

Northern Ireland



Fire Safety Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the principles and arrangements on which the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) base their commitment to fire safety and should be read in conjunction with other policies eg health and safety; security; incident reporting.

The Department of Health Fire code suite of documents is the point of reference for all matters appertaining to fire safety within the Agency (see Appendix 1).

Policy Influences

This policy is influenced by:

- Department of Health Fire Code
- The Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 as amended 1993
- The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001
- The Health and Safety at Work Order 1978
- Health and Safety Policy

Policies Impacted

Changes to this policy may have an impact on the following:

- Health and Safety Policy

Policy

1. ACCOUNTABILITY

1.1 The Agency Board through the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Agency's fire safety policy and Fire Code guidance. The Agency shall endeavour to work towards the following objectives:

- Comply with relevant fire safety legislation
- Provide for the setting and achievement of fire objectives and targets for the organisation
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate information, instruction and training
- Make the fire safety policy widely accessible by inclusion in the staff handbook and intranet
- Facilitate communication with all stakeholders regarding the Agency's fire safety policy and associated objectives, targets and performance against these.

1.2 The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility and accountability for fire safety and will ensure that, through effective policies and procedures, NIMDTA is compliant with all legal and statutory responsibilities and directives issued by the DHSSPS.

1.3 The Administrative Director is the appointed Executive Director with special responsibility for fire safety arrangements and is responsible for ensuring that.

- the Agency's procedures for fire safety compliance (new build and alteration) is adhered to (see Appendix 5).
- A regular testing and checking programme is in place for all fire extinguishing and detection appliances systems.

- Fire fighting equipment is serviced annually by the Fire Safety Unit, Properties Division, Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).
- Professional fire safety advice is available from the Fire Safety Unit of DFP.
- Risk assessments are undertaken and action is taken to minimise the risks identified
- Relevant information is shared with the Health and Safety Committee

1.4 This authority is further delegated to the Human Resources Manager who is the nominated Fire Officer and is responsible for ensuring that:

- Staff are compliant with this policy and are trained to carry out the duties associated with fire safety management
- Guidance is issued to staff with regard to the Agency's fire safety arrangements
- Incident reporting and investigation procedures are carried out where appropriate
- An up-to-date library of fire safety legislation is maintained
- Training is recorded in the Fire Training Register (Appendix 7)

1.5 All Senior Managers shall ensure that:

- staff and others that work within their department are aware of, and understand the Agency's fire safety policy and procedures (Appendix 2 and 3).
- A copy of the evacuation procedure is located in the department and made accessible to staff.

1.6 Each member of staff has a personal responsibility for ensuring adherence to fire safety procedures. Staff should:

- be familiar with the policies and procedures relating to fire safety
- report any breach of fire safety regulations to their line manager and take corrective action where possible
- assist with completion of the adverse incident report form in accordance with NIMDTA's procedure for recording and reporting incidents

1.7 The Health and Safety Committee will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Agency's fire safety arrangements.

2. COMMUNICATION OF THE FIRE SAFETY POLICY

2.1 The policy is available on the Agency's intranet and a dedicated fire safety section is included in the Staff Handbook. Any health and safety issues raised will be communicated to staff via email and posted on the staff notice board.

2.2 Relevant information is also available in the HR Department and the HR Manager is available for help and guidance on fire safety issues. Team Leaders are tasked with passing on relevant information to their staff and act on any feedback that may arise from this communication.

2.3 All new employees will be inducted on fire safety matters in accordance with Agency procedures

3. MONITORING AND REVIEW

3.1 The Director with responsibility for health and safety will make an annual report to the Board and will ensure that fire safety matters are considered at appropriate Board meetings held throughout the year.

3.2 A Fire Safety Risk assessment will be conducted on an annual basis by the Fire Safety Unit Properties Division (DFP). A report will be

produced at the end of the inspection and managers and staff will be expected to action the points raised. The Administrative Director will report findings of the risk assessment and the resulting action plans to the Agency Board.

- 3.3 The Health and Safety Committee will be responsible for dealing with all health and safety issues, including fire safety, and will play a significant role in monitoring and reviewing all aspects of the system. The Health and Safety Committee will be responsible for ensuring that systems are in place for the identification and delivery of fire safety training needs and will ensure that the health and safety of staff is subject to regular review.
- 3.4 The Health and Safety Committee will report directly to the Audit Committee. The terms of reference are attached in Appendix 5.
- 3.5 Any fire safety risks will be recorded in the Agency's Risk Register
- 3.6 This policy will be reviewed every two years and will be revised in line with changes to legislation or Departmental policy.

APPENDIX 1

FIRECODE PUBLICATIONS

Fire code

Policy and Principles, 1994.

Director of Fire Documents, 1987.

Nucleus Fire Precautions Recommendations, 1989.

