**Fire Management and Control Policy**

Aberdeenshire council will demonstrate that, in regard of managing the risks associated with Fire it will:

* Identify and assess sources of risk
* Prepare a control system for preventing, reducing or controlling the risk
* Implement and manage and monitor precautions
* Maintain suitable and sufficient records of the precautions implemented and will carry this out for each Aberdeenshire Council premises within the Council’s control.
* Appoint a person to be responsible for the management and maintenance of the control system and measures adopted.

The Manager of the establishment has the day to day responsibility for the implementation of these procedures to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of employees and others at council premises

Management has a statutory duty to ensure that compliance is active, continuous and effectively policed.

The Council must be able to demonstrate it has:

* Identified all the relevant factors
* Instituted the appropriate corrective or preventive actions and
* Is monitoring the effective implementation of the required solutions.

**Fire Safety Guidance**

**This guidance is intended for those who work in general environments with limited or no ‘dangerous substances’ with regard to fire or explosion.**

**If you are looking for specific guidance re workplaces containing ‘dangerous substances’ visit** [**http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/index.htm**](http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/index.htm)

Even in a well managed premises fire can occur. Once started it produces heat, toxic gases and large quantities of smoke. The inhalation of smoke and toxic gases has been shown to be one of the main causes of fire deaths in buildings. There are many potential causes of fire and premises should therefore incorporate measures which minimise the risk of a fire starting.

Fire safety measures range from the simple, such as a shout of warning alerting occupants of a fire in a small, single storey building to sophisticated systems such as sprinklers to stop fires from spreading in large, complex premises.

In addition to considering the size and layout of the premises when assessing appropriate fire safety measures, you need to think about the activities undertaken on the premises, when they are undertaken and by whom, as this may have an impact on the protection they require.

For example, people are vulnerable when asleep and when roused may be confused and slow to react to an emergency situation. Therefore owners/managers of premises providing sleeping accommodation have to pay particular attention to fire safety measures aimed at maximising the time available to occupants to evacuate the premises and making sure that escape routes are clearly marked, clearly lit and accessible at all times.

It may be necessary to create a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for individuals with mobility problems. For further guidance click [here](http://arcadia/intranet/itradpub.nsf/wMaintoList?OpenView&Start=1&Count=10&RestrictToCategory=My+Job+-+Health+and+Safety+-+Personal+Emergency+Evacuation+Plan+(PEEP))

Aberdeenshire Council has dedicated staff (health and Safety advisers) who have been trained to carry out Fire Risk Assessments of relevant properties within Aberdeenshire. If you have concerns about any of the issues raised in this guidance you should contact the H+S Unit on 01224 664118 for assistance/advice

For further information on Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Training click [here](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CFRA%20%26%20Fire%20Training%20Guidance.doc)

**Reducing the likelihood of fire and spread of fire**

The following are examples of the issues to be considered when assessing the likelihood of a fire starting or spreading:

* The materials you have on the premises and the arrangements for storing them;
* The waste generated on the premises and how it is disposed of, or stored prior to removal;
* The condition of equipment used on the premises and testing/maintenance arrangements;
* The location and contents of any areas on the premises where smoking is permitted;
* The location and nature of any structural work being carried out on the premises, especially hot work, such as welding;
* The opportunities for deliberate fire-raising on the premises;
* The structural features of the building(s) such as ventilation ducts;
* The fabric of the building(s) (interior and exterior) such as timber built;
* The structural condition of the building(s) such as soundness of walls, floors and ceilings; and
* The frequency of fire drills.

This list is not exhaustive and you should think about what other aspects of your premises and the activities undertaken on them may influence how safe the premises are from fire. Remember that your aim is to MINIMISE the likelihood of a fire starting and if one does start, to LIMIT its spread, so think about storage methods, housekeeping practices and maintenance of equipment and buildings.

**Adequate means of escape**

Prevention is key to fire safety but in the event that a fire does start, safe evacuation of the premises as quickly as possible is the goal.

You need to think about the shortest and safest route to exit from the building from every room or area. How long would someone need to evacuate from each of these rooms/areas? Remember that some people may need more time than others to evacuate e.g. parents with children, people with mobility problems. You need to take this into account when considering your evacuation strategy.

It may be necessary to make some structural changes to walls, doors, ceilings and stairs along the escape route in order to increase their fire-resistance, such as where persons are located on levels above ground floor. This is known as "protecting" the route and can provide crucial extra minutes in which people can safely escape.

The escape route may be needed at any time so it must be clearly signposted, adequately lit, kept free of obstructions and lead to an exit point from the building. This exit must be capable of being opened from the inside at any time without the requirement of a key or other similar device.

**Adequate means of detection and warning**

The quicker a fire is detected and the alarm raised, the more time everyone has to escape (and the greater the potential for a small fire to be extinguished in its early stages). You need to think about where a fire could start on the premises and how everyone on the premises will be alerted. In some small single storey shops or offices, interlinked smoke alarms may provide a sufficient means of detection while in others, a shout from any room or area may be heard by everyone on the premises, thereby providing sufficient warning. However, in other cases, a fire alarm system combining automatic fire detectors with sounders may be more appropriate.

