

## HEALTH AND SAFETY / ASSETS



Document No: <b>FIRE/1 of 3</b>	Issue No: <b>Issue 3</b>	Issue Date: <b>August 2014</b> Review Date: <b>April 2015</b>	Responsibility / owner:  <b>Corporate Health and Safety/Asset Management Service</b>
Title:  <b>FIRE PREVENTION POLICY</b>			

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### Revision table

Issue Number	Date issued	Revision / change
1	July 2009	Policy issued
2	November 2013	Minor amendments
3	August 2014	Minor amendments

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) covers general fire precautions and specifies the duties which have to be met in order to protect 'relevant persons' in the event of fire in and around most premises. The Order requires fire precautions to be put in place where necessary and to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable to do so.
- 1.2 Accountability for complying with the order rests with the responsible person. In a workplace, this is the employer and any person who may have control of any part of the premises, e.g. the manager or owner. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises, such as is found in a multi-occupied complex, then they must all take reasonable steps to co-operate with each other and bring about the co-ordination of arrangements.
- 1.3 The responsible person is required to ensure that a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which all relevant persons are exposed (the 'fire risk assessment' - see Fire Risk Assessment - Guidance Notes) is undertaken. Once the fire risk assessment has been completed, the responsible person will then be able to identify the risks that can be removed or reduced and decide on the general fire precautions that need to be taken for the premises concerned. These general precautions will include:
  - (a) Measures to be taken to reduce the risk of fire and to minimise the risk of fire spreading.
  - (b) Provision of means of escape and for ensuring that, at all material times, the means of escape can be safely and effectively used.
  - (c) Ensuring that systems are in place for detecting fire and for raising the alarm should fire break out.
  - (d) Provision of equipment for the fighting of fires.
  - (e) The action to be taken in the event of fire breaking out.
- 1.4 A written record of the fire risk assessment must be made along with the significant findings. Other records that should be maintained are those relating to the maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems, fire fighting equipment and emergency lighting. Records should also be kept of all fire drills, fire safety inspections and fire safety training undertaken and of inspections/tests of electrical installations and equipment, gas systems, boilers and pressure systems.

## **2.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1 Cheshire East Council recognises the need to protect employees and other relevant persons who may be present in any of the premises under its control from any fire-related risks associated with the work undertaken. To this end, the Authority is committed to complying with all relevant legal duties and obligations and will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that measures are taken to minimise the chances of fire breaking out in the premises that it is responsible for. To achieve this, the Authority will:

- (a) Ensure that fire risk assessments are undertaken in order to identify the hazards present in the workplace.
- (b) Based on the outcomes of the fire risk assessments, develop and implement the appropriate policies and procedures
- (c) Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated in order to manage fire safety and to implement any recommendations arising from the fire risk assessment process.
- (d) Provide and maintain all fire prevention measures that have been identified and deemed to be necessary.
- (e) Provide appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training to employees, and where required to non-employees, such as temporary or contract workers.
- (f) Provide the employer of any person from outside the organisation (e.g. agency providing temporary staff) with clear and relevant information on any risks to those employees and the preventive and protective measures taken.
- (g) In the case of a multi-occupied complex, co-operate with any other responsible persons to ensure co-ordination of arrangements.
- (h) Consult with employees (or their elected representatives) regarding the nomination of persons to undertake particular roles in connection with fire safety and about any proposals for improving fire precautions.

2.2 It should also be noted that employees will be required to co-operate with the authority in order to ensure that the measures put into place to reduce the risk of fire and its effects work properly and that employees must not do anything that will place either themselves or other persons at risk.

### **3.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR CORPORATE PREMISES**

- (a) The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 are met with regard to all premises under the control of Cheshire East Council.
- (b) The Asset Management Section has the responsibility for providing reactive repairs and cyclical maintenance for all fire fighting equipment and fire safety systems.
- (c) On a day-to-day basis, the manager of the premises concerned will normally undertake the duties of the responsible person and will have sufficient training and experience or knowledge to be able to carry out this function properly. It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Section and the Asset Management Service to provide the necessary support, instruction and training to enable the building managers to carry out their duties.

