

SECTION 2

Fire Instruction and Training for All Staff

Fire Procedures

It is essential that all possible precautions in the day-to-day operation of the work place be taken in order to minimise the risk from fire and to ensure that everyone understands fully the arrangements for rapid, orderly evacuation and accurate roll-call. The establishment's emergency procedure should be documented and inserted in the Log Book. A standard format is reproduced on page 2-14, which should be adopted, where appropriate. A format indicating the action to be taken to provide refuge in an emergency is given on page 2-15.

Managers must ensure that all members of staff have been instructed as to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire. Consideration should also be given to the procedure for evening and weekend uses of the premises.

Further information about fire drills is given on Form F, section 5.

The aims of the fire procedure should be:

- to prevent panic and ensure the safe, orderly and efficient egress of all occupants of the premises
- to use all the existing facilities available
- to promote an attitude of mind which reacts rationally when confronted with a fire or other emergency.

It is, therefore, important that members of staff are aware of the following:

- how to raise the fire alarm (especially the operation of break glass points)
- actions to be taken on discovering a fire
- actions to be taken on hearing the alarm
- how to call the Fire and Rescue Service
- the location, use and hazards associated with extinguishers (only to be used when appropriate training has been given)
- the location of primary and secondary escape routes
- how to ensure the safe evacuation of persons with mobility impairments and people with special needs
- the procedure for assembly and roll-call.

Discovering a Fire

On discovering a fire staff should, without hesitation, raise the alarm and inform the Manager or nominated person of the location and extent of the fire and any other relevant details available. The Manager or nominated person should then ensure the



Fire Service is called. If the fire is small enough to be easily and safely extinguished, trained staff can attempt to do so with the correct extinguishers. Staff should not take personal risks and should always call for assistance. Circumstances will dictate whether fighting the fire should be attempted. However, no attempt to fight fires alone should be made. Fire-fighting must always be secondary to the preservation of life.

On Hearing the Alarm

On hearing the alarm staff should escort visitors, pupils and clients to the assembly point, leaving by the nearest escape route. Occupants should leave calmly, in single file and in an orderly fashion and should not stop to collect coats, bags etc. If the primary route of escape is compromised, for example by smoke, people should leave by the secondary escape route. On leaving, efforts should be made to close all doors and windows.

Staff should take particular account of the following:

- attendance registers or signing in books should be taken to the assembly point
- noise should be kept to a minimum
- no running should be permitted
- occupants should descend staircases in single file
- overtaking of individuals should be forbidden
- no one should re-enter the building until permission is given by the Fire and Rescue Service or, in the case of a fire drill, by the Manager or nominated person.

All new staff, residents and students should be given a conducted tour of the building as soon as possible in order to acquaint them with all primary and secondary escape routes.

Calling the Fire and Rescue Service

Appointed or nominated members of staff are responsible for calling emergency services and delivering registers or signing in books to the assembly point. Staff should be aware of the procedure for calling the Fire and Rescue Service and the kind of information to provide, for example, the name and address of the site, location of the fire (if known) and details of any hazardous materials involved in the fire.

If a plan of the site is available, an emergency plan could be created. The location of fire extinguishers, hose reels, break glass points, hydrants, gas and electrical isolation points, and any high risk areas where gas bottles or flammable liquids chests are stored could be highlighted using a combination of a text and colour coding. The plan could then be used when conducting inspections or safety audits.

A copy could also be kept in the office and be given to the emergency services in the event of a fire as well as the register of highly flammable or toxic materials in Section 6, Form N.



Instructions regarding the procedures to be followed when calling the Fire and Rescue Service in case of fire should be displayed at the main telephone and all other telephones.

Assembly and Roll Call

An assembly point should be established for use in the event of evacuation and should be located in an area unlikely to be affected by the fire and the arrival of emergency vehicles.

Immediately when occupants have assembled, a roll call should be taken.

