

# Fire Safety Policy

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## **Fire Safety Policy**

### **1. Policy Statement**

1.1 The University is committed to providing a safe environment for its staff, students and visitors. Part of this responsibility is in the provision and management of fire safety systems and procedures.

1.2 The University will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the risk associated with fire will be managed in compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any other relevant legislation that may impact upon it.

### **2. Scope**

2.1 All staff, students, visitors and contractors, have a statutory responsibility in ensuring compliance with the law and complying with the fire safety provisions defined within this policy.

### **3. Aims**

3.1 To provide a robust fire safety framework which will be implemented to secure the safety and wellbeing of everyone within the University Community and to protect the University's assets.

3.2 To ensure Teesside University meets its legislative requirements in respect of fire safety

3.3 To ensure staff, students, visitors and contractors receive suitable instruction and training on fire safety and the University's fire safety arrangements

### **4. Responsibilities**

4.1 This Fire Safety Policy applies to all University owned premises including student residential accommodation and activities falling, to any extent, under the University's direct control. The Policy identifies responsibilities that all members of the University community must adhere to including their specific duties. The overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order rests with the Vice-Chancellor. The management and supervision of the regulations is devolved to the relevant Deans/Directors/Heads in each school/department including the Director of Campus Services, who with the support of the Health and Safety Team will

ensure the requirements of the duty holder's responsibilities in respect of the undertakings required to meet compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order are met.

4.2 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order requires employers and those with control of a premise, to any extent, to carry out a fire risk assessment of the premises to identify any risks to the safety of relevant persons in respect of harm caused by fire and to take all reasonable fire safety measures to ensure the safety of relevant persons within the relevant premise.

4.3 Fire safety risk assessments will be undertaken by the University's Health and Safety Team, with support, where required from Departmental Safety Officers. Fire risk assessments are subject to an annual review or will be reviewed after a fire or change of layout to the building.

4.4 To ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order the Director of Campus Services will be responsible for ensuring arrangements are made in respect of the maintenance of fire safety provision for University premises, this will include;

- Fire warning and detection systems are maintained in accordance with the relevant standard
- Firefighting equipment, including fixed installations and specialist systems, are subjected to a maintenance programme in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines
- Fire Alarm testing (weekly)
- Fire Alarm maintenance
- Dry Riser pressure testing
- Means of escape are maintained as required
- Emergency lighting, escape lighting and signage are maintained and tested in accordance with the relevant standard
- Electrical installation tests are undertaken as required
- Ensuring that any recommendations from risk assessment reviews relevant to areas of responsibility, are responded to diligently.
- Liaising with the Health and Safety Adviser on all matters likely to impact on the Fire Safety provision for University Buildings
- Ensuring that all works undertaken by contractors, relevant to areas of responsibility, are supervised and where "Hot Works" are to be carried out, that an appropriate Hot Work Permit is completed.
- To ensure that the appropriate statutory licences are applied for and renewed where necessary
- Proactively monitor waste and waste storage ensuring it is stored away from buildings and within designated containers

4.5 To ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order the Deans/Directors/Heads will be responsible for;

- Ensuring that any recommendations from risk assessment reviews, applicable to area of responsibility, are carried out diligently

- Ensuring that all staff receive fire safety training on induction and at regular intervals thereafter
- Ensuring that adequate records are maintained in relation to;
  - Storage and use of dangerous substances (DSEAR & COSHH)
  - Electrical portable appliance tests
  - Staff fire safety training
- Ensuring that all works undertaken by contractors, relevant to areas of responsibility, are supervised and where “hot works” are to be carried out, that a Hot Work Permit is completed
- To liaise with the Health and Safety Adviser on all relevant matters likely to impact on the fire safety provision for the relevant premise

