

# Welcome to the Royal Mail Group

## Introduction to 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.

We therefore all have a duty to maintain a high level of fire safety standards wherever our work place, not only for our own protection but the safety and welfare of our colleagues and our business.

The Introduction to Fire Safety will give you a brief understanding of your role in promoting a strong fire safety culture, what you will need to do in the event of a fire situation and how fire safety is a part of your workplace.

### 1. What you need to know.

Whenever you start work at any new premises your employer must, by law, ensure that you have are given adequate fire safety training on appropriate fire precautions and what actions you will need to take to safeguard yourself and others. This is known as Fire Safety Induction Training and will help you identify the fire prevention and protection measures that have been installed in the building where you work and the types of hazards you may have to be aware of.

The following gives the main areas you must be made aware of;

- Any specific risks or hazards you likely be exposed to
- What action to take on hearing the fire alarm.
- How to identify hazards and what you should do about them.
- The actions you should take in the event of a fire
- What you should if you discover a fire
- Your responsibilities for fire safety as an employee
- Safe routes and exits out of the building
- Location of fire alarm and fire fighting equipment and generally how it operates.

Your manager will familiarise you with the building on the first day at your new workplace. The manager must also ensure that;

1. You know where the exits routes are out of the building and how to open the emergency doors.
2. You know where your assembly point is, this is the safe place outside the building where you will need to wait until you are told it is safe to return to work.
3. You can recognise the sound of the fire alarm and distinguish it from any other type of alarm.
4. You know how to give the fire alarm warning by the method used in the building.
5. You know the actions you need to take in the event of a fire. These should be clearly explained and your attention brought to the Fire Action Notices around the building.
6. You know who you should report fire hazards to.
7. You are aware of any hazards or hazard areas.
8. You know why fire doors must be kept closed and never obstructed.

**IN THE EVENT OF FIRE  
GET OUT AND STAY OUT**

### 2. Starting at your new workplace

- Get to know your building, where your escape routes and fire exits are located. Your line manager is responsible for ensuring you have been fully inducted into the building.
- Ask what the fire alarm sounds like, where the fire alarm call points are located and how they are actuated.
- Ask if there are any hazards in the building you need to be made aware of?
- Ask who is the Fire Precautions Officer?

Ask for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan to be completed if you are unable to evacuate the building unaided and need assistance.

### 3. Fire Procedures

Fire can and does have devastating effects; smoke and heat can quickly spread through a building cutting off your escape route if proper care is not given to the fire protection of your building. In any event you must always react quickly and calmly to any fire situation and leave by the nearest fire exit.

There are principally two ways by which you will be made aware of a fire in your building. First if you hear the fire alarm and second if you discover a fire.

#### If you hear the fire alarm

##### You must!

- Leave by the nearest fire exit using the safest route
- Close doors behind you but do not lock them
- Turn off any cooking equipment or machinery that may create a fire hazard if safe to do so
- Report to the Fire Warden
- Wait there until you are told by the Fire Warden or Incident Officer it is safe to return

##### You must not!

- Stop to collect personal belongings
- Use lifts
- Attempt to return to the building
- Leave the assembly point without informing your line manager

#### If you discover a fire

##### You must

- Warn others in the immediate area by shouting
- Activate the fire alarm using the break glass call point
- Call the fire brigade by dialling 9 - 999
- Leave by the nearest fire exit using the safest route
- Go directly to your assembly point
- Report to the Fire Warden
- Wait there until you are told by the Fire Warden or Incident Officer it is safe to return



## You must not

- Panic. Stay calm, move quickly but do not run
- Attempt to fight the fire
- Risk being trapped by putting the fire between yourself and your exit
- Attempt to collect belongings
- Use lifts
- Put your self in danger

### Visiting other premises

When you are travelling or visiting other premises always ensure you read the fire action notices and understand the fire procedures for the building. Always know your nearest alternative fire exit, do not limit your self to the route you used to enter the building.

