

Fire Safety Policy (Corporate Buildings)



EAST RIDING

OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Lead Directorate and Service:	Corporate Resources - Human Resources
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Contents

Fire Safety Policy (Corporate Buildings).....	1
1. Background.....	1
2. Foreword	1
3. Implementation.....	1
4. Duties and Responsibilities	2
5. Arrangements.....	5
6. Unwanted Fire Signals and False Alarms.....	9
7. Further Guidance	9

Fire Safety Policy (Corporate Buildings)

I. Background

Fire safety controlling legislation is the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) which removed the previous requirement for prescribed premises to be issued fire certificates. The RRO is enforced by the local fire authority. They have the same 'powers' as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or Local Authority enforcing teams, including the right of entry to inspect premises and management systems.

The RRO places the onus on organisations to consider premises fire safety by implementing effective fire management systems to minimise the risk of a fire starting, the severity of events should a fire occur, and the potential for loss of life or serious injury.

Legislation demands that a responsible person or responsible persons are appointed. Asset Strategy will fulfil the elements associated with strategic management of premises and Directors will nominate a "responsible person" for each premise under their control to ensure necessary fire safety management arrangements are in place.

In shared and corporately managed accommodation an individual will be nominated to take the lead.

This Fire Safety Policy provides information on East Riding of Yorkshire Council's response to this legislation and its management arrangements associated with all premises and activities under the control of the Council. In particular the Council will:

- Assess the risks posed by fire and minimise the risk of fire outbreak;

- Introduce controls to reduce the severity of a fire and safeguard all employees;
- Reduce risks to employees and other persons accessing premises;
- Review and update arrangements as required.

A standardised Fire Safety Systems Check Record has been introduced for all Council premises (owned or leased). For those teams which work from a partner agency site/premises (such as NHS) the responsibility for fulfilling the "premises" part of the legislation is the agency. Equally we will consider partner agency employees working on our premises.

2. Foreword

In accordance with the Council's Corporate Safety Policy, the Council is committed to pursuing continual improvements in health and safety. This Fire Safety Policy supports this commitment and forms part of the Council's health and safety management system.

3. Implementation

Directors are responsible for the implementation of this policy, and communication of its content as appropriate. The primary aim is to reduce risks from fire across the operational remit of the Council.

This policy is available on the Safety Services intranet page and, where employees do not have access to the Council's intranet, via their Line Manager/Headteacher.

The Council relies on the co-operation of all employees, and trade unions for the successful implementation of this policy.

A review of this policy will be undertaken three years after its implementation, and where significant changes in legislation or working practices deem this appropriate.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Council manages fire safety issues and achieves compliance with legislative requirements.

For the purposes of the requirements of the regulatory reform (fire safety) order 2005 the Chief Executive will act as the “duty holder” and with the support of the corporate management team will appoint responsible and competent persons to support and fulfil this duty and achieve the requirements of the legislation.

The scope of delegated responsibilities is set out within this policy and fulfils the requirements of the regulatory reform (fire safety) order 2005.

Directors and Heads of Service

Directors and Heads of Service are ultimately responsible and accountable to the Chief Executive for ensuring the requirements of this policy are complied with, and that the policy is issued to their management team and monitored as necessary to ensure compliance.

Directors will nominate a “responsible person” for each premise under their control to ensure necessary fire safety management arrangements (excluding those arrangements already allocated to the Head of Asset Strategy) are fulfilled. In shared and corporately managed accommodation an individual will be nominated to take the lead

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that Asset Strategy have commissioned a fire risk assessment in the

premises under their control and that the “responsible person” within these premises ensures any requirements arising out of the fire risk assessments have been appropriately actioned by the relevant persons and that records are kept up to date.

Heads of Service are to inform Asset Strategy of any proposed material changes to the use of, or staffing of, premises they control or occupy before these are actioned to obtain any necessary approval and to necessitate any amendments or updates to the fire risk assessment.

Head of Asset Strategy

The Head of Asset Strategy has been appointed as the competent person in control of budgetary and maintenance activities for Council premises and assets, precluding occupants of premises and excluding schools (where the duty to maintain school premises is discharged to the school through the provision of a devolved budget). They are responsible for:

- Through commissioning, Asset Strategy ensure all fire safety measures in premises are adequately maintained and that the requirements for these are considered at the design, build and lease of all premises used by the council, to meet the appropriate relevant standards, with particular emphasis on the usage of the property;
- Ensuring a programme of fire risk assessments is commissioned and delivered in all Council owned or controlled non domestic properties and the outcome of which is acted upon to ensure compliance with the legislation. As part of this programme, particular emphasis will be placed on sleeping accommodation and other high risk premises which will be subject to an annual review;

- Ensuring necessary resources are allocated to achieve fire safety improvements and addressing any consequential works arising from risk assessments and inspections through the use of the Council's property management processes;
- Putting in place an effective means of communication with the nominated "responsible person" for each premise to ensure that the outcome of the fire risk assessment in respect of any "housekeeping" issues are adequately dealt with;
- Contributing to the content of the fire safety policies and all associated procedures;
- Providing reports to the Chief Executive and Corporate Management team on the outcome of fire risk assessments, inspections and associated actions.

