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Fire safety and evacuation procedure

1. Procedure statement

This procedure forms part of the health and safety policy

We will comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety Act 2021 along with all other current fire safety legislation and standards.

We will ensure that:

- adequate means of escape in case of fire exist for anyone on our property;
- all means of escape are properly maintained, always kept free from obstruction and available for safe and effective use;
- the means of escape have adequate emergency lighting (in case of fire) which will be maintained in efficient working order;
- adequate means of giving warning in case of fire exist and are maintained in efficient working order;
- adequate means for fighting fire are present and are maintained in efficient working order;
- appropriate instruction will be given to anyone on our premises on evacuation procedures;
- effective management procedures are in place to respond to and deal with the aftermath of a fire;
- appropriate fire training is given to designated staff who have an active role in the implementation of fire precautions;
- measures are taken to protect buildings, installations and equipment from fire that are commensurate with the risks and are appropriate to the importance of those assets.

2. Scope

Fire can have a devastating effect in terms of both loss of life and damage to property. The objectives of this procedure are:

- to safeguard from death or injury anyone on property owned or managed by us, in the event of fire or associated explosion.
- to minimise the risk of fire and to limit the spread of fire.
- to minimise the potential for fire to disrupt accommodation services and support, damage buildings and equipment and harm the environment.

This policy applies to all persons on our premises and, in particular, to staff and managers who have a duty placed upon them to actively monitor the implementation of this procedure.

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3. Fire risk assessments

Fire risk assessments will be carried out at all premises owned or occupied by us in compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Fire Safety Act 2021 and all other current and relevant fire safety legislation and standards.

To safeguard our clients, staff and visitors and to minimise the risk of fire, where we own the building, it is our procedure that the assessment will be carried out annually or when there's been a fire related incident or after any significant change that may affect the fire risk. All remedial works and/or management actions detailed in the action plan must be completed within the designated period.

Where we lease buildings, or provide support, the landlord may choose to carry out the assessment less frequently, in some instances bi-annually or greater. Where we occupy such buildings, we will report any issues and in the event of any remedial works that are either structural or, due to the lease conditions are the responsibility of the landlord, we will work closely with the landlord to ensure these are resolved at the earliest opportunity.

During the fire risk assessment, the assessor will also review and update the site fire evacuation plan. The updated plan will be held on site with the fire emergency documents and will be reviewed by the manager after each fire drill or emergency evacuation.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Asset manager's responsibilities

The asset manager is responsible for:

- ensuring that the procedure is implemented throughout the organisation
- ensuring that incidents of fire are investigated
- ensuring that the appropriate resources are available to enable managers to ensure that staff are trained as necessary
- ensuring that fire risk assessment is maintained for all of our premises in relation to fire prevention, building structure and means of escape
- ensuring that surveys are carried out to fire doors and compartmentation, the data is held securely, and planned programmes are implemented to resolve the defects identified in the surveys.

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4.2. Managers' responsibilities

Managers will ensure that:

- all staff are made aware of the procedure and the processes are implemented to reduce the likelihood of fire
- all staff, clients and contractors are made aware of fire safety and evacuation provisions
- the appropriate induction, core and refresher training in the prevention of fires is undertaken by all staff
- all fixed and portable fire safety and firefighting equipment is maintained in good working order. This includes extinguishers, fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, and the correct use and structural integrity of fire doors
- fire risk assessments and fire safety procedures are maintained for services under their direct control. A list of documents to be held for fire safety is shown in appendix one. The schedule of tasks to be carried out and the frequencies of those tasks is shown in appendix two.
- the appropriate fire safety signs are posted
- the asset manager is informed immediately in the event of any fire inspection
- weekly, monthly, biannual and annual fire checks will be completed and recorded in the fire logbook or the central health and safety spreadsheet
- the site emergency pack has all the required documents and is kept up to date. A list of documents to be held in the pack is shown in appendix three.