Where it is impractical to carry out a roll call due to movement of people etc. for example at a High School, a system such as one which utilises fire wardens for specific floors or areas should be instigated. These wardens are designated an area of responsibility and on hearing the fire alarm they must check these areas to confirm that they are clear of all persons and report back to the Fire Coordinator at the assembly point accordingly. As part of this type of fire procedure the Fire Coordinator must ensure that wardens are on duty at all material times.

Emergency services should be notified immediately of any missing persons.

A refuge can be established for vulnerable people (elderly, disabled, young etc.). The refuge should be accommodated within the building and used until the Fire and Rescue Service have confirmed that the remainder of the building is safe to re-enter, or the development of the fire dictates that full evacuation must take place. This refuge must have a door direct to the outside and should not be adversely affected by fire development in another part of the building. The Fire and Rescue Service will verify the suitability of refuges during its inspections.

Staff Information and Instruction

Every member of staff should receive fire safety instruction at least every six months usually as a result of debriefing following a fire drill. Since debriefings following evacuations due to a real fire or a practice can count as an ongoing means of training they should be appropriately recorded.

New staff should receive instruction as soon as possible, preferably within their first week of employment.

Instruction may include lectures, video presentations and demonstrations of techniques and methods of handling equipment in connection with safe evacuation of all occupants. In addition, the subsequent need to ensure that everyone is identified and accounted for and that the premises are actually empty should be addressed. Each staff member's training should be recorded on an individual training record to confirm instruction has taken place. Form G1 on page 5-17 lends itself well to this process. It is the responsibility of the Managers to ensure that all



members of staff, whether employed in a full or part-time capacity or on day or night shift work, participate in fire drills and are suitably trained.

Fire Action Notices and Procedures

Notices indicating the action to be taken in the event of a fire should be strategically placed around the workplace to inform staff and visitors of the procedures to be followed should a fire occur. A suitable format is detailed on page 2-14.

Please note the Fire Notice on page 2-14 relates to electronically operated fire alarm systems and may be colour copied for use within individual establishments. For those premises with manual alarm systems, such as hand bells, a Fire Notice can be obtained by contacting the Corporate Health and Safety Team in County Hall.

The Responsible Person

The role of the **Responsible Person** is as follows:

- To oversee the completion of the Fire Risk Assessment for the premises. This may be the Manager/Headteacher or a suitably trained nominated person
- Ensure that appropriate staff training is completed (See Section 4, Part 2)
- Oversee the implementation of appropriate systems for safe evacuation in the event of an emergency
- Ensure that practice evacuations take place as detailed in the fire arrangements for the premises
- Ensure the completion of all relevant records pertaining to the fire arrangements for the premises.

Relevant Person

The definition of relevant persons is as follows:

(a) any person (including the responsible person) who is or may be lawfully on the premises; and

(b) any person in the immediate vicinity of the premises who is at risk from a fire on the premises.

In respect of Northumberland County Council premises persons in the former category would include employees, students, residents of care homes, on site contractors and visitors, whilst those in the latter category would include anyone passing by a premises and nearby neighbours.

Fire Warden Training and Responsibilities of Fire Wardens



Managers should ensure that a sufficient number of personnel are trained to a standard to enable them to control evacuation of premises. This may be achieved by attending training for Fire Wardens. Details of training providers are available via Community Safety Academy within the Fire & Rescue Service or the Learning and Organisational Development Section within the County Hall. Information is also available on the County Council's intranet.

Fire wardens, once they have been trained, will be required to ensure that a number of issues are adequately dealt with. These will include:

- identifying fire hazards in the workplace
- recording and reporting observations
- ensuring escape routes are available for use
- taking appropriate and effective action when a fire occurs
- ensuring the alarm is raised and the fire brigade called
- ensuring staff are evacuated from the building or area involved
- checking that visitors and others are accounted for.