Head of Infrastructure and Facilities

The Head of Infrastructure and Facilities has been appointed as the competent person for the operational delivery of fire safety issues and measures at the request of Asset Strategy. They are responsible for:

- Preparing budget estimates for any requested works for Asset Strategy;
 - Providing technical advice on fire related issues, which includes risk assessments;
 - Delivery of fire related projects;
 - Implementing cyclical maintenance of fire systems in council properties;
 - Ensuring that site familiarisation of fire safety systems is completed for all operational teams relocating to properties. This includes both established and new properties;
- Ensuring that system drawings and operational instructions of all fire related equipment are in place within one month of occupying premises and copies of these to be provided to Asset Strategy;
 - Monitoring building fire alarm plans and following any alterations to premises, instruct contractors to amend these plans.

Safety Services Team

The Safety Services Team acts as the competent person(s) to ensure that fire safety issues are managed at the highest strategic level throughout the Council and develop in partnership with delegated competent officers the overall strategy on all matters relating to fire safety. They are responsible for:

- Preparing, reviewing and consulting on this Fire Safety Policy (Corporate Buildings);
- Providing supporting fire safety guidance documents;
- Advising on operational fire safety issues including arson prevention;
- Represent the Council on fire safety issues which includes corresponding with the relevant enforcing authorities;
- Assisting Learning and Development to scope and deliver fire safety training for Council employees;
- Auditing fire safety management systems;

Managers

Managers are responsible for achieving the objectives of this fire safety policy and for ensuring that the information contained within this fire safety policy is implemented and complied with.

Where Managers have been allocated the role of “responsible person” for premises or work areas including shared or corporately managed accommodation they are responsible for:

- Checking that a fire risk assessment has been commissioned by Asset Strategy and that any highlighted housekeeping issues are actioned accordingly including the reporting of any defects relating to the premises fire safety measures;
 - Ensuring the Fire Safety Systems Check Record is fully completed;
 - Control measures including safe systems of work are introduced to reduce any potential risks to a reasonable level;
 - Relevant information, instruction and training is provided to staff to enable them to undertake their job safely and without risk including the provision of at least twice yearly fire drills.
- Ensuring necessary resources are allocated to achieve fire safety improvements and addressing any consequential works arising from risk assessments and inspections;
 - Putting in place an effective means of communication to ensure that the outcomes of the fire risk assessment are adequately dealt with;
 - Ensuring the Fire Safety Systems Check Record is fully completed;
 - Control measures including safe systems of work are introduced to reduce any potential risks to a reasonable level;
 - Relevant information, instruction and training is provided to staff to enable them to undertake their job safely and without risk including the provision of at least termly fire drills.

Schools

The Headteacher will hold primary responsibility for fire safety where the duty to maintain school premises is discharged to the school through the provision of a devolved budget. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring a fire risk assessments is commissioned and the outcome of which is acted upon to ensure compliance with the legislation;

Employees

Employees must ensure they carry out assigned tasks and duties in accordance with information, instruction, training and agreed safe systems of work. Specifically they must ensure that:

- This policy is complied with;
- They cooperate to enable their Manager/Headteacher to formulate and implement effective management systems;
- They undertake fire training - site specific and general awareness as requested;
- They provide basic site specific awareness to any person visiting them or working in their area;

- Their own health and safety and that of others is not put at risk by their actions.

Site Responsible Persons

In addition to the duties detailed above, site responsible persons with specific duties have been nominated and will fall into one of three categories:

- Those responsible for the management and operation of whole premises, for example Residential Care Homes, Leisure Centres;
- Those responsible for the management and operation of corporate buildings and corporately shared office accommodation, for example, County Hall, Bridlington Town Hall;
- Those responsible for the management and operation of shared facilities through a lead responsible person and the cooperation of other occupiers, for example Multi Service Centres, premises shared with the National Health Service.