4.3. Staff responsibilities

Staff have a duty to ensure the following:

- staff must comply with all instructions given to them regarding fire safety and any other fire procedures as required by supplementary codes of practice. Failure to comply with such instructions may lead to disciplinary action being taken;
- staff must report any observed shortcomings in fire precautions to their manager.

4.4. Contractors

Contractors working on behalf of, or on property owned or occupied by us, must comply with our Fire Safety procedure and obey all instruction given to them regarding fire safety by our authorised staff. They must also ensure that all personnel for whom they are responsible are adequately trained and instructed in fire safety procedures and arrangements.

Contractors must liaise with the asset manager and complete a hot works permit if hot works are planned.

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4.5. Clients and visitors

Clients and visitors must comply with all instructions given to them regarding fire safety by our authorised staff.

Clients and visitors must receive sufficient, appropriate fire safety instruction when coming onto our premises.

If any client or visitor has a known history of behaviours which may increase the risk of fire (for example previous fire setting, previous history of barricading, medical conditions or medications that impact potential evacuation), a person centred fire risk assessment (PCFRA) must be carried out, and the appropriate controls put in place, before they are allowed in to the service or when their behaviours increase the risk of fire.

5. Fire wardens

As part of the evacuation procedures, our services should employ nominated staff as fire wardens. The role of the fire warden is to check that full evacuation has taken place in the event of a fire and to check that everyone answers to a roll call at the fire assembly point.

Fire wardens should be trained in how to carry out their role. They should be given some means of identification in the event of an evacuation, such as a brightly coloured tabard. Managers should make sure that any absence of a nominated fire warden, due to sick leave; holiday etc. is covered by another responsible trained person.

The number of trained fire wardens required for a building will be specified in the fire evacuation plan. For some buildings it may be determined that all staff require the training.

6. Fire alarms

The risk assessment will determine what fire precautions are required for each particular building. For example, in a large hostel an automatic fire detection and alarm system may be required; in a smaller individual flats it may be sufficient for clients or staff to manually raise the alarm.

The aim of a fire alarm is to alert anyone in the workplace that there is a fire, to allow them time to escape from the building before there is a risk to their life.

The fire alarm must be tested weekly to identify any faults and ensure that it is operating correctly. This would normally be completed at the same time each week. New staff should be made aware of what the fire alarm sounds like and when the fire alarm test takes place. A record of the fire alarm test must be updated in the site fire logbook.

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7. Fire escape routes

The purpose of an escape route is to allow people to evacuate the workplace in the event of a fire. Fire escape routes are protected zones (i.e. they are well protected to prevent the passage of fire into these routes for as long as possible to allow people to escape).

Fire escape routes will be protected by fire doors, and fire-resisting walls, floors and ceilings. It is essential that fire exit doors are kept shut to prevent the passage of fire into these areas, and that no combustible materials (e.g. paper, cardboard, etc.) are stored in escape routes as they will provide fuel to the fire.

Fire escape routes should be kept clear of obstructions on both sides of the escape route doors to allow safe passage to all of the building occupants.

Escape routes should always lead persons to a safe place outside of the building.

8. Fire safety signs

Fire safety signs should be provided to identify the fire action procedure, the evacuation route, assembly points and the location of fire extinguishers.

Fire action notices should be displayed by each fire alarm call point and give guidance on what to do in the event of a fire occurring. They should state what to do if a fire is discovered, what to do if the fire alarm is sounded, and give the location of the fire assembly point to which people must report. The notices should be clear to staff, clients and visitors.

Fire exit directional signs must be provided to direct people to the nearest fire escape route and to mark the fire escape route itself.

Signs must also be provided to show the location of firefighting equipment (e.g. fire hoses, fire extinguishers). These must be displayed beside the equipment and must show what types of fires the equipment can be used on.

All signs must comply with the Health and Safety (safety signs and signals) Regulations 1996 in that they must have a pictorial reference and be in prescribed colours.

9. Fire extinguishers

The fire risk assessment will determine the number and type of fire extinguishers required for the workplace and where they should be located.