## Always carry out a Fire Safety Self-Assessment (FiSSA)

**IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE SOUND THE ALARM  
CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE**

## 4. Keeping safe in the event of a fire

In the event of a fire alarm activating leave immediately by the nearest exit, do not stop to collect belongings and remember to close but do not lock all doors as you leave. You may need to shut down any machinery you may be using that could be unsafe to fire-fighters searching the building and always turn off any cooking appliances you may be using if it is safe to do.

Go directly to your designated assembly point. You must remain there until told it is safe to return to the building or given other instructions by the Incident Officer.

If you discover a fire you must sound the fire alarm or warn others by any available means especially those in close vicinity.

Call the Fire Brigade by dialling 9-999. When the Fire Brigade emergency operator answers speak clearly and slowly giving the address of the building and any other details they may ask. Immediately evacuate the building and go directly to your designated assembly point and inform the Incident Officer what actions you have taken and the location of the fire.

Never re-enter the building until you have been told it is safe by your manager.

### Calling the fire brigade

- Dial 9 to obtain an outside line then 999 if using a Royal Mail Group landline.
- When the emergency operator answers ask for the Fire Brigade
- When you are through to the Fire Brigade emergency call centre give the following information.
  1. The address of the premises
  2. What the problem is
  3. If there is anybody trapped
  4. Where the fire is in the building
- The Fire Brigade will automatically call the ambulance and police if necessary

Remember the fire brigade call centre may not be in your area and the operator will not be familiar with your building. Always give a clear and accurate

### If you become trapped

If you find yourself cut off or having to move through smoke to a fire exit remember some simple rules.

- **Evacuating from a smoke filled room or corridor**

Keep low and keep moving. There will be fresher air nearer the floor as hot smoke rises. It may mean getting down on your hands and knees.

- **Finding yourself cut off.**

Move to a room away from the fire and close any doors to stop smoke entering the room. Go to a window and attract someone's attention. If you are near to or have a phone call the fire brigade and tell them where you are.

Stay calm, keep low and near to the window and wait for help to arrive.

**WHEN YOU HEAR THE FIRE ALARM LEAVE BY THE  
NEAREST FIRE EXIT  
DO NOT STOP TO COLLECT BELONGINGS**

## 5. What is fire Safety

### 1. Fire prevention

For a fire to start three elements are needed, Heat, Fuel and Oxygen. Fire prevention is about stopping fires from happening by keeping the elements of fire apart. This can be easily done by careful attention to our workplace and keeping a watch for potential dangers and hazards.

Here are some examples;

**Smoking** – Carelessly discarding cigarette ends cause many fires in the UK which can result in a loss of both life and property.

Only smoke in designated smoking areas and always stub out cigarette ends properly and dispose of them in the proper bins.

**Electrical** – Always check appliance leads and extension leads for damage and ensure they have been electrically tested, look for the green and white sticker with the test date. Never use multi-plug adaptors or link one extension lead to another, known as daisy chaining.

Always fully unwind extension leads.

**Flammable Liquids and Solvents** – These give off flammable vapours which are often unseen to the naked eye. These vapours will be easily ignited by a small spark from machinery such as an electrical motor or heating element. Flammable solvents and liquids should only be used where a risk has been carried out and the hazards removed.

Always store them in closed Flammables Cabinet after use.

**Portable heaters** – Always keep a minimum of 1.5 metres clear area around portable heaters and never interfere with any heating equipment. Only trained engineers are authorised to assemble or maintain heaters.

**Arson** - Always challenge strangers or anybody not wearing an I.D. badge on your premises. If you are unsure of their reason for being on the premises inform a line manager.

**Storage** – Always keep storage areas clean and tidy. Untidy storage can hide fire hazards and block escape routes.

### 2. Fire Protection

All Royal Mail Group buildings have a high standard of fire protection to enable you to leave the building safely along protected routes. These are normally recognised by following the fire safety signs to the nearest exit. You should take time to recognise how your building is protected.