Staff that are nominated as fire wardens within County Hall should ensure that they inform the County Hall manager if they move locations within County Hall or leave their employment, this will ensure that the fire warden register is up to date. The County Council has a dedicated webpage for fire wardens located within County Hall, and this can be accessed by searching under 'County Hall information' on the staff intranet.

Fire Supervisors/Nominated Persons

Personnel trained to fire supervisor level are deemed 'competent persons' for the delivery of fire instruction to staff and conducting fire drills. Members of staff who deliver instruction (cascade training) must receive refresher training at periods not exceeding two years. In addition, they may undertake and record the results of periodic tests on specific fire equipment, such as break glass points. However, a 'nominated Person' who has had relevant instruction (such as caretakers carrying call point checks) may undertake these regular tests. Contractors will undertake some specialist inspection and testing, for example the annual servicing of fire extinguishers.

Check Lists

Detailed in Section 6 and appendices 2, 3 and 4 are standard check lists which can be utilised for the purposes of staff instruction.

The Location and Use of Portable Fire Extinguishers

All staff should be aware of the location of fire fighting equipment and the hazards associated with them. Only named members of staff that have received suitable training should ever consider tackling a fire.



Nominated staff will be aware that a number of different types of fire extinguisher exist and that different fire extinguishing agents are designed for different types of fire. The following information is intended to help staff select the most appropriate type of extinguisher in the event of a fire. Specific guidance on the location and type of fire equipment is provided on form C, section 5.

A European standard for the manufacture of portable fire extinguisher came into force on 1 January 1997. Every extinguisher **manufactured** after this date must conform to BS-EN3. The main difference between the new standard and the old British Standard is the colour of the extinguisher's body. All extinguishers are now **red** regardless of their content. However, the contents are indicated by a colour band. Details of the different types of extinguisher are given below.



(a) Water Extinguishers:

Water is the most widely available extinguishing agent. However, water **must not** be used on:

- fires involving electrical equipment - unless the power supply is isolated first (beware of residual current). Short circuits caused by water in electrical apparatus could make the situation worse rather than better, and exposes the operator to the risk of electric shock
- fires involving flammable liquids - many flammable liquids are lighter than water and the only effect would be to spread the fire over a wide area
- alkali metals (for example, sodium or calcium carbide).

Method of Use

Aim jet at the base of the flames and keep moving it from side to side across the area of the fire. If the fire is spreading vertically, follow the fire using the same procedure.

(b) Carbon Dioxide Extinguishers

A cloud of carbon dioxide blankets the fire and extinguishes it. This type is effective on all types of fire including those involving electrical equipment and flammable liquids. The great advantage of carbon dioxide is that it is completely clean, leaving no residue or mess. The disadvantage of carbon dioxide is that it does not cool the fire. This could itself be hazardous and re-ignition could occur.

A loud roar is heard when a carbon dioxide cylinder is discharged. The loud noise is no cause for alarm; however, the noise does change when the extinguisher becomes empty.

Method of Use

Aim at the base of flames and keep moving from side to side across the area of the fire. If re-ignition occurs repeat the procedure.

The low operating temperature of carbon dioxide extinguishers also presents a risk of freeze burns if the nozzle comes in contact with skin during use.

(c) Dry Powder Extinguishers:

Dry powder blankets the fire and smothers it. Such extinguishers are very effective and can be used on any type of fire. This type is particularly suitable for fires involving flammable liquids.



However the discharge of dry power within a building can cause a sudden reduction of visibility and impair breathing, this could potentially jeopardize escape, rescue or other emergency action. For this reason, the use of powder extinguishers should not be used indoors, unless a risk assessment identifies mitigating reasons for indoor use.

Method of Use

Aim at the base of the flames and with a rapid side-to-side sweeping motion drive flames towards the far edge until extinguished. If re-ignition occurs, repeat the above procedure.

(d) Foam Extinguishers:

Foam extinguisher contents vary but the basic principle is that they produce foam that blankets the fire. These are suitable for most types of fire, including flammable liquids. Due to the presence of water these extinguishers are **not** suitable for fires involving electrical equipment irrespective of the type of foam contained.