4.6 To ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order the Health and Safety Adviser will;

- Support the Deans/Directors/Heads to meet, deliver and maintain statutory fire safety obligations
- Ensure initial Fire Risk Assessments are carried out for all new premises as soon as is practicable
- Review all fire safety risk assessments annually
- Ensure a Fire Marshal training programme is provided as required
- Provide a programme for staff fire safety training
- Provide liaison and support on all matters relating to fire safety provision within the University estates
- Liaise with Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service on all statutory fire safety matters
- Ensure all fire incidents are investigated and monitor all calls to the Fire and Rescue Service
- Carry out regular audits and inspections of all University buildings and report on any deficiencies in fire safety arrangements
- Carry out regular fire evacuation drills
- Ensure that in a situation requiring the attendance of the Fire and Rescue Service, adequate information is available to prevent, so far as reasonably practicable, exposure to risks to their Health and Safety
- Assist in the development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) to aid the evacuation of those persons requiring additional evacuation support

4.7 In some of the larger or more complex University buildings fire evacuation can be achieved more easily with the support of a team of staff who are routinely familiar with the building. In such premises Fire Marshal Teams chosen from staff who occupy the building can be best utilised to support safe and efficient evacuation procedures.

These individuals will provide assistance and support to the Evacuation Team. Fire Marshal training is provided by the Health and Safety Team and Fire Marshal Duties include;

- To be familiar with all exit routes from the building in which they normally work

- To advise others on exit routes
- Drawing the attention of the Health and Safety Team to any deficiency or obstruction on the means of escape routes
- Instruct occupants of the area in which they find themselves to vacate the building pausing only to make any equipment safe
- Instruct those outside the building to clear the building entrance and to congregate at the recognised Fire Assembly Points
- Prevent people from re-entering the building until so instructed by a member of the Evacuation Team
- Reporting any incidences of non-compliance to a member of the Health and Safety Team

4.8 Staff, students, contractors and visitors have a responsibility to comply with the Fire Safety Policy. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Observing all instructions, information and training intended to secure fire safety
- Co-operating with the University on all matters relevant to fire safety
- Evacuating buildings promptly upon continuous activation of the fire alarm
- Not interfering with any building fabric or equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety
- Reporting any obvious defects or short-comings in University fire safety provision, arrangements or procedures
- Complying with the conditions of any lease agreement for rented accommodation

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy could result in disciplinary action being taken.

4.9 All employees, students, contractors and visitors are expected to follow established safety procedures to ensure the safe use of electrical/gas appliances, the safe use, storage and disposal of hazardous/combustible materials and compliance with the requirements of the University's [No Smoking Policy](#).

4.10 Where contractors are on site it will be the duty of the Campus Services Project Manager or relevant person with the responsibility for the works undertaken by them, to ensure the appropriate level of fire safety provision is incorporated within any work schedule, contract agreement or risk assessment and where such works are likely to impact on the existing fire safety provision notification must be communicated to the Health and Safety Team for consideration. Where any work requires the application of a naked flame or mechanically induced heat source a "Hot Work Permit" must be acquired and agreed prior to the commencement of such works. Information on the mandatory fire safety requirements applicable to contractors including the University procedure for hot work is included in the Department of Campus Services Health and Safety Rules and Conditions for Contractors.

4.11 University visitors must be provided with [Health and Safety Information for Conference Delegates and Visitors](#), this document provides Health and Safety information including what to do in the event of a fire evacuation. To assist those people who may be unfamiliar with the layout of a building appropriate fire exit, fire action and fire assembly point signage and information is provided in all University buildings.

## 5. Evacuation Procedures

5.1 The University [Fire Evacuation Procedures](#) prohibit the use of lifts during a fire or an alarm activation. Lifts are interfaced with the fire alarm system and will return to the ground floor of the building in the event of a fire alarm activation.

5.2 The majority of University buildings have refuge areas incorporated within a protected enclosure that is fire resistant between 30 and 60 minutes. Refuge areas have a clear means of communication between the designated refuge area and another person in a safe zone, often the Security Control Room. These areas can be utilised for persons with a physical, cognitive or sensory impairment that prevents them from evacuating a building without assistance.

5.3 It is the responsibility of the University to ensure the safe evacuation of persons with a physical, cognitive or sensory impairment is carried out diligently. The University has a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans \(PEEP\) procedure](#) in place in order to meet this requirement. Where any person requires assistance to evacuate any University building during an emergency a PEEP application will be required. Students or staff, who may require assistance to evacuate, should in the first instance complete the 'Initial emergency egress questionnaire for staff and students' so that any necessary individual arrangements can be put in place. Local managers should consider the arrangements that may be required to assist visitors with physical impairments in their area where evacuation becomes necessary. Evacuation chairs are available and training in their application and use may be coordinated through the Health and Safety Team on request.