- (d) Fire Risk Assessments will be arranged by the Asset Management Service, and will be updated and reviewed on a regular basis. Particular attention will be paid to those at special risk such as disabled persons, those it is known have special needs and children. Consideration must also be given to any substances or preparations present which meet the criteria laid down in the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002, which classify certain materials as being explosive, oxidising, extremely flammable, highly flammable or flammable or any dust which can form an explosive mixture with air or an explosive atmosphere. The emergency services will be informed of any dangerous substances that may present a risk (e.g. gas bottles) should a fire break out on the premises.
- (f) It is the responsibility of building managers to draw up an evacuation plan for their respective buildings, and to put in place all necessary procedures to effect the plan. In addition they must ensure that the plan is practised by arranging recorded fire drills at least once every 6 months.
- (g) Building managers are required to ensure that personal evacuation plans are produced for any members of staff who have disabilities, and report to the Asset Management Service any necessary modifications to the building to assist the evacuation of persons with disabilities.
- (h) Building managers are required to arrange recorded weekly bell tests, and to report any defects including issues of alarm audibility to the Asset Management Service using the Helpdesk. **Failure of ancillary items such as failure of keypads to disengage, failure of lifts to ground or failure of doors to disengage should also be reported using the same procedure.**
- (i) Regular inspections will be carried out by the manager of the premises to ensure that all fire prevention measures identified by the assessment as being required for fire safety are in place, maintained and are still effective including suitable means of evacuating the premises and for contacting the emergency services. **Fire panels and escape routes must be checked along with ensuring that high standards of housekeeping are maintained.** Any defective fire safety equipment or fire safety systems must be reported to the Asset Management Service using the Helpdesk.
- (i) The manager of the building should ensure that all employees (and any other persons as necessary) are aware of their designated fire responsibilities and of who in their working area has been delegated other fire related functions such as that of fire warden. This information along with instruction in raising the alarm, escape routes and the operation of the evacuation plan must form part of the induction process for any staff new to the building.
- (j) The manager of the building shall put into place arrangements for consulting on a regular basis with the responsible persons for other organisations in any multi-occupied premises in which the Council employs staff or provides services.

- (k) The manager of the building must ensure that, for the area that they are responsible for, all employees, and where required non-employees such as temporary or contract workers, are provided with appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training in fire and fire-related matters.
- (l) Managers must also provide the employer of any person from outside the organisation (such as an agency providing temporary staff) with clear and relevant information on any risks to those employees and the preventive and protective measures that need to be taken.
- (m) Effective security precautions (such as secure boundaries, security lighting and intruder alarms) will be taken to minimise the risks of arson both within buildings and in the grounds of buildings owned by the Council.
- (n) Suitable control will be exercised over the operations of contractors employed on Council premises in order to minimise any fire risks associated with these operations. All contractors working on the Council's Premises will be required, under the terms of their contract, to comply with the Council's conditions for contractors. Where contractors are carrying out works on Council Premises and these works involve a risk of fire, then fire safety requirements will form an integral part of the contract and appropriate measures, including the use of a Hot Work Permit system must be implemented.
- (o) Testing and inspection of fixed installations and portable appliances will be carried out in accordance with the latest edition of the Electrical Engineers Regulations for Electrical Installations.
- (p) Appropriate measures will be taken to reduce the risk of ignition by electrical equipment or other sources of ignition in any areas where combustible dusts, flammable liquids or flammable gases are used or stored.
- (q) The use of personal electrical equipment such as fan heaters is prohibited in any of the Council's premises unless absolutely unavoidable and agreed with the manager/supervisor beforehand. On the rare occasions that this may be necessary then the equipment should carry a current PAT test label before it is to be used on the premises.
- (r) Arrangements will be put into place for any portable heaters (those provided by the Council only) to be inspected and tested by a competent person before use, sited so as to avoid any risk of ignition of combustible materials and returned to store after use. Under no circumstances should radiant bar electric fires be used in any of the Council's premises.
- (s) Smoking is prohibited on all Council premises and in all Council owned/leased vehicles.
- (t) Consultation will take place with employees (or their elected representatives) over the arrangements to be put into place to ensure adequate fire precautions are taken in premises owned or run by the Council. The normal forum for such consultation will be the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Committee

- (u) The Health and Safety Section and the Asset Management Service are responsible for inspecting premises to ensure that the requirements of the RRFSO continue to be met.
- (v) The Asset Management Service are responsible for ensuring that any remodelling of corporate premises meets the necessary legal requirements in respect of fire safety.
- (w) **Where an occupying service intends to remodel or make any changes to the layout or operation of the building, they must inform the Council's Asset Management Service using the Landlord Consent form.**

#### 4.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOOL PREMISES

- (a) The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 are met at community, voluntary controlled and special schools under the control of Cheshire East Council.
- (b) These schools have delegated funds with which to purchase the necessary services, either internally through the council, or externally through private organisations, to ensure the requirements of the RRFSO are met. It is therefore the direct responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Board of School Governors to ensure that the necessary services are purchased. Each school is therefore responsible for arranging reactive repairs and cyclical maintenance for all fire fighting equipment and fire safety systems at their respective premises. Schools must also ensure that external contractors they appoint to inspect fire fighting equipment and systems are competent to do so.
- (c) On a day-to-day basis, the Head Teacher will undertake the duties of the responsible person and will have sufficient training and experience or knowledge to be able to carry out this function properly. **When purchased through ChESS it is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Section and the Asset Management Service to provide the necessary support, instruction and training to enable the Head Teachers to carry out their duties.**
- (d) Fire Risk Assessments will be arranged by the Head Teacher, and will be updated and reviewed on a regular basis. **The school must ensure that the fire risk assessment is suitable and sufficient for the premises, and where the school is large and complex the Head Teacher should appoint a competent Fire Risk Assessor to undertake the risk assessment on the schools behalf.** Particular attention will be paid to those at special risk such as disabled persons, those it is known have special needs and the children. Consideration must also be given to any substances or preparations present which meet the criteria laid down in the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002, which classify certain materials as being explosive, oxidising, extremely flammable, highly flammable or flammable or

any dust which can form an explosive mixture with air or an explosive atmosphere. The emergency services will be informed of any dangerous substances that may present a risk (e.g. gas bottles) should a fire break out on the premises. The Head Teacher is required to arrange for any building works, or procedural issues identified within the fire risk assessment to be addressed.

