such as obstructed fire doors, exits and routes, storage and handling of hazardous substances, Ensure sufficient fire signs and fire instructions are in place and legible. Emergency lighting and fire alarms are sufficient, easy to operate and maintained.
- Ensure employees are aware of the emergency fire safety procedures, induction has been carried out and awareness training undertaken as required.
- Be supplied with copies of any documents regarding fire safety matters.
- Adequate safety measures are in place for the protection of fire fighting crews.

The contents of this fire precautions guide will assist you to carry out your fire safety responsibilities and ensure your premises complies with fire safety legislation.

### 1.2.20 Fire Precautions Guide 14 - fire extinguishers

All fire extinguishers are maintained under contract. The Pic is still responsible to ensure they are being maintained and ready to be used if required.

Extinguishers manufactured before 1997 have colour coded bodies to aid recognition. It is quite acceptable for these to remain in use providing they pass the annual British Standard inspection which must be carried out by a competent servicing organisation. This will be arranged by Royal Mail Facilities Management.

Since 1997 extinguishers are produced to a new European standard with an all red body colour. A small percentage of the body area is allowed to be colour coded to the old British Standard scheme. RMG has a national Call-Off contract for the supply & maintenance of fire equipment. Some work is also carried out by internal suppliers.

Type & suitability	Old body colours	New body colour	Method of extinguishment
<b>FOAM</b> <b>Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF)</b> All risks except live electrical equipment. Standard issue.	Cream or beige	Red (cream band)	Extinguishes by cooling - lowering the temperature so that combustion ceases. Wetting agent is spread over the fuel surface forming a foam layer over the burning vapour.
<b>Carbon Dioxide</b> For electrical equipment risks. Standard issue.	Black	Red (black band)	Extinguishes mainly by oxygen displacement.
<b>Water</b> Wood, paper, textiles, etc. Not live electrical equipment or burning liquids. Not standard issue.	Red	Red	Extinguishes by cooling.
<b>Dry Powder</b> All risks. Not standard issue.	Blue	Red (blue band)	Extinguishes by chemical inhibition and thermal interaction with flames.
<b>Wet Chemical</b> High temperature oil fires for commercial kitchens	N/A	Red (yellow band)	Extinguishes by reacting with the hot oil to form thick foam type layer over the burning oil and excluding oxygen. Does not break down under high temperature.

Provision and Location



The normal provision is one water based extinguisher (typically AFFF) for every 200m<sup>2</sup> of floor area. Travel distance to reach an extinguisher 30 metres. Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) extinguishers are usually provided adjacent to electrical equipment in higher risk areas such as boiler rooms, kitchens and electrical switchgear or intake rooms.

CO<sub>2</sub> extinguishers are also normally provided adjacent to automated equipment or in the same location as photocopiers, printers etc. but special extinguishers are not necessary for every item of electrical equipment. Hose reels (normally only provided in distribution areas, warehouses, etc.) are mostly 30m long and can provide coverage up to 36m from the actual reel.

Wet chemical extinguishers are only installed in our larger commercial kitchens for use on fire in deep fat fryers. They should be placed in an easily accessible position near or by a fire exit within the kitchen. Wet chemical extinguishers are purposely designed for fires involving contained hot fats and oils such as deep fat fryers. They are not suitable for any other type of fire.

Fire equipment must be sited at easily accessible locations on escape routes and a clear space must be maintained around installations. Extinguishers should be fixed on wall brackets or in floor mounted cradles.

All employees must be familiar with their use and any person with a fire safety duty must be trained to safely use fire extinguishers for self-preservation or to assist others evacuate the building.

### **1.2.21 Fire Precautions Guide 15 - Emergency Escape Lighting**

Emergency escape lighting gives sufficient light to allow you to exit a building safely when other lights fail.

Emergency escape lighting normally activates only when the ordinary lighting fails but some emergency lighting can remain illuminated at all times of occupancy. Most emergency light fittings in our buildings contain their own batteries, which are kept charged by the normal lighting circuit. Modern fittings of this type usually contain a red or green LED lamp to show that the battery is being charged, although this may not be present in older emergency light fittings.

If you can see a small LED light, the battery is being charged in the emergency lighting unit. An unlit LED should be reported as a fault to the P&FM Helpdesk.

Monthly operation tests must be carried out either by engineering contractors or the unit manager. The Site Log Book must be completed after the examination.

Some building systems have the Emergency Escape Lighting wired to a central control panel that will carry out the periodic monthly testing and report failures. Where installed, these panels should be checked daily for faults.

Emergency Escape Lighting is normally installed to illuminate escape routes and exits in buildings occupied during the hours of darkness.

