

Fire Safety Procedure

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SUBJECT: FIRE PRECAUTIONS AND FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to ensure that within the University of South Wales Group, arrangements are in place to ensure that legal requirements relating to fire safety are met, that controls are in place to prevent fire and minimise the impact should a fire occur.

2.0 SCOPE

This document applies to the University of South Wales Group.

3.0 REFERENCES

3.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

3.3 University Fire Wardens <https://thehub.southwales.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=1333>

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Responsible Person	In line with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the overall responsible person for the University of South Wales is the Vice Chancellor. For practical purposes however, the responsibility for managing fire safety arising out of the operation of the University is delegated to Deans of Faculty and Directors of Department within their areas of control.
Competence	The possession of a combination of training, skills, experience, knowledge and the ability to apply these attributes to be able to perform a task safely. In addition a person should have an appreciation of their own limitations and should seek further advice where necessary.
Fire Warden	Members of staff appointed to assist with the management of fire hazards and fire evacuations.
Assembly Point Coordinator	A member of security staff appointed to take reports from Fire Wardens at the appropriate Assembly Point and liaise with other parties as necessary.
Assembly Point	A designated location where people congregate following an evacuation of a building.
Refuge Point	A designated safe area where people who cannot negotiate stairs unaided can remain in relative safety to await assistance.
Fire Drill	A practice of the evacuation procedure carried out periodically.

4.0 DEFINITIONS (Cont)

Fire Escape Route	A designated route, typically corridors and stairways, designed to protect people evacuating the building from the dangers of fire and smoke.
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5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 Fire Risk Assessment General

5.1.1 In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO), the responsible person must ensure a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is carried out by a competent person.

5.1.2 The purpose of such an assessment is to identify fire related hazards and risks, evaluate the effectiveness of existing control measures and suggest further controls where necessary. In particular, the assessment will consider:

- the potential for a fire to start e.g. sources of ignition, presence of combustible material, arson etc.
- the means for fire to spread
- the means for detecting an outbreak of fire
- the means for alerting people to an outbreak of fire
- the means of fighting a fire
- the means of escape available to those at risk
- the availability and appropriateness of emergency lighting and signage
- the presence and management of any high risk areas e.g. explosive or highly flammable substances, bottled gases etc.
- the effectiveness of emergency plans
- the means for contacting the Emergency Services
- staff training
- the measures in place to protect vulnerable persons e.g. sleeping accommodation, disabilities, young persons, those unfamiliar with the premises etc.
- the maintenance of fire safety equipment e.g. extinguishers, emergency lighting, detectors etc.
- the maintenance of equipment that might give rise to a fire if faulty or defective e.g. electrical equipment, heating systems etc.
- the potential environmental effects if a fire occurred e.g. the release of airborne contaminants, the discharge of contaminants to the water system etc.

5.1.3 The Director of Estates and Facilities is responsible for:

- ensuring a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is carried out and its findings recorded
- implementing remedial action deemed appropriate following any assessment recommendations
- informing relevant Faculty Deans, Heads of Support Departments and any other appropriate persons, of assessment findings and recommendations, the implementation of which falls within their area of responsibility
- carrying out follow-up inspections and checks to confirm that the remedial actions have been implemented

1. The Director of Estates and Facilities must arrange for the fire risk assessment to be reviewed following:

- a change in use of a building
- a change in construction material of a building
- a change in the design or layout of a building
- a change in fire loading of a building e.g. the introduction of additional combustible materials/substances or the reduction/removal of such
- the introduction of additional sources of heat e.g. portable heaters, electrical equipment, use of naked flames etc.
- any work affecting the compartmentation of a building e.g. the installation of cables, pipes, ductwork, additional openings, doorways etc.
- in absence of any of the above, at intervals of not more than 5 years

5.1.5 Faculty Deans, Heads of Support Departments and other appropriate persons, must bring to the attention of the Director of Estates and Facilities:

- any of the items shown in 5.1.4 above for which they are responsible
- the introduction of new, or changes to existing, work practices or equipment that might affect the University's fire risk assessment

5.2 Combustible Waste Material

5.2.1 Combustible material is any material that can provide a source of fuel for fires to start or spread. Such material must not be placed near possible sources of ignition, or located in any area where it may cause an obstruction or compromise a fire escape route. Such areas include for example, corridors, stairwells, near fire exit doors etc.

5.2.2 It is the responsibility of all Managers to provide an appropriate system for preventing combustible waste material from being located in such areas.

5.3 Notice Boards and Notices

5.3.1 To prevent the build-up of combustible material on fire escape routes such as corridors and stairwells, any notices required to be displayed in such areas must only be posted within fire retardant notice boards.

5.3.2 The use of unprotected i.e. loose notice boards and notices must be kept to an absolute minimum and only provided where the risk of ignition is low and the use of an enclosed notice board is shown to be impractical, for example where notices are posted for short periods of time and changed frequently.