APPENDIX 2

FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

Each premise which Agency staff occupy, must have a clearly defined Fire Safety Procedure. This procedure shall document the following:

- Fire alarm procedures for:
 - Actions on finding or suspecting a fire;
 - Actions on hearing the fire alarm.

- How and where to evacuate the department (for guidelines see Appendix 3).

- The location and types of fire fighting equipment.

- Produce A4/A3 plan showing:
 - Fire equipment;
 - Break glass call points;
 - Smoke/heat detectors;
 - Fire compartments;
 - Fire escape doors;
 - Fire bells/sounders.

- Any other relevant information regarding the department.

IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

In the event of a fire it is imperative that all staff know how to respond promptly and effectively to a fire situation.

On discovering a fire the following action should be taken:

- Raise the alarm (nearest breakglass point). Evacuate the immediate danger area and continue evacuation as required under the direction of the Fire Safety Officer and the nominated deputies (see Appendix 4).
Fight the fire only if it is safe to do so using the appliances provided
- On hearing the fire alarm staff should leave their desk immediately and proceed to the nearest exit route. Staff should not take any of their personal possessions and should assemble in the lower car park. Continue evacuation of the premises as required under the direction of the Fire Safety Officer and the nominated deputies.
- The Fire Safety Officer must ensure that any disabled member of staff or visitor to the premises is assisted in evacuating the premises

Escape Routes

The 2 Escape routes (at main entrance door and back door beside hospital training open plan section) are well sign-posted and will be kept clear at all times.

Fire Fighting Equipment

The following fire fighting equipment is located on the premises:

Back wall at hospital training open plan section

- CO2 and water extinguishers
- Break glass

Opposite Dental Training Co-Ordinator's Office

- CO2 and water extinguishers
- Break glass

Kitchen

- Fire Blanket

Opposite store room

- CO2 and water extinguishers
- Break glass

Entrance porch

- CO2 and water extinguishers
- Break glass

Outside disabled toilet

- CO2 and water extinguishers
- Break glass

Action required at a Fire Drill

The effectiveness of emergency procedures for dealing with a fire incident must be tested by means of practical fire drills. A fire drill will be carried out on an annual basis.

On hearing the fire alarm staff should leave their desk immediately and proceed to the nearest exit route. Staff should not take any of their personal possessions and should assemble in the lower car park.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Attention to “good housekeeping” practices can greatly reduce the likelihood of fire.

Some good housekeeping practices which should be observed are;

- Avoid the use of highly flammable liquids and materials where possible
- Orderly stacking in paper stores to reduce the risk of fire spread and assist fire fighting
- Storage of equipment and packages in designated areas only – not in corridors or switchrooms
- Regular checks for the accumulation of rubbish – waste and unauthorised storage must be dealt with promptly
- collection, storage and disposal of waste undertaken on a regular basis.
- Regular cleaning of workplaces and equipment to avoid the accumulation of dust etc
- Correct storage of cleaning materials and rags in non-combustible containers after use
- Checking for possible sources of fire on leaving the workplace ie unnecessary electrical equipment left on
- Faulty electrical equipment to be reported to the Administrative Director
- Unauthorised staff do not attempt to repair any electrical equipment
- Personal electrical equipment is not to be used unless it has been checked

All fire doors must be kept shut

APPENDIX 3

EVACUATION CHECKLIST

- The primary aims of evacuation are:
 - to remove staff and others from immediate danger;
 - to keep the distance of any movement as short as possible;
 - to avoid routes which in the particular circumstances may need to be used by fireman and others involved in fire-fighting;
 - to take a roll-call. (be prepared – always have a dedicated clip board and pen immediately available).

- The knowledge which managers have of the physical constraints of the parts of the premises for which they are responsible, the capabilities of their staff are essential to the formulation of the evacuation plans.

- Plans will need to be reviewed and modified as necessary to take account of changed circumstances.
 - practice aspects of the escape plan regularly, and involve all members of staff.
 - Know how to deal with employees whose behaviour is likely to be obstructive during an evacuation.

APPENDIX 4

DELEGATION OF DUTIES

Director with special responsibility for fire safety.

- The Administrative Director is the appointed executive director with special responsibilities for fire safety, duties will include:
 - ensuring that the Agency's agreed programme of investment in fire safety are properly accounted for in the annual business plan;
 - To deliver an annual report of all safety matters to the Board;
 - To ensure that the requirements placed upon the Agency by the issue of a Fire Certificate under the 1971 Fire Precautions Act are complied with.