Here are some examples;

**Fire Doors** – Are designed to stop smoke and heat travel along corridors and stairwells. They must be kept closed at all times. They will be fitted with a self closing device and often have smoke seals and are designed to stop fire for 30 or more minutes.

**Protected Routes** – A protected route will stop fire for 30 or more minutes. These are your escape routes which are adequately protected from the rest of the building by fire-resisting construction.

**Stairs** – A protected stair may serve one or more than one floors. Each floor will have fire doors onto each landing.

## 6. Fire Safety Self Assessment (FiSSA)

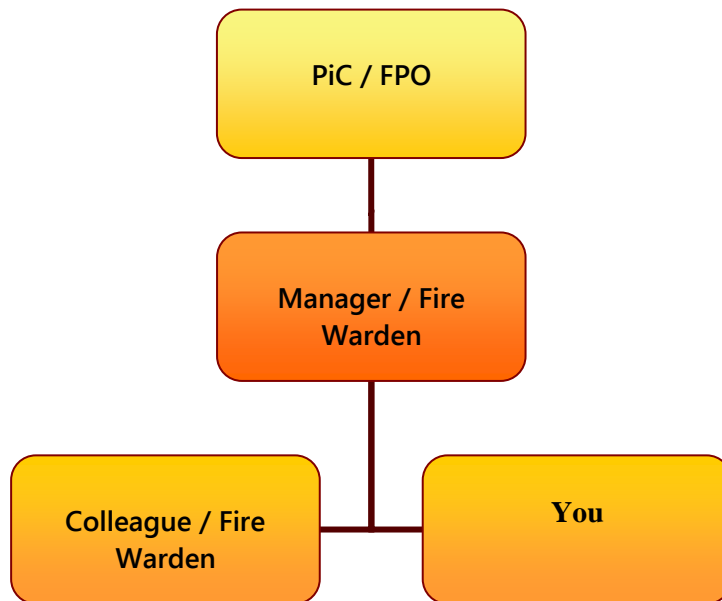
Making a simple check of your work area can help to save your life and reduce the chance of a fire, it can also ensure you can quickly leave the building in the event of a fire. Wherever you work always make a simple assessment to ensure your work area is safe and you know the safest way out of the building. Ask yourself some simple questions such as where is your nearest fire exit and fire alarm call point, is your escape route is being kept clear?