**Suitable means of fighting fires**

In some cases, tackling a small fire with fire-fighting equipment may prevent the fire from developing into a larger fire and requiring full evacuation of the premises. However, such fires should only be tackled IF the person would not be putting themselves at undue risk and is trained in the use of the fire-fighting equipment available.

**Action to be taken in the event of fire**

You need to plan the action that everyone on the premises should take in the event of fire. The purpose of an emergency plan is to ensure that everyone on the premises knows what to do if there is a fire and to ensure that the premises can be evacuated safely. Some persons may be allocated specific roles, such as the role of Fire Marshall or someone to assist a disabled person's evacuation from the building.

The plan should specify:

* what should be done by someone discovering a fire;
* how everyone on the premises will be warned in the event of fire;
* the procedures for evacuation, taking into account the personal evacuation needs of individuals, such as disabled persons;
* the location of fire-fighting equipment where appropriate;
* the duties and identity of those persons with specific roles;
* where everyone should assemble following evacuation; and
* summoning the Fire and Rescue Service and meeting them on arrival.

Making a plan is just the first step, ensuring that everyone is aware of the plan is the second step. In some small premises, the above points can perhaps be summarised in a Fire Action Notice for display in prominent places in key locations. In other premises, you may need to supplement the Fire Action Notice with a simple plan of the premises and additional instructions.

If everyone understands what is expected of them and where they have to go in the event of fire, they are less likely to panic and evacuation is more likely to proceed smoothly, quickly and safely.

**Appropriate and adequate instruction/training**

In the event of fire, you want everyone to be familiar with the emergency plan and follow it. This is aided by ensuring that clear and concise written instructions are available; fire drills are regularly carried out; and, where necessary, formal training is provided (such as training in the use of fire-fighting equipment). Having an emergency plan and ensuring that everyone on the premises is aware of it and has received the necessary instruction and training will contribute to a well-organised and rapid evacuation.

**LEVEL OF CONTROL**

In some cases, you may have limited control of the premises you use. Generally tenants or others who occupy premises which they do not own, have less control of the premises than the owner or someone acting on behalf of the owner. The tenancy agreement/contract should set out clearly what the tenant/occupier can and cannot do in respect of the premises and this determines the extent of their responsibility for fire safety measures on the premises.

Obviously if you do not have the authority to make structural changes to the premises, then you cannot be expected to provide fire safety measures which require structural work. However, even though you may not have the authority to install some types of fire safety measures, if you think they are necessary or the existing measures require to be repaired or replaced, you should alert whoever has the authority to make these changes. For example if you offer yoga classes in the local village hall two evenings a week and during your risk assessment of the hall you notice that the smoke detectors have been vandalised but you do not have the authority to call someone out to check them, you should bring the potential hazard to the attention of the caretaker or other authorised person.

**EACH CASE IS DIFFERENT**

As indicated earlier, there are a wide range of fire safety measures with a variety of purposes but all are aimed at preventing fire or protecting life in the event of fire. You have to consider which are most appropriate for your premises. No two cases will be the same. What may be appropriate for your neighbour's premises may not be appropriate for yours. This is where your knowledge of your premises: who uses them; when; and for what purpose is invaluable.

However, in general, all non-domestic premises require:

**A fire warning system** - the warning element could potentially be anything from a shout of warning or manually operated gong in some small, single storey offices or shops to automatic sounders in larger, more complex premises.

**Means of escape** -clear, sign-posted and lit. You need to keep your escape route(s) clear of fire and smoke for as long as may be required to facilitate full evacuation of the premises. This means that you may have to ensure that doors, walls, floors and ceilings on the route have a fire resistant structure (for example where occupants will be located above ground level).

**Portable fire-fighting equipment** - fire extinguishers and/or a fire blanket. A fire blanket may be used to smother a small fire, especially those involving oil or fat. There are a number of different types of fire extinguishers for different classes of fire. Make sure that the extinguisher(s) you provide is appropriate for the type(s) of fire which may start on your premises.

**The provision of clear and appropriate instruction or training** in respect of fire safety measures on the premises.

In some cases, such as where the premises include a listed building or have more than three floors above ground level, specialist advice may be required before any fire safety measures are introduced. For advice in respect of listed buildings, contact your local planning authority.

Other Useful information and forms is contained within the resource pack section of the Fire Safety Section.

This includes:

[Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CLPG)

[Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CPEEP)

[Firework Displays](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CFirework%20displays)

[Fire Warden Duties](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CFire%20Warden)

[Fire Risk Assessment and Recommended training](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CFire%20Risk%20Assessment%20and%20Recommended%20Training)

[Fire Safety Checklist (for use during local inspection)](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CFire%20Safety%20Checklist)

[Fire Hydrant points (within council sites)](file:///%5C%5CABNWHHNA02%5CHOME_CEX%5CDROBB%5CDocuments%20from%20Desktop%5CMy%20Docs%5CMy%20Docs%5CFolders%5C2012%20revised%20policy%20and%20guidance%5CGuidance%20to%20go%5CFire%20Safety%20Guidance%20%28G%29R%5CFire%20Hydrants%20on%20your%20premises)