



**Barcombe    Hamsey    Plumpton**  
**Skylark Federation**  
**Fire Safety Policy**

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Signed .....Chair of Governors      Date .....

Signed ..... Executive Headteacher Date .....

# Fire Safety Policy



**Date:** April 2021

## Document summary

The County Council requires that departmental policies and procedures are in place to manage fire safety in all our premises; that fire risk assessments are carried out for each workplace, school, establishment, etc. and that mutual arrangements are made with those in joint occupancy.

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# Fire Safety Policy

## Key points

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to all workplaces and requires employers to carry out a fire risk assessment.
- A Fire Safety Audit may be carried out at any County Council building by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service who are the enforcing authority for this legislation and are likely to include a request to inspect the documentation referred to in Appendix 1.
- Fire Risk Assessments must be reviewed at least annually or sooner if there is any building alteration or change of occupation and use of the premises or following a fire incident/emergency, etc.
- Emergency Plans must be drawn up for each premises, which reflect the outcome of the fire risk assessments.
- Responsibilities in relation to this Policy fall on Chief Officers, Managers, Health and Safety Advisers, designated Responsible Persons, Controllers of Premises and employees.
- Copies of all the Health and Safety Policies can be found on the Intranet and Webshop.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy describes the arrangements for effectively managing fire safety so as to minimise the risk of fire occurring and, in the event of fire, to protect people and property.
- 1.2 Compliance with the Policy is crucial in the context of business continuity planning and risk management generally and to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 1.3 The responsibility for complying with the Order rests with the 'responsible person'. This is the employer or any other person who may have control of any part of the premises e.g. managers and Controllers of Premises.
- 1.4 The guidance contained in the Appendix 1 includes more detailed information on specific matters referred to in this policy.

## **2. Responsibilities**

### **2.1 Chief Officers will:**

- 2.1.1 ensure that this Policy and/or any departmental fire safety policies and procedures that complement this Policy are in place, properly implemented and reviewed;
- 2.1.2 ensure that a Responsible Person is appointed for all their premises to oversee and implement fire safety arrangements, and ensure that they are competent and appropriately trained to undertake their duties;
- 2.1.3 ensure that arrangements are in place for the completion of fire risk assessments, including, where appropriate, technical surveys in respect of fire protection;
- 2.1.4 ensure that fire, security, and health and safety arrangements at each premises are complementary.

### **2.2 Managers with responsibility for premises will:**

- 2.2.1 ensure that fire risk assessments are carried out for all their workplaces and for specific activities such as “hot” working involving welding, hot cutting, soldering, work with bitumen, burning off paintwork, using bonfires, etc. The ESCC Fire Officer can assist in the development and completion of fire risk assessments and evacuation plans for all premises;
- 2.2.2 ensure, in conjunction with the outcome of the fire risk assessment that the optimum number and type of fire extinguishers are installed in appropriate locations and that appropriate staff are trained to use them;
- 2.2.3 ensure that Fire Alarm and Detection Systems, Sprinkler Systems, Emergency Lighting and Fire Extinguishers are appropriately located and properly maintained;
- 2.2.4 ensure that a robust and effective Emergency Plan is in place at each location to safely evacuate all persons, whether employees, visitors, pupils or clients/service users. This Emergency Plan must take into account people with mobility, some sensory and some learning impairments, including those with temporary impairments, which will affect their ability to use stairs or otherwise evacuate premises promptly. The plan must be internally deliverable and not reliant on the Fire and Rescue Service to complete the evacuation;
- 2.2.5 ensure that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is developed for all relevant persons e.g. employees, pupils, clients/service users, in accordance with the guidance available on the intranet and Webshop. Further advice may be sought from the ESCC Fire Officer;
- 2.2.6 arrange for the Emergency Plan to be issued to employees, visitors, etc. to inform them what to do in the event of fire, particularly safe evacuation;
- 2.2.7 arrange for a competent Responsible Person (who may also be the Controller of Premises) to be nominated to oversee and implement fire safety arrangements at their workplace(s) on their behalf;

- 2.2.8 ensure that if there is any doubt about the provision of new or replacement fire extinguishers, advice is sought from the ESCC Fire Officer;
- 2.2.9 ensure that staff are appropriately trained in fire safety procedures to reflect the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- 2.2.10 ensure that a copy of the current fire risk assessment for their premises is readily accessible and its provisions complied with;
- 2.2.11 ensure that fire risk assessments are reviewed at least annually or whenever there is any building alteration, change of occupation or use of the premises or following an incident involving fire.
- 2.2.12 ensure that effective arrangements are in place for contacting the emergency services;
- 2.2.13 ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service are aware of any significant hazards associated with the premises e.g. oxygen or gas cylinders, storage of petrol, chemicals, etc.;
- 2.2.14 confirm that their Fire Safety Maintenance Inspections relating to alarm systems, fire extinguishers, etc. are carried out in accordance with the ESCC Fire Safety Log Book;
- 2.2.15 liaise with the local Trade Union Safety Representative, where appointed, on all aspects of the above arrangements.