**Here are some other things to lookout for;**

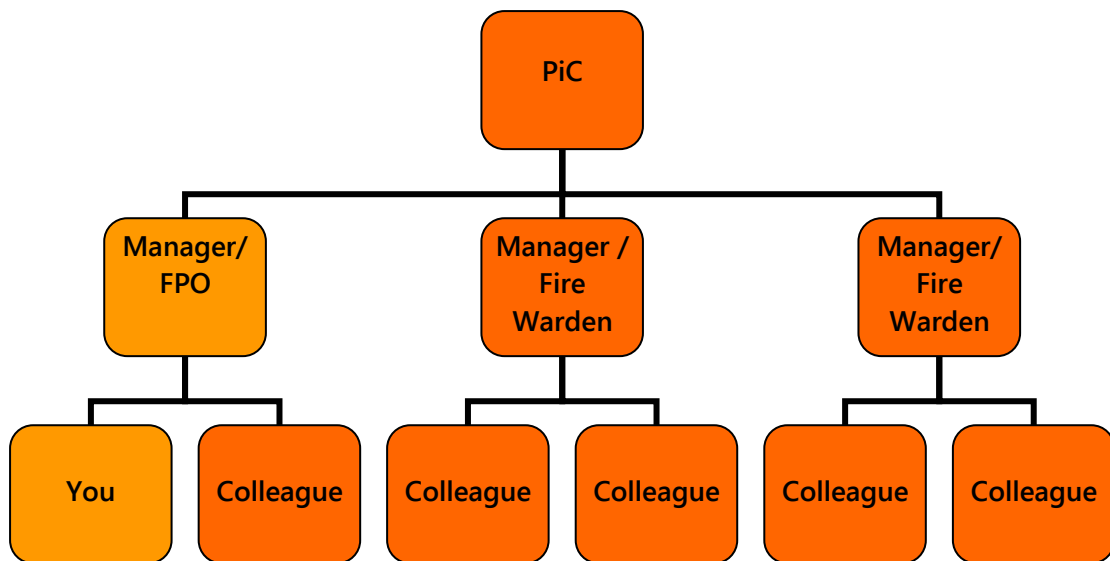
- Your nearest fire exit and is there an alternative exit?
- Do you know how to operate the fire exit door?
- Is your exit route clear and free from obstructions/trip/slip hazards?
- Do you know the sound of the fire alarm /can it be heard clearly.
- Do you know where your assembly point is?
- Where is the nearest fire alarm call point?
- Do you know how to sound the fire alarm?
- Do you know how to call the fire brigade from your building?
- Do you work alone? Does someone know you are in the building and where you are working?
- Do you need to be assisted in an emergency; has assistance been arranged?
- Toasters and microwave ovens should only be used in a purpose built self catering kitchens.
- Electrical cables trailing under your work station
- Excessive storage of boxes and papers around your workstation
- Untested personal electrical equipment being used
- Cables and extension leads badly run or across foot space or access ways.
- Smoking outside of designated areas
- Waste stacked against buildings or near to openings
- Excessive storage or accumulated redundant items in the work area or on exit routes.
- Are flammable liquids, solvents or gases being used safely and stored away from heat sources?
- Portable heaters have a clear area around them away from combustible materials, liquids or gasses.

**Remember**  
**Fire Safety Self Assessment**  
**Don't think it is safe know it is safe!**

## 7. Who manages Fire Safety in your building?



In some smaller buildings the Person in Control may also be the Fire Precautions Officer and your work colleagues may be appointed as Fire Wardens as shown above.



In larger buildings the Person in Control may appoint a manager as the Fire Precautions Officer and other managers as Fire Wardens.

Fire Safety does not just happen it is a part of safety that has to be continually maintained. There are many hazards in the work place which have to be properly controlled to ensure safety, to be successful we must ensure they are properly managed and responsibilities are realised at every level of the business.

The manager with **Person in Control responsibility (PiC)** will have responsibility for all safety on the premises including fire and be responsible for appointing a Fire Precautions Officer. If the PiC has not appointed a Fire Precautions Officer it will be their responsibility to carryout those duties.

The **Fire Precautions Officer (FPO)**. The PiC can undertake the duty themselves or may appoint someone to be the FPO. Whoever undertakes the duty should be competent by qualification, training or experience. The FPO does not need to be an expert in fire safety, become involved in fire fighting or maintain any fire equipment themselves. Their main task as FPO is to oversee that daily, weekly and yearly fire safety checks and tests are carried out, organise fire drills, training and check that records and documents are reviewed and up to date.

The **Fire Warden** is normally someone who will be in the building most of the time. This can be any employee suitable to carryout this roll. Normally it will be a manager but can also be a colleague with suitable experience and training. It is important to remember during any evacuation they carry the authority of the Person in Control. Their main function is to ensure any emergency evacuation is carried out properly and work as a team. They may be responsible for ensuring the work area or floor is clear, searching for the cause of the alarm, redirecting traffic onto the premises or meeting the emergency services. During any emergency fire evacuation **you must at always follow the Fire Wardens' instructions.**

### **You and your colleagues**

You have a duty to take all reasonable precautions to ensure you're own and the safety of others. You have the duty to report any hazards that may be considered a serious or imminent danger and take remedial actions where safe to do so. You must not willingly interfere with, misuse or damage any fire safety equipment. You are expected to take time to read and understand the fire instructions for your building and know how to sound the alarm in the event of a fire. You are not expected to fight fires or take any part in any fire fighting activity.