Ensure that engineers complete entries in the Site Log Book to confirm that the required periodic testing has been carried out. Look out for:

- Any failure of emergency light fittings that are normally on all the time;
- Any LED charging lamps that are not illuminated;
- Any indication on central control equipment or panels that the system has a fault.
- Report any faults or problems to the Help Desk **Tel: 08448009191**



### 1.2.22 Fire Precautions Guide 16 – Fire Alarms

Every building must have an adequate means of giving warning to its occupiers in the event of a fire. All our buildings are required to have an adequate method of fire warning. In very small buildings, this could be just a verbal communication or a mechanical gong.

In most buildings, there will be an electrical fire alarm system. This system will consist of a control panel (except in the case of very old and simple systems which run off the mains), 'break glass' call points and electronic sounders or, in some cases, bells. Call points should be sited at exits and on escape routes.

The alarm system should be tested weekly, by operating one or more different call points each time so that all call points are tested in rotation over a period of time. The system should be inspected periodically by engineers. All tests and inspections/ servicing must be entered in the Site Log Book.

Some fire alarm systems may incorporate automatic fire detectors which set off the fire alarm automatically when either smoke or heat (according to the type of device) is detected. A clear space of 0.5m must be maintained around each detector so that it can operate effectively.

Fire alarm systems are normally divided into zones, the number of zones depending on the size and layout of the building. A schematic drawing showing the area which each zone covers is essential for quick recognition of the area affected by both fire wardens and fire brigade.

The fire alarm system will consist of a control panel (except in the case of very old and simple systems which run off the mains), 'break glass' call points and electronic sounders.

Make yourself reasonably familiar with the indicators and controls on the fire alarm panel.  
Look out for any fault indications on the panel.

When the escape routes are checked, it must be ascertained that all alarm points are unobstructed and clearly visible.

The alarm must be audible in all parts of the building and must be tested weekly, generally at a set time and day. Use a different call-point each time. A 5 second ring will normally be adequate.

Record which call point has been tested in Volume 3 of the Site Log Book.

Report any faults or problems to the P&FM Helpdesk Tel: 08448009191

### 1.2.23 Fire Precautions Guide 17 – Other Fixed Fire Installations

Fixed fire installations we mean those that are in-built as part of the engineering services. These may suppress a fire or reduce the damage caused by heat and smoke. Fixed fire installations are usually only installed to protect special risks or very large buildings. There are not very many of these systems in the RMG estate, but this is an overview of the main types which might be encountered:

#### Sprinkler Systems (Water)

These are installed mostly in special or large buildings. Do not obstruct the heads by storage or allow them to be painted over during redecoration contracts. Technical inspections, periodic tests and repairs should only be undertaken by competent sprinkler engineers. Every week the sprinkler alarm bell should be tested.

### Gaseous Fire Extinguishing Systems

Usually activated automatically by smoke/heat detectors within the protected space. Control panels indicate the system status e.g. 'Automatic', 'Manual', 'Gas Discharged' or 'Locked Off', together with fault indication. People who have to work in rooms where these systems are installed must be briefed as to their mode of operation and correct usage of the controls. Periodic checks required will be laid down in the system installation manual.

### Smoke Ventilation Systems

These comprise smoke vents or extract fans fixed in the roof area of very large single storey buildings. They are usually actuated by smoke detection systems and have their own control panel which usually is inter-linked with the fire alarm.

## **1.2.24 Fire Risk Assessment.**

The Person in Control of the premises is responsible for ensuring all fire safety arrangements are satisfactory. The fire risk assessment pulls together all those arrangements into one form. Once completed, it must be reviewed at least annually or when any significant changes are made to your building or work systems.

A Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is an organised look around the premises to identify any hazards which may cause a fire, the process and practice already in place to control and reduce the risk and what further measures need to be undertaken to achieve the safest practical standard.

The risk assessment will help you to ensure that your fire plans and emergency procedures are in place.

That your emergency action plan is relevant to the size of the premises, the process carried out and the number and type of person who may be on your premises.

It should also identify any hazards outside of your premises along with any hazard you pose to others around you.

## **1.2.25 Fire Evacuation Plan**

The purpose of the fire evacuation plan is to ensure the building is quickly cleared, everyone is accounted for and the cause of the alarm is quickly identified.

The extent of the organisation and control required will depend on the size and type of the premises, the number of occupants and the nature of the hazards present.

All premises must have a suitable fire evacuation plan, relevant to the size of the property and nature of the business, to ensure the safe and effective evacuation in the event of fire.

This guidance note has been produced to assist you with identifying the level that should be applied to your premises and the information you will need to complete your Premises Fire Evacuation Plan.