5.4 In consultation with the schools and departments the Health and Safety Team will ensure that fire evacuation drills are carried out for all University buildings, including residences, each year, during semesters and when the buildings are occupied. It is accepted that drills should be avoided during times, such as exams and conferences, however, consideration will be given to ensuring advantage is taken of peak occupancy times and ensure that all fire exits are utilised.

The drills will monitor the effectiveness of the local evacuation procedures and, where necessary, identify required changes. The Health and Safety Team will time the evacuation and compare the time to a previously determined acceptable time for the particular building, based on national standards and accepted good practice. In cases where the evacuation takes

longer than the expected time, a second drill may be carried out at a later date.

## **6. Fire Safety Training**

6.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order requires an employer to ensure that employees are provided with adequate fire safety training. To comply with this statutory requirement Teesside University shall ensure that all employees receive appropriate fire safety training and all new employees receive fire safety training as soon as is practicable after commencement of employment. Staff Health and Safety induction information, including relevant fire safety is included as part of the staff central induction process. This information is also available on the Health and Safety web pages. Where young persons (under the age of 18) are employed individual capability must be considered when assessing work based tasks and the impact this may have on fire safety arrangements.

6.2 All new employees must to be informed of the fire safety provisions that are relevant to the workplace. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are made to ensure new employees are advised of the following;

- Fire evacuation arrangements
- The Fire Safety Policy
- Means of escape within the premise
- Location of fire exits
- Location of firefighting equipment
- Details in relation to relevant findings of the fire risk assessments and dangerous substances
- On line / E-Learning fire safety training

The University's E-Learning fire safety training course is available to access via the Health and Safety webpage. All staff are required to access the on-line facility and complete the course on minimum 3 yearly basis, staff can access the course as often as they wish, however, the assessment must be completed by all staff at least once every 3 years. The on-line course lasts for approximately 40 minutes and includes the following topics;

- General fire safety awareness
- Means of escape
- Fire extinguisher awareness
- Relevant fire safety risk assessments
- Raising the alarm and personal safety

6.3 Fire Marshal Training will be provided as and when deemed necessary. Consideration will be given to the building occupancy and risk profile, the maximum period for refresher training for should not exceed 3 years. The training will include safe evacuation and zone clearance procedures as well as detailed fire safety guidance.

## **7. Fire Safety Provision Procedures and Guidelines**

7.1 Fire Safety Risk Assessments are required for all University owned buildings, including student residential accommodation, to ensure a methodical and structured approach is applied to assessing the suitability and effectiveness of the fire safety provisions applicable to a relevant premise and the fire hazards within. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order places a statutory duty on employers to carry out an assessment of the workplace for the purpose of identifying any risks to the safety of the employees, students, visitors and others in respect of harm caused by fire. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, details the arrangements that are required to meet this obligation. Fire Safety risk assessments are undertaken by competent persons in the University Health and Safety Team, with assistance as required by the schools and departments.

7.2 Fire Safety Risk Assessments are reviewed on an annual basis by the Health and Safety Team. Additionally, risk assessments will be reviewed whenever any material changes are likely to impact on the fire safety provision or following a fire incident.

7.3 Where necessary a report will be produced with specific recommendations for the improvement of fire safety provision within the relevant premises concerned. These may include actions required to be undertaken by schools/departments occupying the building (eg; improving housekeeping) as well as actions which will be the responsibility of the Director of Campus Services (eg; work to the fabric of the building, signage etc.). Risk assessment findings will be forwarded to the appropriate Departmental Safety Officers and Director of Campus Services. A copy of the fire risk assessment for every building will be held by the Health and Safety Team.

7.4 The impact of dangerous substances when exposed to fire can create a hostile and unpredictable environment. Where such substances are stored and used within the University particular attention should be given to the safe use and storage guidance supplied with the substance's Safety Data Sheet. Students and employees should only be exposed to dangerous substances in an appropriately controlled and supervised environment.