There are different fire extinguishers available for different types of fires. Signs displayed above the extinguisher must clearly state what that extinguisher should be used for.

It is essential that any staff who uses a fire extinguisher is trained in how to use one correctly. Staff must be aware that they should only use an extinguisher where they can do so safely without endangering themselves or others.

Fire extinguishers should be wall-mounted or mounted on stands to prevent them being damaged. They should not be used to prop doors open. Extinguishers should be regularly

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checked to ensure that they are in good working order. Each year the extinguishers should be serviced by an approved contractor.

10. Fire Doors

The Fire Safety Act 2021 requires that all fire doors are inspected by a qualified surveyor and that a register of all defects is completed and held by the landlord. Two Saints will arrange for repairs to be carried out on a risk-based approach, as part of the planned maintenance programme. Any door set that cannot be repaired to a safe standard, will be replaced as part of the repair programme. An investment programme is in place programme is in place for door replacement where required.

11. Fire evacuation

Staff must be aware of the evacuation procedure for their workplace in the event of a fire.

For larger sites, in the event of an evacuation, one of the fire wardens must take the lead as coordinating fire warden, ensuring the location of the alleged fire is checked and the fire is confirmed, all areas are evacuated, and a roll call is carried out for everyone assembled at the muster point.

All staff must be informed of the evacuation routes, how to open fire escape doors (including the use of any emergency fastenings), the designated fire assembly points and the need to report to the fire warden on arrival at the assembly point. They must be informed of who the fire wardens are and how they can be identified (i.e. by wearing of high-visibility jackets, etc.).

Staff must be made aware that they should not use lifts, where these are present, in the event of a fire. These rely on electrical power for operation and so may fail at any time.

Staff with disabilities and clients or those with special needs (deaf, blind, or mobility-impaired) will need to be considered so they can be safely evacuated from the building. Such staff should be made aware of the evacuation procedures specific to them. A personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP)e must be carried out for everyone who will need support during an evacuation and a list of everyone needing support held with the fire emergency documents. The template for person centred fire risk assessments is included as appendix four.

12. Raising the alarm

Should a staff member discover a fire, they must be aware that they should raise the alarm by activating the nearest fire alarm call point. In smaller services where the fire risk assessment has established that a fire alarm is not necessary, the new staff member must be trained in how to inform colleagues and clients of the presence of a fire (i.e. by shouting 'Fire', ringing a bell, etc.). The person discovering the fire must call emergency services straight away.

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On hearing the alarm

Staff must be advised of the procedure they should take if the alarm is raised:

- Leave the building by the nearest exit
- Report to the assembly point immediately
- DO NOT stop to collect personal belongings
- DO NOT re-enter until it is safe to do so
- DO NOT use lifts or escalators

13. Fire alarm activation at unstaffed sites

In the event that a fire alarm is activated at an unstaffed site, the clients will contact an assigned on-call staffed site for instructions on how to reset the alarm panel and stop the alarm if no evidence of a fire exists.

The on-call staff member will talk through the resetting process and will also ask the client to do a virtual risk assessment to find if there is a genuine fire, by the following process;

- Ask; can you smell smoke, see flames, are people evacuating. If it appears to be a false alarm, the panel will be reset.
- If the panel immediately re-activates, it will be reset for a second time.
- If it is a real fire or if the panel reactivates for a third time, the on-call staff member will end the call with the client and make a 999 call to the fire brigade.
- A member of Two Saints staff will be sent to the service to ensure any emergency arrangements are put in place as a result of the incident.

14. Fire drills

To ensure that training in fire evacuation procedures has been effective and to refresh the minds of staff on the fire evacuation procedure, it should be regularly practiced. For most services, fire drills should be carried out every six months.

15. Procedure review

This procedure will be reviewed at least every three years by the asset manager or whenever relevant legislation changes.

16. Links to other policies

- [HS 001 Health and safety policy statement](#)
- [HS 002 Health and safety manual](#)