Nominated Officers [Fire]

- The Fire Safety Officer Ms Roisin Campbell shall:
 - supervise the effective day to day upkeep of the fire safety policy established for the premises;
 - ensure that all staff participate regularly in fire safety training drills;
 - be responsible for co-ordination and direction of staff actions in a serious fire, in accordance with the emergency plan;

- advising and assisting management of the interpretation and application of the provisions of legislation, Fire code and other guidance in respect of fire safety in NHS premises;
- advising Senior Management of their initial and continuing responsibilities in respect of their designated premises require fire certificates under the Fire Precautions Act 1971, and maintaining the necessary provisions following certification on behalf of Senior Management;
- involvement in fire safety audits and contributing to periodic authoritative reports to management about the state of fire precautions in their premises;
- involvement in the identification and assessment of fire risks in healthcare premises, using the techniques of Fire code: HTM 86 and assisting with reports to management recommending prioritised actions in respect of fire safety improvements;
- liaising with fire authorities in the Specification of fire precautions in new and existing premises (see Appendix 4);
- preparing training programmes for all staff employed in Agency premises, liaising with the Nominated Officer [Fire] in the organisation of fire drills and staff training, witnessing the effectiveness, or action when necessary, and arranging for accurate records of staff training and fire drills to be kept centrally, and at each workplace;
- managing and supervising adequate provision, sitting and effective maintenance of all first aid fire-fighting equipment, fire safety signs/notices etc;

- keeping accurate records of all fire incidents, investigating fires occurring in suspicious circumstances with local Fire and Police authorities;
- ensuring that the presence and activities of contractors working on site are reported and logged prior to the commencement of work and taking effective steps to ensure their activities do not subvert fire precautions in existing premises’;
- managing the work of assistant fire safety advisers and other fire prevention staff where necessary.

Deputy Nominated Officer [Fire]

- The Fire Safety Officer should have one or more appointed deputies to ensure that a responsible person is always available to assume the specified range of duties when the principal officer is absent. In the event of an emergency, one of these officers should be able to take command until the Fire Brigade arrives and to act as a focus for liaison purposes thereafter.
- Lyn Bickerstaff and Gillian Dennison will be the Deputy Nominated Officers.

APPENDIX 5

FIRE SAFETY COMPLIANCE (NEW BUILD & ALTERATIONS)

- The Agency requires that the specialist fire safety officer be consulted regarding all proposed building and structural alterations. Consultation must take place at the design stage and prior to seeking building control consent. Consultation shall take place in the following manner:

- Formal requests for approval, supplying full details of the scheme:

Two sets of drawings showing location of the scheme on a site plan.

Three sets of drawings showing the safety area as existing with room designations and existing fire safety features.

Three sets of drawing showing proposed scheme with room designations.

- The specialist fire safety officer shall respond within 15 working days from receipt of drawing.
- It is the responsibility of the fire safety officer to inform the County Fire Brigade of any alterations affecting Fire Certificates.
- Any variances relating to fire safety in the scheme requested by other bodies, shall be communicated to the fire safety adviser for consideration before acting upon.
- During construction the supervising officer shall inform the fire safety officer of the progress relating to fire safety requirements.

The supervising officer shall accompany the fire safety adviser to inspect fire safety elements at appropriate intervals throughout the contract.

- Upon completion of the scheme and before staff occupation, the supervising officer will inform the fire safety adviser arranging a date and time that they may inspect the completed work.

It is the responsibility of the supervising officer to ensure all fire safety requirements have been fulfilled.

APPENDIX 6

FIRE GROUP LEADERS

- It is the responsibility of the Agency to ensure fire group leaders are appointed within each department and that the appointment is registered with the Agency's fire safety officer.
- The fire group leader shall ensure that all staff within their remit attend at least one fire safety training session per annum.
- The fire group leader shall meet all new members of staff upon appointment and induct them regarding the following points:
 - Fire Procedures; explain fire action notices.
 - Assembly points; identify assembly points and explain the system for accounting for staff.
 - Fire Exit & Escape; identify all escape routes from the departments.
 - Fire Alarm Call Points & Sounders; identify all units in the department, and nearest outside the department, detail test days.
 - Fire Equipment; identify location of equipment, type and use.
 - Fire Doors; explain reason for fire doors/compartmentalisation.
 - Agency No Smoking Policy;
- Fire group leaders are required to attend specialist lectures/courses relating to their duties when directed.

APPENDIX 8

ARSON PREVENTION

Introduction

NHS Healthcare Fire Statistics 1994/5 (FPN 9) indicate that thirty percent of all hospital fires during that period were caused by arson.

Policy

The Agency will endeavour to prevent arson by good security and housekeeping and by training employees to be aware of its prevalence.

Arrangements

Existing arrangements in the Agency's Fire Safety Policy and the Security Policy will be relied upon to prevent and deal with arson.

These arrangements, how they relate to arson in particular, and who is responsible for the arrangements is set out below.

Responsibilities

The Agency shall provide facilities for the reporting and recording of arson.