7.5 Where in the opinion of any student or member of staff a dangerous condition exists, that is likely or has the potential to compromise the safety of any person in the event of fire the condition should be brought to the attention of the Health and Safety Team, using a Health and Safety Report Form. In the first instance, the Health and Safety Team will investigate the concerns and where necessary implement the appropriate means to negate the risk, or contact colleagues from Campus Services to seek assistance.

7.6 In the event of a fire or an alarm activation an Incident Report Form will be submitted by the Security Team (Campus Services). This process enables the Health and Safety Team to be aware of all incidents where the Local

Authority Fire and Rescue Service has been summoned to the University Estate, but more importantly allows for investigations to be carried out where necessary.

7.7 The Evacuation Team will investigate the cause of the alarm activation to avoid unnecessary calls being made to the Fire and Rescue Service. Whilst the Evacuation Team are sufficiently trained, they must not put themselves at risk. A dynamic, on-the-spot risk assessment should be made and the Evacuation Team may only re-enter or stay in a building, if there is no indication of fire. The Evacuation Team procedure is as follows:

- 1) Verify that no reported signs of fire have been reported to Fire Marshals or Campus Services
- 2) Check the fire alarm panel to identify which sensor or call point has been activated
- 3) Proceed to the sensor/device indicated, being vigilant for any sign of fire or smoke. Any indication of fire, such as smell or sight of smoke or flames, must be taken as a signal to leave the building immediately and to notify Security, requesting the attendance of the Fire and Rescue Service
- 4) On reaching the activated sensor/device take note of any reason for the fire alarm activation
- 5) Leave the building and report their findings back to Security Control
- 6) Silence and reset the fire alarm before inviting people to reoccupy the building

7.8 False Alarm Activations are activations of the Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) that are caused by any effect other than fire. These signals have a negative effect and can encourage complacency, as well as eroding user confidence. Actions will be taken wherever possible to reduce false alarm activations whilst recognising the importance of fire detection systems in protecting staff, students, visitors and the build environment from the effects of fire.

7.9 Fire Action Signs are located at various points within University buildings detailing relevant information to assist evacuations. Each notice will clearly indicate the following;

- The location of the assembly point
- Simple guidance on actions to be taken

7.10 All of the University's premises have a number of fire safety provisions incorporated within them. These provisions are often referred to as either an active provision, examples of which can be fire safety systems and smoke extraction, or a passive provision, examples of which can be fire doors with smoke seals and intumescent strips. Irrespective of the provision it is

necessary to recognise the importance of such features and ensure that their function is not compromised, as to do so will ultimately impact on the safety of building occupiers and the integrity of the building itself.

7.11 Fire doors are designed to restrict the spread of fire for a specific time period and will feature a self-closing device, smoke seals and intumescent strips. All fire doors are marked as a fire door and should be kept closed at all times. The use of wedges and other items as hold open devices is not permitted within any of the University's premises and must be positively discouraged. The use of electromagnetic hold open devices on fire doors may be considered in some instances. Following full consultation with the University Health and Safety Team to ensure there is no impact on fire safety provision.

7.12 Means of escape routes are indicated by fire exit signage. To ensure exit routes are not compromised, the University Health and Safety Team provide '[Guidance on Fire Escape Routes and Permitted Furniture and Equipment](#)' that must be followed. All means of escape routes must be sterile areas, free from any obstruction and all final exit doors must be easily and immediately openable in the direction of travel. Additionally, the surface finish to wall linings within stair enclosures and protected routes should be maintained free from any form of combustible wall decorations. Notice boards can be acceptable in such areas but must have a Class '0' surface flame spread and be effectively managed.

Items that may be a source of fuel or an ignition source should not be located within escape routes, such items include; portable heaters, upholstered furniture, coat racks, vending machines, gas pipes and meters, photocopiers and other electrical equipment, seasonal decorations and display or exhibition material.