You must evacuate the building when the fire alarm sounds and follow the instructions of the Fire Warden

## 8. What do we do to manage Fire Safety?



Here are some of the ways we manage fire safety in the Royal Mail Group to ensure we can reduce the risk to anyone who may be in our buildings. You are a key part in that system and we must always work together to keep our workplace, colleagues and ourselves safe from fire.



## 9. Fire Signs and Notices

The purpose of safety signs are to draw attention to a situations or objects which may present a hazard to health or safety, others are used to indicate a safe situation or route, they are not meant to replace or substitute accident prevention measures. It is important that you understand what the different signs mean and the message they are designed to give. The colours of the signs are the first indication of what the sign is telling you, for example;

A **Blue sign with white writing** is a compulsory action which means it is something you must do.

A **Yellow Sign with Black writing** warns you of a hazard.

These signs are to help keep you safe remember to take notice of the signs in your building and understand their meaning. Always

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

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.

### Safe Condition – Fire Exit Signs

Green and white signs with are to be used to indicate safe conditions such as direction to a fire exit, fire exit and



### Mandatory signs – what you must do

Blue signs indicate something you must do and will have written instructions on them. A typical example can found on both sides of a fire door fitted with a self closure.



### Prohibition signs – Something you must not do

Prohibition signs inform you on something you must not do. They are easily recognisable being circular white sign with a red boarder and diagonal line going through the centre. A pictogram symbol in the centre will instruct on what action you are prohibited from doing.

The below example shows smoking is prohibited.

They may often be accompanied by a smaller rectangular information sign below.



### Hazard Warning Signs – warns you of a danger

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.



## 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. The Fire Action Notice will give you instruction on what to do if you discover a fire or hear the fire alarm. It is important that you know what to do.

# FIRE ACTION

## IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE

- Immediately operate the nearest alarm point
- Telephone the fire brigade by dialling 9 – 999
- Give the operator your telephone number and ask for FIRE.
- When the Fire Brigade answer speak clearly and slowly.
- **Fire at**
- DO NOT hang-up until the address has been repeated by the Fire Brigade.
- Report your actions to the PiC or Fire Warden as soon as possible

## FIRE PRECAUTIONS OFFICER AND FIRE WARDENS

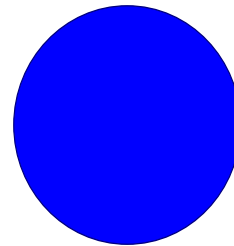
### Fire Precautions Officer:

POSTLINE

STD

Fire Wardens

See list for wardens in your section



## ON HEARING THE ALARM

### DO

- Leave the building immediately by the nearest exit
- Follow the Fire Wardens instructions
- Go to your assembly point
- Report to your line manager/fire warden

### DO NOT

- Stop to collect belongings
- Leave the assembly point until instructed
- Re-enter the building

## 10. Fire Extinguishers

### Your safety comes first

**Do not attempt to fight a fire if you can safely evacuate the building unless it is to assist yourself or others to escape.**

There are 6 main types of extinguishers throughout the premises. These are Water, Foam, Carbon Dioxide, Dry Powder, Wet Chemical and Fire Blankets

You should be aware of the different types and what they can be used on. There may be a situation that you may need to use one to help yourself evacuate the building or help others.