5.4 Displaying Work

5.4.1 When deciding on the locations for displaying work and the materials to be used as part of the display, the requirements of this policy must be taken into account, in particular:

- the combustibility of the materials used
- the location of any sources of heat (including the possibility of overheating electrical equipment, arson)
- the potential obstruction caused in corridors and other escape routes
- other potential safety issues e.g. trailing cables, electric supply

5.5 Refuge Points

5.5.1 Specific areas within University buildings have been designated as 'Refuge Points', i.e. specifically designed areas for the protection of people who cannot negotiate stairs unaided in the event of a fire or fire alarm activation - when lifts cannot be used. These areas **must** be kept clear of combustible material and obstructions.

5.6 Fire Doors

5.6.1 Fire doors are specifically designed to withstand the spread of smoke and heat for a predetermined length of time, normally 30 minutes. This allows occupants of buildings, in the event of a fire, to proceed to a place of safety without being placed in any danger. All fire doors are identified by an attached 'Fire Door Keep Closed' sign and are fitted with 'self-closing' mechanisms to ensure they close automatically and provide the level of protection required.

5.6.2 Certain fire doors have been fitted with either 'Door Guard' hold open devices, or directly linked to the fire alarm to allow them to be purposely held in the open position. In the event of a fire alarm activation, the connection holding the doors is broken, allowing them to close and provide the required level of protection. Such doors are identified by the presence of an 'Automatic Fire Door' sign.

5.6.3 With the exception of automatic doors and those fitted with 'Door Guard' devices, all fire doors must be kept closed at all times. The 'wedging' open of fire doors by other than formally approved devices is a criminal offence.

5.6.4 In conjunction with ongoing health and safety considerations, further installation of automatic doors will be undertaken where such a need has been identified and their provision will be of benefit to students, staff and visitors.

5.7 Communication

5.7.1 All employees, contractors, and visitors must receive information and training to make them fully aware of the risks on the premises and the actions that they should take in the event of a fire.

5.8 Fire Wardens and Fire Evacuation Zones

5.8.1 As detailed in building Fire Safety Management Strategies, areas of each building have been designated as fire evacuation zones. In the event of the fire alarm activation, appointed Fire Wardens must:

- physically check their designated evacuation zone(s) to observe that everyone has responded to the alarm and has, or is in the process of, evacuating the building (see 5.8.2 below)
- encourage a swift and orderly evacuation if necessary
- assist with the evacuation of disabled persons through the use of Evac Chairs where trained to do so
- ensure all fire doors are closed as they walk through the fire evacuation zone
- report to the Assembly Point Coordinator whether or not their area is clear, whether a Refuge Point is occupied by someone requiring assistance and any other relevant information
- complete and submit an Observers Report (OHSS 02.16.6.1) to the Health and Safety Office

Note: In out-of-hours situations, Fire Warden checks will be limited to occupied classrooms and immediate surrounding areas.

5.8.2 If any person(s) refuses to evacuate the building, Fire Wardens should not unduly delay their own evacuation by entering into any discussion with the person(s) concerned, but inform them of their responsibility to leave the building immediately and advise the Assembly Point Coordinator accordingly.

5.8.3 To assist with day-to-day proactive fire management, Fire Warden's will be responsible for carry out monthly checks of their designated evacuation zones, to confirm:

- fire escape routes in their designated evacuation zones are free of combustible materials and/or obstructions
- that the relevant fire action notices are complete and up to date
- that fire extinguishers are correctly located in their designated place and not missing or being used for purposes unintended
- fire extinguishers are visible and access to them unobstructed
- extinguishers are not obviously damaged or have parts missing

5.8.4 The findings of the monthly checks and any action taken must be recorded on the *Fire Warden's Monitoring Form*.

5.9 Assembly Point Coordinator

5.9.1 On activation of the fire alarm, a member of Security Staff will act in the capacity of Assembly Point Coordinator and immediately go to the appropriate assembly point for the affected building.

5.9.2 The purpose of the Coordinators role is to act as a point of focus to whom Fire Wardens, and any other person with relevant information, can report. Typical information expected will include:

- reports from Fire Wardens whether or not their fire evacuation zone is clear
- whether the cause of the alarm activation is known or suspected
- whether any refuge points are occupied by someone awaiting assistance

5.9.3 It will be the duty of the Fire Assembly Point Coordinator to liaise with other members of Security Staff, Fire Wardens, Fire & Rescue Service personnel and any other relevant persons to help ensure the communication of necessary information.

5.10 Fire Evacuation Arrangements

5.10.1 Any person discovering a fire must sound the alarm by operating the nearest break-glass point and as soon as possible inform Campus Security that the alarm activation is due to an actual fire so they can contact the emergency services.

5.10.2 If it is decided to tackle the fire (see 5.9.3 below) the person involved may ask another member of staff to confirm to security that there is an actual fire, rather than delay fighting the fire to do so themselves. Security may be informed by either:

- using the emergency telephone number 83333 (internal) or 01443 483333 (external)
- reporting to the Assembly Point Coordinator
- reporting directly to the Security Lodge

5.10.3 Attempts to extinguish a fire must only be made:

- once the alarm has been sounded
- the person(s) involved are satisfied that it is safe to do so and have been trained in the use of fire extinguishers
- the fire is in its very early stages
- there are no materials in close proximity to the heat that might explode or otherwise suddenly ignite and abruptly increase the size of the fire
- it can be ensured that a clear passage to safety, i.e. the ability to quickly and safely get away from the fire and evacuate the affected building, is available at all times

5.10.4 Prolonged efforts to fight the fire must not be made. If the fire cannot be extinguished by using the extinguishers immediately to hand, the person(s) concerned must abandon their attempts, evacuate the building and inform the Assembly Point Coordinator or Campus Security.