The site responsible persons will:

- Ensure that the outcome of the fire risk assessment in respect of any “housekeeping” issues are adequately dealt with;
- Make sure that any upgrades or improvements identified within the risk assessment have been actioned by Asset Strategy/Infrastructure and Facilities;
- Undertake any necessary tests of fire systems such as fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems and emergency lighting;

- Ensure that appropriate actions are taken following the activation of a fire alarm or a fire occurring;
- Oversee good housekeeping of the premises to ensure that fire risk is not increased and means of escape are not compromised;
- Ensure that relevant information, instruction and training has been provided to staff to enable them to undertake their job safely and without risk including the provision of at least twice yearly fire drills;
- Ensure that the Fire Safety Systems Check Record is completed including records of fire drills and training.

5. Arrangements

Fire Risk Assessments

It is a legal requirement for a risk assessment to be carried out on all premises where people could be working.

A programme of fire risk assessments will be commissioned in all Council owned or controlled non domestic properties and the outcome of which will be acted upon to ensure compliance with the legislation.

Where new premises are commissioned or where significant refurbishment has taken place, a fire risk assessment (which will include a fire plan of the premises), will be undertaken by a competent person upon occupation of the premises, and the level of detail determined by Asset Strategy prior to them procuring the assessment.

As part of this programme, particular emphasis will be placed on sleeping accommodation and other high risk premises which will be subject to an annual review.

Each fire risk assessment will be accompanied by a “fire plan” which will detail all the passive and active fire protection measures in the associated premises and indicate such things as where fire resisting walls are, doors that are designated as fire doors, the location and standards of fire detection, emergency lighting, fire signage etc. These will be available at each premises along with the fire risk assessment and will be updated where changes occur.

The site responsible person will ensure that all housekeeping items are completed on receipt of the document and that these standards are maintained. They will also review the findings of the risk assessment on an annual basis or where significant changes to the usage of the premises are made to ensure the risk assessment remains compliant.

Asset Strategy will prioritise repairs and upgrades arising out of the risk assessment and instruct Infrastructure and Facilities to implement a programme of works subject to the availability of budgets.

Where refurbishment or alterations are made to buildings that have been instigated and funded by Asset Strategy they will arrange for an updated fire risk assessment to be carried out. Following a significant change of use, major refurbishment or major event carried out by the service, contact should be made with Asset Strategy who will appoint a competent person to update the fire risk assessment.

Arson

Asset Strategy and Housing will ensure that they have taken reasonable measures to protect any vulnerable and/or unoccupied buildings under their control and management from the risks of arson.

Site responsible persons in occupied premises will act on the findings of the fire risk assessment and complete an arson risk assessment ensuring that necessary measures have been put in place to safeguard against the risk of arson and to minimise the potential of the premises being damaged by malicious activity. Where signs of arson are identified these will be reported to the relevant authority and to Asset Strategy.

Occupancy Figures

Occupancy figures for premises will depend on the number of exits, size of space and activity. Asset Strategy will advise on occupancy levels (excluding schools) based on corporately agreed set standards. These will be recorded by Asset Strategy and passed to the site responsible person.

Fire Protection Measures

Our premises are designed and where necessary will pass through a formal evaluation process with built-in fire safety features such as compartmentation and fire resisting doors, fire detection systems, emergency lighting, maintained exit routes, final exits etc.

The purpose of installing fire protection measures is to maximise the time available to evacuate a premise or prevent a fire from taking hold in the first place.

Fire doors form a vital part of the fire protection measures within premises and must be maintained in a fully operable condition and able to close in the event of an alarm being raised. Wedging is not permitted, although hold open devices can be used in certain circumstances.

Fire protection measures particularly fire doors must be regularly inspected by the site responsible person to ensure that there has not been any compromise in its integrity such as holes in walls where

cables have been routed or damage to fire doors.

All premises will have means to warn occupants of a fire. These range from fully automated systems, which may notify an external control centre to manual operations or a simple verbal means of raising an alarm.

Any systems or products put in place to detect or combat a fire for example smoke detection, sprinklers, fire extinguishers etc will always need some form of “trigger” to activate such as smoke from a fire or an extinguisher being discharged by a user.

Where automated systems are in place Asset Strategy will be responsible for ensuring that these systems are accompanied with associated system/zone plans and clear instructions on how to operate the system. Responsible persons within each premise will be trained to interrogate and interpret the system and manage any actuation.

Regardless of the type and level of fire protection systems in place they must be well maintained.

Fire Fighting Equipment

The Council has within its premises various types of firefighting equipment including sprinklers, gas extinguishing systems and a variety of portable fire appliances.