You should take time to familiarise yourself with the different types of fire extinguisher in your workplace and where they are located.

| Colour Code  | Class A<br>Wood, Paper,<br>Wood, Fabric<br>etc | Class B<br>Flammable<br>liquids | Class C<br>Flammable<br>Gas. | Class D<br>Metal Fires | Class E<br>Electrical<br>Fires | Class F<br>Hot Fat Fires<br>only |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Water        | √  | Do not use<br><b>X</b>          | Do not use<br><b>X</b>       | Do not use<br><b>X</b> | Do not use<br><b>X</b>         | Do not use<br><b>X</b>           |
| Fire Hose    | √  | Do not use<br><b>X</b>          | Do not use<br><b>X</b>       | Do not use<br><b>X</b> | Do not use<br><b>X</b>         | Do not use<br><b>X</b>           |
| Foam         | √  | √                               | Do not use<br><b>X</b>       | Do not use<br><b>X</b> | Do not use<br><b>X</b>         | Do not use<br><b>X</b>           |
| CO2          | √  | √                               | Do not use<br><b>X</b>       | Do not use<br><b>X</b> | √                              | Do not use<br><b>X</b>           |
| Powder       | √  | √                               | Do not use<br><b>X</b>       | Do not use<br><b>X</b> | √                              | √                                |
| Fire Blanket | √  | √                               | Do not use<br><b>X</b>       | Do not use<br><b>X</b> | Do not use<br><b>X</b>         | √                                |
| Wet Chemical | Do not use<br><b>X</b>                         | Do not use<br><b>X</b>          | Do not use<br><b>X</b>       | Do not use<br><b>X</b> | Do not use<br><b>X</b>         | √                                |

### Types of Extinguisher and their uses

In the normal work environment you will generally see only two types of fire extinguisher. These are Foam and Carbon Dioxide (CO2). Other types will usually be placed where there is a specific type of risk such as Wet Chemical in larger commercial kitchens and Dry Powder by fuel stations and in vehicle workshops. You should take time to familiarise yourself with the types of fire extinguishers in your workplace and understand on what types of fire can be used.

All fire extinguishers have a red body. What type it is can be easily seen by the coloured bad near the top. This colour denotes what type of extinguishing medium is inside as shown by the above table.

Instructions on how to use them and what they should be used on will be printed on the front and shown as pictograms.

Typical features are;

- Carrying handle and trigger mechanism

- Air Pressure gauge which if fully charged should be in the green area (except CO<sup>2</sup>)
- Locking safety pin. If this is missing or damaged this must be reported to your line manager.
- Discharge tube or nozzle
- Pictogram instruction on how to use and what it can be used on.

Here are typical examples of the type of extinguishers used in the Royal Mail Group.

## Water



Water extinguishers contain approximately 9 litres of water and weigh a total of about 10Kg. The contents will discharge in about 50 seconds if you hold the trigger down continuously.

They work by cooling the fire below its ignition temperature until the fire goes out.

These are best used to extinguish solid materials such as wood, paper and fabric. The water jet can reach an effective distance of about 5 metres

They must not be used on or near electricity, burning oils, flammable liquids, hot fat fires, gas flames or metal fires.

## Foam

Foam extinguishers operate in the same way as the water extinguishers but due to the different nozzle design only give a short diffused jet from the nozzle reaching about 2 metres.

The foam is designed to be laid over the surface of a burning liquid and form a thin blanket covering any burning vapour.

These are designed to extinguish small fires involving burning liquids such as petrol, diesel and alcohols. They can also be used on materials such as wood, paper and fabric. Like water extinguishers these will discharge in about 40 seconds (9 litre).

Foam extinguishers are water based and like the water extinguisher must never be used near electricity, on hot fat fires, gas flame fires or metal fires.



### Carbon Dioxide (also known as CO<sup>2</sup>)

CO<sup>2</sup> is a gas stored under pressure and when released expands about 500 times. It extinguishes the fire by excluding oxygen. It is very effective when used on electrical fires. As it is a gas it has no cooling effect and when the gas dissipates there is a danger that the fire could re-ignite. Because of this they are not always recommended for outside use. Care must always be taken when using in an enclosed space as the CO<sup>2</sup> expels oxygen and cause problems breathing. You must always take care not to hold the discharge horn as this can become extremely cold when the extinguisher is used and could cause skin burns.