Method of Use

Aim at base of fire moving it from side to side. If fire is spreading vertically, follow fire using same procedure.

For fires involving liquids aim jet at inside surface of container so that foam flows gently over surface of burning liquid.

(e) BCF Extinguishers:

This type of extinguisher has been withdrawn from service.

(f) Wet Chemical Extinguishers

The extinguishing agent produces a special wet formulation that when applied to burning oils and fats provides a “soapy” crust that seals the surface and prevents re-ignition. This is designed specifically for use on cooking oils and fats that are used in Kitchens.

Method of use:

Aim spray into the container (deep fat fryer etc) gently moving the spray until the fire is extinguished. Application should be continued until the surface of the oil is turned into a ‘soap’ crust preventing re-ignition.

(g) Fire Blankets: RED CANISTER



Fire blankets are the most convenient way of extinguishing very small fires by smothering them.

Modern fire blankets are made of glass fibre. The older asbestos blankets have been withdrawn from use.

Method of Use

The blanket should be placed carefully over the fire shielding the face and hands from the fire. In the case of fat fryers the heat source should be turned off, where possible. A fire blanket is the best way to tackle a chip pan fire. No attempt should be made to move the pan for at least thirty minutes to give it sufficient time to cool well below the ignition temperature.

Fire blankets are also the best way to tackle a fire involving someone's clothing. Immediately lay the person on the ground and smother the flames with the blanket. Seek medical help as soon as possible.

(h) Fire Buckets: RED

Sand smothers a fire and is suitable for any type of small fire. Sand buckets are normally provided in school laboratories and areas where flammable liquids may be present.

What Size of Extinguishers Can Be Bought?

Extinguishers can now only be manufactured in the following sizes:

Water Based/Foam - 2, 3, 6 & 9 litre

Dry Powder - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 & 12 kilograms

Carbon Dioxide - 2 & 5 kilograms

How Many Extinguishers Will Be Needed?

Generally 2 x 13A rated extinguishers will be needed for every 200m² of floor area with a minimum of two per floor for general fire fighting purposes. In addition to this provision, specialist extinguishers may be required for specific substantial risks. In general, fire extinguishers are normally sited so that it is not necessary to travel more than 30m from the site of a fire. The Fire and Rescue Service will give guidance on such provision. It is not the size that is important but the extinguisher's fire rating. It may be desirable to purchase additional smaller extinguishers rather than fewer larger ones. **If in doubt seek advice.**

Where Can Extinguishers Be Purchased?

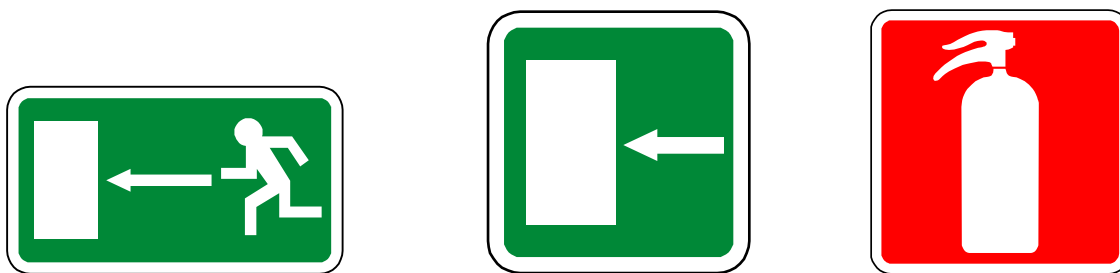


County Council establishments can obtain extinguishers by contacting the Property Helpdesk. The telephone number is provided in the contacts section of this book. Other organisations will need to consult a reputable supplier.