The Agency shall provide suitable and sufficient staff training on all aspects of arson.

All employees have a responsibility in helping to prevent arson.

Employees noticing unauthorised persons in vulnerable areas of the Agency should report this to security immediately.

To reduce the risk of arson all line managers must ensure the security of their departments, when not in use.

All employees shall ensure that “good housekeeping” is practised throughout the Agency by:

- Storing combustible materials in designated places only – not in plant rooms, service voids, corridors or lobbies.
- Reporting all instances where combustible materials are found in vulnerable places, to either their line manager, Health & Safety Department or Security.
- Ensuring regular clearing of combustible waste takes place.

The fire safety officer in the event of a fire where the cause is considered doubtful will:

- Preserve any evidence and report their findings to the Senior Fire Brigade Officer present.
- Inform the Health & Safety Manager

Monitoring

There shall be annual reporting to the Board.

APPENDIX 9

FIRE DRILLS

Introduction

Policy and Principles (Fire code) requires that NHS buildings carry out a fire drill at a frequency of at least one per annum, this requirement also satisfies the Fire Precautions Act 1971, for premises with a Fire Certificate. Health Technical Memorandum 83 states that the effectiveness of emergency plans for fire and other aspects of fire safety must be tested by a fire drill. The drill should simulate conditions in which one of the escape routes have been blocked by fire or smoke. It also states that drills should not endanger those taking part.

Policy

It is policy that the Agency will carry out a minimum of one fire drill per annum.

Arrangements

Full evacuation drill.

- This drill will be designed to test all aspects of the appropriate fire plan. Full evacuation of the area will take place. It will comply with the requirements of the Fire Precautions Act.

Utilising actual fire calls: Fire procedures in some buildings require staff to evacuate the building when the fire alarm is operated. On the occasions that this occurs, it could be appropriate to use the alarm in lieu of a planned fire drill. In order for this option to be valid the following criteria must be observed:

- A report is produced, showing the date, time and duration of the drill
- The report will identify the way the drill was carried out
- A list of those staff that participated in the drill
- A copy of the report to be sent to the Health & Safety Manager, the original to be kept with the fire training register.

- Checklist for Fire Drills

Select team to organise and run the fire drill, this may be:

- Fire Group Leaders
- Line Managers
- Health & Safety Co-ordinators
- Doctors
- Health & Safety Department
- Security Manager

Meet with your team and agree:

- Type of drill
- Location
- Time, date
- How criteria of paragraph 5 will be met
- How evaluation of drill will be effected
- Appoint safety officers/evaluators

Inform Key people in writing of drill detail:

- Switchboard operator
- Local fire and rescue service

Day of the drill:

- Confirm notification of drill with local Fire & Rescue, switchboard and Security (1 hour before the drill)
- Check the team are available
- Execute the drill

- Conclude fire drill
 - Inform all parties mentioned in paragraph 3 that the drill has concluded
 - Debrief
- In any event whichever evacuation scenario is implemented the following criteria must be tested:
- Knowledge of Agency's Fire Policy
 - Knowledge of the department fire procedures
 - Knowledge of the fire alarm system
 - Staff evacuation technique's
 - Management of visitors etc
 - Knowledge of the fire fighting equipment

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Fire Safety Officer to ensure that there is a programme of fire drills in place.

Responsibility for the organisation, execution and safety of fire drills lies with the Fire Safety Officer.

Before a drill is carried out the responsible person must develop a plan of action. This plan will set out the criteria for enacting the drill taking into consideration the safety of staff, along with the designation of staff to monitor that the drill is carried out safely (see paragraph b).

Monitoring

The Health and Safety Committee shall review all aspects of fire (including fire drills) twice a year.

APPENDIX 10

Health and Safety Committee – Terms of Reference

The Health and Safety Committee is representative of both management and staff side and reports directly to the Audit Committee.

Composition and Membership

Dr Terry McMurray	Chief Executive
Miss Margot Roberts	Administrative Director
Miss Roisin Campbell	HR Manager (Fire Safety Officer)
Mrs Gillian Dennison	Fire Officer
Mrs Lyn Bickerstaff	Fire Officer

Terms of Reference

- To agree arrangements for devolving responsibility for health and safety, fire safety, environmental matters, waste management and security across the organisation
- To monitor the adequacy of health and safety communication and awareness to include fire safety, waste and environmental management, and security arrangements within the workplace
- To appraise the effectiveness of health and safety training to include fire safety, environmental awareness and waste management training
- To agree the arrangements for the identification and management of all health and safety risks
- To ensure that risk assessments in relation to all health and safety issues are completed and are reviewed at least annually
- To consider health and safety audit reports
- To produce an Annual Report for submission to the Board for the purpose of demonstrating improvements that have taken place

Policy Proforma

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