### **2.3 Sources of help and advice:**

- 2.3.1 The ESCC Fire Officer will provide additional advice and guidance, on request, to assist with the implementation of this Policy and ensure it is kept up to date in accordance with any changes in legislation and reflects current best practice.
- 2.3.2 ESCC Property will provide additional advice and guidance in respect of fire risk assessments and where applicable, specialist advice in respect of physical building structure from a fire safety perspective.

### **2.4 Responsible Persons must:**

- 2.4.1 assist and support with the preparation and review (at least annually) of fire safety risk assessments;
- 2.4.2 ensure compliance with the outcomes of the Fire Risk Assessment and that the necessary control measures are implemented;
- 2.4.3 prepare and review the Emergency Plan issued to all staff;
- 2.4.4 ensure information on fire safety arrangements is available to service users and visitors;
- 2.4.5 ensure all staff and, where appropriate, contractors are fully conversant with the Emergency Plan;

- 2.4.6 arrange and review Fire Evacuation Drills at a frequency of not less than every six months or every other term in the case of schools;
- 2.4.7 specify and rehearse the arrangements for assisting visitors, disabled people or those with temporary physical impairments to safely evacuate the premises. Where appropriate, a PEEP must be developed;
- 2.4.8 ensure Fire Alarms are regularly tested at the frequency recommended in the appropriate British Standard i.e. weekly;
- 2.4.9 monitor that Fire Alarm Systems, Detection Devices Sprinkler Systems, Emergency Lighting and Fire Extinguishers are appropriately and regularly maintained;
- 2.4.10 keep the Fire Log Book up to date. A model Fire Safety Log Book is available on the intranet and Webshop;
- 2.4.11 ensure that Fire Action Notices (displayed as a minimum at Fire Alarm Call Points) and Fire Signage are appropriate and kept up to date;
- 2.4.12 ensure all escape routes are kept clear of obstructions and that access to Fire Extinguishers and Fire Alarm Call Points are not impeded;
- 2.4.13 ensure that the annual testing of portable electrical equipment and periodic testing (3 or 5 yearly depending on building use) of the fixed electrical installations has been carried out;
- 2.4.14 ensure that the testing of any fire safety sprinkler system is carried out in accordance with manufacturers' guidelines;
- 2.4.15 ensure that fire safety inspections of the premises are recorded and carried out at the frequency set out in, the ESCC Fire Safety Log Book which was designed to assist the Responsible Person comply with the Fire Safety Guide documents referred to in Appendix 1.

## **2.5 Employees must:**

- 2.5.1 ensure they are familiar with the Emergency Plan for their workplace and co-operate by participating in Fire Evacuation Drills and by observing practical fire safety arrangements;
- 2.5.2 know, and co-operate with, the Responsible Person for their workplace;
- 2.5.3 report to their manager or supervisor any concerns about fire safety;
- 2.5.4 be familiar with all escape routes;
- 2.5.5 not wedge fire doors open, nor block or obstruct them;
- 2.5.6 be aware of the action to be taken on discovering a fire, hearing a fire alarm, for raising the alarm (including the location of Fire Alarm Call Points) and calling the

Fire and Rescue Service;

- 2.5.7 promptly evacuate the premises, in accordance with the Emergency Plan, to a place of safety without putting themselves and others at risk, and NOT attempt to extinguish a fire unless they have been specifically trained;
- 2.5.8 comply with the County Council's Smoke Free Policy
- 2.5.9 comply with the County Council's Electricity at Work Policy.

## **Appendix 1: Guidance to the Policy for Fire Safety Management**

### **1. The following are available to support your fire safety risk assessments and development of fire precautions.**

- 1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government Guidance documents, for various types of premises and events and are available on their website <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business#documents>

There are a number of guidance documents which include:

1. Offices and Shops
2. Factories and Warehouses
3. Sleeping accommodation
4. Residential Care premises
5. Educational premises
6. Small and Medium places of Assembly
7. Large places of Assembly
8. Theatres and Cinemas
9. Open-air events and venues
10. Healthcare premises
11. Transport Premises and Facilities
12. Means of escape for people with disabilities
13. Animal premises and stables

Guides 6 and 7 have been identified as appropriate to County Libraries and Registration Offices (Ceremonies.)

- 1.2 The ESCC Fire Safety Log Book, which is designed to assist managers to comply with Government guidance, is available on the intranet and Webshop
- 1.3 The recommended Fire Risk Assessment model is available from the ESCC Fire Officer.
- 1.4 The Fire and Emergency Evacuation Guidance, in respect of people with mobility, sensory and learning impairments, is available on the intranet and Webshop.
- 1.5 County Council Health and Safety Policies on the Safe Management of Contractors and Risk Assessment, where a typical methodology for conducting risk assessments is described, are available on the intranet and Webshop.