Typical discharge time about 10 sec (2.5Kg) 20 sec (5Kg)



### Dry Powder

The Dry Powder extinguisher is the most versatile of all the extinguishers. It can be used on many of the fires that you could encounter in the normal workplace. Care must be taken when using these as the dust cloud can obscure vision and may cause breathing difficulties.

The chemical in the Dry Powder extinguishes the fire by interfering with the flame and excluding oxygen. This type of extinguisher has no cooling effect and so you must ensure the fire is completely extinguished or re-ignition may occur.

Typical discharge time 18 sec (9KG)



### Wet Chemical

This type of extinguisher is normally only found in commercial kitchens where hot fats are used for cooking. The high temperature from the fat reacts with the spray from the extinguisher to form a thick soapy layer sealing the surface and excluding oxygen.

The heat source should always be turned off and the deep fat fryer left to cool for at least an hour to allow the fat to cool.

Normal foam breaks down due to the high heat and should not be used.

Typical discharge time 50 Sec (6 litre)



### Fire Blankets

Fire blankets are usually located in self catering kitchens to smother a small fire such as a toaster or small pan fire.

Care must be taken and the instructions on how to hold and use them must be adhered to. They may also be found in workshops especially where flammable liquids and oils are used.



Take time to learn what type of extinguishers are in your building and where they are located. Understand how they operate and what they can be used on. You never know one day they save your life.

**Remember Fire Wardens and Managers are trained to use fire extinguishers leave any fire fighting to them.**

## Review

### 11. Self preservation – Fire Safety Self Assessment

- Ensure you know what to do if you hear the fire alarm and where your nearest safe is route out of the building.
- Know what to do if you discover a fire, how to sound the alarm and where the alarm points are located.
- If you need help to evacuate are there sufficient assistants available?
- Always ensure your safe route is kept clear and free from obstructions.
- Keep a check of your work area for fire hazards.

### 12. Safe Practice

- Always report defective fire equipment such fire doors not closing fully into the door frame, missing or incomplete fire action notices.
- Never use any portable electrical equipment that has not been tested or the test is out of date. Report it to your line manager.
- Never interfere, misuse or deface any fire safety equipment, signs or notices.
- Always ensure any equipment is turned off and left in a safe condition after use.
- Never use flammable liquids or solvents near heat sources and always ensure the area is well ventilated.
- Only smoke in the designated smoking area. Always ensure you extinguish your cigarette end properly before leaving the area.
- Do not use butt bins for disposing of rubbish. Do not use rubbish bins for disposing of cigarette ends.

Now complete the questionnaire over the page and file under Training Records in Volume 3 of the Site Log Book.

## 14. Starting at your new workplace

Your line manager is responsible for ensuring that you have been fully inducted into the building and you are able to identify your escape routes, the sound of the fire alarm, where your assembly point is located, what you should do if you discover a fire or hear the fire alarm. You must also be made aware of any fire hazards and any measures you need to undertake to control them.

|   | Yes | N/A |
|---|-----|-----|
| Do you know where your escape routes and where your fire exits and fire assembly points are located?  |     |     |
| Do you know the sound of your fire alarm? Can you easily distinguish this from other alarm sounds?  |     |     |
| Do you know where the fire alarm call points are located and how to operate them in an emergency?   |     |     |
| Ask if there are any hazards in the building you need to be made aware of?  |     |     |
| Do you know who the Fire Precautions Officer is?  |     |     |
| Has a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan been completed if you are unable to evacuate the building unaided and need assistance?   |     |     |
| <b>If you cannot answer yes to all the above questions speak to your line manager immediately.<br/>Remember you have a responsibility towards fire safety in your workplace in any doubt ask your line manager.</b> |     |     |

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Name of Manager:

Date:

Address of Premises

**To be photocopied, copy retained with local training records**