7.13 All University Buildings have a fire warning system that is designed to provide an audible alarm. Methods of alarm activation include AFD a manual alarm call points. AFD is provided in all University buildings and is automatically activated by the detection of smoke and/or heat. Manual alarm call points are situated in exit routes and at final exits. Where fire is known or suspected, the alarm should be raised immediately utilising a manual alarm call point (break glass point). On hearing an alarm all occupants of a premise must evacuate the building by the nearest available exit and assemble at the nearest fire assembly point, with the exception of members of the evacuation team or those with specific PEEP. Visual warning devices are incorporated within all new fire warning systems to assist in warning people with hearing impairments, however, some older buildings do not offer this facility. However, people with hearing impairments can be provided with a Deaf alerter pager to inform them of a fire alarm activation. Deaf alerter systems are provided in all University teaching and office accommodation.

7.14 Firefighting equipment is provided within fire exit routes and may be placed adjacent to some specific risks, such as computer server rooms, laboratories and electrical transformers. The extinguishers are provided for use by trained competent persons but should only be used when it is safe to

do so without compromising personal safety. Under no circumstances should a fire extinguisher be used without first raising the alarm. All employees are instructed to familiarise themselves with the location of extinguishers provided within their area(s) and the fire classification that may influence their limitations of use.

All firefighting equipment must be kept free from obstruction and be readily available for use in an emergency. Portable firefighting equipment must not be removed or repositioned without permission from the Health and Safety Team.

Where any firefighting equipment has been used or is deemed unsatisfactory, the Health and Safety Team should be advised to facilitate replacement or investigation as necessary.

7.15 Where any structural or material alterations are carried out that are likely to impact on the fire safety provision it will be the duty of the Project Manager appointed to ensure that a copy of the proposal is made available to the Health and Safety Team. Thereafter, it will be incumbent on the Health and Safety Team to ensure that a review, if deemed necessary, of the Fire Safety Risk Assessment is carried out. It is also prudent to ensure the Health and Safety Team are included at an early stage of correspondence in regard to any proposed material changes/alterations to any of the University's premises. It should be noted that no work may be carried out on the fabric or structure of any University building without authorisation from the Director of Campus Services or their Deputy.

7.16 A full inspection of fire precautions will be carried out by a member of the Health and Safety Team prior to any re-furnished area being re-occupied, this will include:

- Fire compartmentation
- Fire stopping
- Fire door installations
- Automatic fire detection – cause and effect
- Sounder level checks
- Emergency lighting requirements
- Portable fire extinguisher requirements
- All fire safety signage
- Formal Records and Handover

7.17 External waste containers, refuse bins and skips are a potential fire hazard and when they are placed in close proximity to a building, the potential for fire to spread is a reasonably foreseeable hazard. To ensure this risk is eliminated all such receptacles must be placed a minimum of 5m from any building. In all cases no waste containers should be placed directly adjacent to or below any window, door or other openings of a building. Where, due to operational reasons, a waste skip has to be placed within 5m of a building, it must be of the lockable type and sited with the access doors facing away from the building.

## 8. Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals & Prohibitions

Unwanted fire alarm signals are activations of the fire alarm system that are activated by any effect other than fire. These signals ultimately have a negative effect on the University's core business and also encourage complacency, as well as eroding user confidence. It is the intent of the University to strive towards zero unwanted fire alarm signals whilst recognising the importance of Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) systems in protecting staff, students, visitors and the University Estate from the effects of fire. In pursuance of this goal the University prohibits the use of the following items in all areas other than specialist teaching spaces, kitchens, kitchenettes, catering facilities and tea points.

- Toasters
- Microwaves
- Kettles
- Candles (Prohibited in all areas)
- Any other electrical appliance that could be reasonably expected to cause and accidental activation of the Automatic Fire Detection (AFD)

Should you require an exemption to these arrangements this must be formally requested in writing and approved by the University's Health and Safety Manager.

## 9. Related Documents

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Building Regulations 2000
- The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- [No Smoking Policy](#)
- [Health and Safety Information for Conference Delegates and Visitors](#)
- [Fire Evacuation Procedures](#)
- Health and Safety Rules and Conditions for Contractors
- [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans \(PEEP\) procedure](#)
- [Guidance on Fire Escape Routes and Permitted Furniture and Equipment](#)