5.10.5 If the fire appears to have been successfully extinguished, those involved must advise Campus Security as soon as possible and be available to provide details to the Fire & Rescue Service on their arrival. The area and materials involved must be monitored until the arrival of the Fire & Rescue Service to check for re-ignition.

5.10.6 On activation of the fire alarm:

- all persons must immediately evacuate the building by following the emergency exit signs and go to the designated Assembly Point
- Fire Wardens must carry out the duties outlined in 5.8.1 and 5.8.2 above
- any person having relevant details of the fire alarm activation or evacuation must inform a Fire Warden, Assembly Point Coordinator or member of Security Staff, for example:
 - if it is known that the activation is due to an actual fire
 - if it is known that Refuge Point(s) are being used by someone awaiting assistance

5.10.7 When evacuating, lifts must not be used in case their power supply becomes affected. Once evacuated, no person must re-enter the building unless authorised to do so by a senior member of staff, a member of security, member of the Fire & Rescue Service or a Fire Warden.

5.10.8 Unless or until confirmation is received that the alarm activation is due to an actual fire, a member of Security Staff will initially investigate the cause of the alarm. If it is subsequently discovered that a fire is in progress, the Treforest Gate House must be informed immediately from a position of safety so that the Fire & Rescue service can be called. **Note: If the investigating staff cannot reach the location of the alarm activation within 5 minutes of the alarm sounding, they must not investigate and the Fire & Rescues Service must be called by the staff at Trefforest Gatehouse.**

5.10.9 If the investigating staff cannot see any obvious reason for the alarm activation and the signs of a possible fire are absent, e.g. smell of burning, no evidence of smoke, no evidence equipment overheating they must inform Treforest Gate House and then silence the alarm. Similarly, if it appears the alarm was triggered by a non-fire related process, for example dust, steam etc. being produced by activities in the area, Treforest Gate House must be informed and the alarm silenced.

5.10.10 If however, after resetting the alarm it subsequently reactivates, or triggers again in a short period of time, Treforest Gate House must be informed and the Fire & Rescue Service summoned.

5.10.11 The silencing of the fire alarm **is not** in itself a signal that the building can be reoccupied, since it may need to be silenced for the benefit of staff or Fire & Rescue

Service personnel investigating the circumstances or possibly become damaged. Authorisation to enter or reoccupy the building can only be given by a senior member of staff, a member of security, member of the Fire & Rescue Service or a Fire Warden.

5.10.12 Where locations exist that due to the presence of specific materials, the nature or quantity of which significantly increases the risks from a fire, alarm activations in these areas must not be investigated and the Fire and Rescue Service called immediately.

5.10.13 Following evacuation events, the causation factors must be investigated by Estates & Facilities managers, Occupational Health and Safety Services and any other relevant manager(s), with reports of findings and recommendations circulated accordingly.

5.11 Testing and Maintenance

5.11.1 The Director of Estates & Facilities is responsible for ensuring appropriate systems are in place for testing and maintaining equipment provided for fire safety in accordance with recognized standards. Such equipment includes:

- emergency escape lighting systems
- fire extinguisher
- manual (break glass) call points
- smoke/heat detectors and other alerting systems e.g. Deaf Alerter
- any other equipment

5.11.2 The Director of Estates & Facilities is further responsible for ensuring appropriate records of maintenance and tests are to be maintained.

5.12 Fire Drills

5.12.1 Fire Drills will be conducted at least twice yearly, organised by Occupational Health and Safety Services, and the outcomes reported to the Health and Safety Committee.

5.13 Training

5.13.1 Training for staff with duties to perform as part of the University's fire safety procedures will be provided with initial training on take up of those duties and at periods not exceed three years to help maintain levels of competence

5.13.2 Additional training will be provided where necessary following significant changes to procedures or upon request from postholders.

5.13.3 All staff will receive general fire awareness/ familiarisation with escape routes and assembly points as part of their departmental inductions.

6.0 Documentation

Document Ref:	Title	Minimum Retention Period
OHSS 02.16.6.1	Observation Report	3 years

OHSS 02.16.6.2	Fire Warden's Monitoring Form	3 years
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Title: Fire Precautions and Fire Risk Assessment					
Version	Issue Date	Revision Description	Author	Approved By & Date	Next Review Date
1.0		First Issue	Wayne Jones and Ian Pugh	H&SC 10/13	10/14
2.0		Reviewed by Wayne Jones 2014			10/15
3.0		Reviewed by Wayne Jones October 2015			April 2016
4.0		Reviewed and rewritten by Wayne Jones		Approved by H&S Committee 01/2017	January 2018