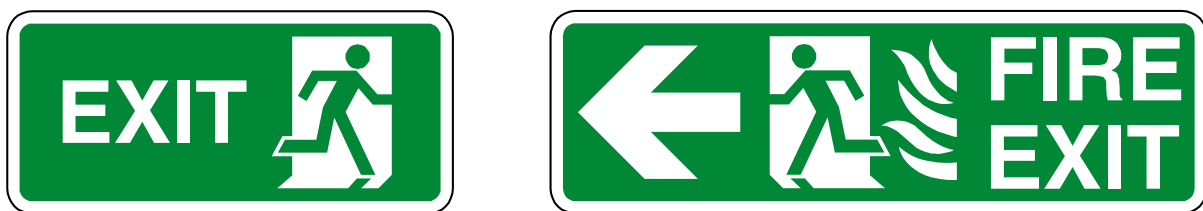
Fire Safety Signs

Which Signs Conform?

Signs conforming to Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 are reproduced below. These contain a pictogram only. For further information see page 1-2 and 1-3.



Signs **manufactured** to BS 5499: Part 1 conform - these contain pictogram **and** text for exit signs



or pictograms for fire equipment.



Please note that supplementary text may be added

What Signs Do Not Conform?

Signs containing text **only** do **not** conform





What Must Be Signed?

- Every designated escape route should have signs that indicate the direction of the appropriate final exit door
- Each designated fire exit door
- Fire fighting equipment*
- Fire alarm call points*
- Additional fire equipment*

Enforcement By The Fire Authority

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service will adopt a reasonable attitude towards the enforcement of these regulations.

All escape routes and exits **must** be adequately signed. Some discretion will be used regarding signs required for extinguishers and call points. Further advice on escape routes is provided on page 3-4. Signs conforming to BS 5499 Part 1 (Pictogram and text) are the preferred option, especially in buildings frequented by members of the public.

Other Safety Signs

Safety Signboards can be of the following types:

Warning Sign



Intrinsic features: triangular shape with a black pictogram on a yellow background. The yellow background should occupy at least 50% of the sign's area.



Prohibition Sign



Intrinsic features: round shape, red edging with diagonal line, black pictogram on white background. The red part should occupy at least 35% of the sign's area.

Mandatory Signs



Intrinsic features round shape with a white pictogram on a blue background. The blue background should occupy at least 50% of the sign's area.

Please note that signs such as this one where there is no obvious or recognised pictogram are not covered by the above regulations.

Staff Awareness

It is not sufficient merely to put signs in position. All members of staff must at Induction stage be informed of the arrangements contained within the signage applicable to their place of work.

What size sign is needed?

The size of any signboard, text and pictogram shall be of such dimensions that it is clearly visible and legible from relevant viewing distances.

Can existing signs be made to conform?

Yes, a 'text' only sign can have a pictogram added to make a sign conform provided the additional sign is of the same size and that the relevant safety colours abut.





Where can signs be obtained?

In some County Council premises the provision of new signs will be part of the delegated arrangements, whereas in others they will be provided through the Property Services via the Property Helpdesk as part of the premises maintenance arrangements. Those Managers who have delegated responsibility for the provision of signs should seek the services of a reputable sign company. The need for maintaining the existing quantity of signs and ensuring that they appropriately located within an establishment will be confirmed via the risk assessment process.





FIRE



A person discovering a fire should:



Raise the fire alarm immediately by breaking the glass at the nearest fire alarm call point.



Call for assistance and, if safe to do so, attack the fire with the appliances provided.

On hearing the alarm:

The fire brigade should be called immediately by:



Leave the building in an orderly manner by the nearest exit and report to the assembly point at:



If possible, switch off all machines and close windows as you leave the building



Do not stop to collect personal belongings
Do not re-enter the building until instructed to do so





Refuge Action

In the event of a fire:

This refuge affords fire and smoke protection for approximately minutes.

The evacuation plan in operation within these premises ensures that assistance will arrive at this point within minutes.



Disabled persons should:

- Remain calm
- Wait here until assistance arrives



Do not attempt to leave the building unassisted.
Do not leave this point even temporarily.