### **2. Practical Fire Safety Arrangements**

- 2.1 As part of a holistic fire safety management system, in addition to the management action outlined below, considerations of passive and active fire precautions are essential.
- 2.2 Passive Fire Precautions are concerned with the physical conditions at workplaces which are designed to facilitate containment of fire by design, construction and layout, effective communication and safe evacuation. In particular;



- 2.2.1 materials specification, design, construction and inspection of buildings, fire doors and escape routes taking into account the needs of pupils, service users, people with disabilities, contractors, members of the public, etc.;
  - 2.2.2 appropriate safe and secure location of building services e.g. gas and electrical distribution boards;
  - 2.2.3 provision of clear fire safety signage for escape routes and final exits, in conformity with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and The Equality Act 2010;
  - 2.2.4 provision of prominently located Fire Action Notices (e.g. by Fire Alarm Call Points) to inform people of the action to be taken in the event of fire;
  - 2.2.5 education and training of staff in fire safety arrangements, in particular evacuation procedures and drills.
- 2.3 Active Fire Precautions are those features of the Fire Safety Management System that detect and operate in the event of a fire, including Fire Alarm Systems, Sprinkler Systems, Emergency Lighting Systems and Fire Fighting Equipment. In particular:
- 2.3.1 the installation, maintenance, inspection and weekly testing of fire alarms;
  - 2.3.2 the appropriate design, location, operation, monthly inspection and annual testing of adequate (emergency) lighting systems for fire escape routes;
  - 2.3.3 the provision, use, appropriate type and location, and annual maintenance of portable fire extinguishers;
  - 2.3.4 the appropriate design, location, operation, inspection and annual testing of the fire safety sprinkler systems;
  - 2.3.5 ensure that fire safety inspections of the premises are recorded and carried out at the frequency set out in the ESCC Fire Safety Log Book which was designed to assist the Responsible Person comply with the Fire Safety Guide documents referred to above at 1.1.

### **3. Fire Risk Assessments**

- 3.1 Fire risk assessments are a requirement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order and are a structured approach to determining the risk of fire occurring in a workplace or from a work activity, and identifying the precautions necessary to eliminate, reduce or manage the risk. The outcome of the risk assessment must be incorporated in the Emergency Plan.
- 3.2 Risk assessments must take into account those who could be affected, e.g. numbers involved, their location, physical and mental capabilities and employees of organisations with whom a workplace is shared. Where appropriate, an individual PEEP must be developed for staff, pupils or service users who have known disabilities that will impact on their ability to evacuate the particular premises.

- 3.3 Particular care should be taken when giving consideration to the use of Refuges as part of a PEEP. Placing people with mobility impairments, who cannot manage stairs without significant support, into a temporary Refuge is only acceptable if the Emergency Plan contains a robust and effective plan to enable them to be removed from the Refuge, to an external place of safety. Such plans must not rely on the Fire and Rescue Service to affect the rescue. Where an effective plan to quickly remove persons in a Refuge to an external place of safety cannot be put into place, then alternatives to a Refuge must be considered. Guidance on PEEP's is available on the intranet and Webshop. When necessary, further advice may be sought from the ESCC Fire Officer.
- 3.4 Keeping sources of fuel such as combustible materials, flammable substances and waste, separated from sources of ignition including work equipment, lighting, hot surfaces, hot working processes, carelessness by contractors, etc. on site, and arson must also be taken into account.
- 3.5 The risk evaluation and appropriate control measures to be taken into account will include those practical fire safety arrangements outlined above.

#### **4. Fire Safety Audits**

- 4.1 Fire Safety Audits may be carried out at any County Council building by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service who are the enforcing authority for this legislation and are likely to include a request to inspect the following documentation:
- East Sussex County Council Fire Safety Policy
  - Premises Specific Fire Safety Handbook or File, containing:
  - Fire Safety Risk Assessment
  - Fire Safety Maintenance Records (available on the Corporate Property Information System CPIS)
  - Fire Safety Log Book
  - Written Fire Evacuation Plan
  - Records of Staff Fire Safety Training.

#### **5. Historic Buildings**

- 5.1 The County Council occupies a number of historic and/or listed buildings as workplaces which may also be accessible by the public. These buildings may present particular difficulties in achieving acceptable standards of fire safety and emergency evacuation commensurate with the character, structure, fabric and contents of the buildings.
- 5.2 A holistic approach to these situations will be required based on the premises specific fire risk assessment; which should take into account appropriate levels of supervision and surveillance, as well as practical security arrangements, e.g. engineered solutions, anti-arson mailbox, CCTV etc. and the statutory need to provide an effective and robust Emergency Plan.