Infrastructure and Facilities have in place a measured term contract for the supply, installation and annual servicing of equipment and replacement if required.

Should additional equipment be required following changes of use to a property, or following recommendations from the fire risk assessment this should (excluding schools) only be obtained through Infrastructure and Facilities through the

existing contract. Site users must not order their own equipment direct. Any additional equipment must be added to the fire plan which accompanies the fire risk assessment.

Fire Management Systems/Record Keeping and Inspections

Fire safety and maintenance records must be maintained for all premises and supporting evidence retained. Inspections must be completed as instructed in the Fire Safety Systems Check Record and monthly health and safety inspection forms.

Contractors' certificates, worksheets will be retained by Infrastructure and Facilities and in the case of schools within their own system. Good practice is also to retain a copies of certificates be this digitally or as hard copy so that these can be referred to for the purposes of inspection and audit.

Housekeeping

Effective housekeeping is an important part of fire management. All occupants are responsible for minimising the risk of a fire starting by ensuring that:

- Fire routes are clear;
- Waste is disposed of;
- Unauthorised items are not brought on site;
- Clutter is kept to a minimum;
- Good storage of chemicals and gases is maintained;
- Ignition sources from electrical systems or work equipment are well managed;
- Hot work activities are risk assessed and adequately controlled to minimise risk of fire.

Chemicals must be contained in a locked and labelled container. Gases should be, wherever possible, stored in minimal

quantities and segregated in an external well ventilated lockable container.

Fire Evacuation Procedures

Every premise must have in place clear and concise fire evacuation procedures. These must take into account the nature of the premises, the type of operation undertaken in the premises and the abilities of the persons occupying or accessing the premises.

The detail of these procedures will vary dependant of the nature of the premises, with more complex services such as residential care settings requiring more detailed evacuation procedures and management plans.

The site responsible person will ensure that the fire evacuation procedures are suitable and sufficient, positioned appropriately throughout the premises and that all staff have had these brought to their attention. They will also ensure that suitable arrangements are in place which take into account contractors and visitors to the premises.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

Where employees, service users or visitors may require additional support in the event of an evacuation from our premises; a personal emergency evacuation plan (or PEEP) will record the management plan to facilitate their evacuation, detailing necessary assistance from carers or colleagues where necessary including the use of refuge points and equipment such as evacuation chairs.

The site responsible person will support managers to ensure that a PEEP is written and implemented where staff or others with additional needs require support to evacuate the premises.

Staff Training

The legislation requires that employees are fully aware of fire risks and control measures specific to the workplace they occupy as well as general fire awareness.

For employees that are based on a partnership agency site for example premises shared with the NHS, the site manager must ensure that Council employees have the same training and that this is recorded.

If personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS) have been identified, then relevant employees must be aware of their requirements and trained in procedures such as the use of refuge points and equipment such as evacuation chairs.

The site responsible person will ensure (if necessary liaising with other managers) that the fire evacuation procedures have been brought to the attention of all staff.

Contractors

Where contractors are commissioned to undertake any works that may alter or affect the fabric of the premises, particularly in respect of the passive protection within the premises; Asset Strategy and/or Infrastructure and Facilities will in all premises excluding schools (unless directly commissioned to manage work in a school) ensure that the contractor has had sight of the fire risk assessment prior to work commencing and will further ensure where these works have a direct bearing or cause a significant alteration to the premises or their passive protection that the fire risk assessment is updated accordingly to reflect these changes.

Where contractors are undertaking any "hot work" then these works will be managed through an appropriate permit

to work, safe system of work and risk assessment.

6. Unwanted Fire Signals and False Alarms

Unwanted fire signals and false alarms can sometimes lead to the unnecessary deployment of fire service resources particularly where there is no evidence of a fire occurring. The Council has agreed as part of this policy to ensure that arrangements are in place within all of its premises to manage fire alarm activations.

There is no legal duty on the fire service to respond to calls originating from automatic fire alarm systems where it has not been established if there is a “real fire”. The duty remains with the ‘site responsible person’ to establish whether or not there is a fire.

There will however be situations where the fire service will always respond, particularly if a fire is confirmed on the premises. Equally where persons could be sleeping such as a residential care home or in high risk industrial sites such as depots and business units the fire service will also respond.

7. Further Guidance

The following guidance supports this policy and provides additional detailed information to assist in the effective delivery of this policy:

- Fire Safety - Automatic Hold Open Devices for Self-Closing Doors Safety Guidance Note.
- Fire Safety - The Capacity of Rooms and Other Spaces Safety Guidance Note.
- Fire Safety - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans Safety Guidance Note.