- (e) It is the responsibility of the school to draw up an evacuation plan, and to put in place all necessary procedures to effect the plan. In addition they must ensure that the plan is practised by arranging recorded fire drills at least once every school term.
- (f) The school is required to ensure that personal evacuation plans are produced for any members of staff or children who have disabilities, and report to the Asset Management Service any necessary modifications to the building to assist the evacuation of persons with disabilities **in order that landlord consent may be obtained.**
- (g) The school is required to arrange recorded weekly bell tests, and to arrange for any defects including issues of alarm audibility to be addressed. **The school should also check that any ancillary equipment linked to the fire alarm is working properly e.g. door releases.**
- (h) Regular inspections are to be arranged by the Head Teacher to ensure that all fire prevention measures identified within the assessment as being required for fire safety are in place, maintained and are still effective including suitable means of evacuating the premises and for contacting the emergency services.
- (i) The school should ensure that all employees (and any other persons as necessary) are aware of their designated fire responsibilities and of who in their working area has been delegated other fire related functions such as that of fire Marshal. This information along with instruction in raising the alarm, escape routes and the operation of the evacuation plan must also form part of the induction process for any staff new to the building.
- (j) The school shall put into place arrangements for consulting on a regular basis with the responsible persons for other organisations who use the school premises. This is to include checking the fire risk assessment produced by the 'outside' organisation to ensure that any fire risks are suitably managed, and that the outside organisation is fully aware of the evacuation procedures for the building, including raising the alarm and the location of the escape routes.
- (k) The school must ensure that all employees, and where required non-employees such as temporary or contract workers, are provided with appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training in fire and fire-related matters.
- (l) The school must make a formal application to the Asset Management Service for 'Landlord's Consent' whenever remodelling or changes to the school layout are proposed. This will help ensure that the proposals meet legislative requirements in respect of fire safety.

- (m) The school should ensure that effective security precautions are in place to minimise the risks of arson.
- (n) The school should ensure that suitable control is exercised over the operations of contractors in order to minimise any fire risks associated with these operations. All contractors working on the Council's Premises will be required, under the terms of their contract, to comply with the Council's conditions for contractors. Where contractors are carrying out works on Council Premises and these works involve a risk of fire, then fire safety requirements will form an integral part of the contract and appropriate measures, including the use of a Hot Work Permit system must be implemented.
- (o) **When purchased through ChESS, the Health and Safety Section and the Asset Management Service are responsible for auditing school premises, and ensuring that the requirements of the RRFSo are being met.**
- (p) **Where a school fails to meet the requirements of the RRFSo, and the Asset Management Service becomes aware of this, the Asset Management Service will initially serve a formal improvement notice on the Head Teacher and agree a date for completion of the required improvements. If the school fails to undertake the improvements before the agreed date, the Asset Management Service can arrange the works and recharge the school.**

## 5.0 ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MULTI-OCCUPIED PREMISES

- 5.1 A multi-occupied premises is a premises where different building managers control different parts of the same building or site, or where different organisations share a building or site on a permanent or temporary basis.
- 5.2 The arrangements set out above for corporate and school premises apply equally for multi-occupied buildings. However there are some additional requirements for this type of premises, and these are as follows:
  - (a) Each manager at a multi-occupied premises is required to share information with the other building managers concerning fire risk and the necessary control measures associated with his/her undertaking.
  - (b) Each manager at a multi-occupied premises is required to cooperate and coordinate with the other building managers in respect of evacuation procedures.
  - (c) Each manager at a multi-occupied premises is required to ensure that his/her staff take part in all jointly arranged fire drills.
  - (d) All managers at a multi-occupied premises must jointly identify an individual(s) who will be responsible for arranging and coordinating recorded fire drills and weekly fire alarm tests.



5.3 In addition to the above policy, the following documents should also be read:

- (a) The Council Policy on Fire Procedures/Emergency Evacuation
- (b) Council Guidance Notes on Fire Safety - both the generic notes and those pertaining to specific areas such as Childrens Services.
- (c) The Council's Smoke Free Workplace Policy
- (d) Fire Safety Inspection Checklist

## **6.0 EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

6.1 This document shall be monitored, and reviewed biennially to evaluate its effectiveness. The document shall be revised as necessary, and in light of such evaluation.

END OF POLICY