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FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING HANDBOOK

A practical guide to workplace fire safety, prevention and emergency procedures



KEEP PEOPLE SAFE

PREVENT FIRES

BE PREPARED

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

CONTENTS

Use this handbook to quickly find the information you need in an emergency.

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REMEMBER ✓ Raise the alarm ✓ Call 999 as required ✓ Evacuate ✓ Report information

01 INTRODUCTION TO FIRE SAFETY

Fire safety is a shared responsibility within the workplace.

WHY FIRE SAFETY MATTERS

A fire can develop rapidly, produce toxic smoke and create conditions that become **life-threatening within a very short period**.

Effective fire safety depends on three things:

- **PREVENTION**
- **PREPAREDNESS**
- **ORGANISED RESPONSE**

Fire Marshals, also known as **Fire Wardens**, support the organisation's fire safety arrangements. Their role is primarily to support safe evacuation and fire prevention.

NEVER PLACE YOURSELF AT UNNECESSARY RISK
Life safety always comes first.



THE FIRE MARSHAL'S ROLE

- [ ] Promote good fire safety practices
- [ ] Identify and report fire hazards
- [ ] Check that escape routes remain clear
- [ ] Support emergency evacuation procedures and fire drills
- [ ] Report defects in fire safety equipment
- [ ] Help identify people who may require assistance
- [ ] Report concerns to the Responsible Person or appropriate manager

02 FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Fire safety in UK workplaces is governed by legislation designed to protect people from the risk of fire.

REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

The RRO – the primary fire safety legislation for most non-domestic premises in England and Wales.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974

The HSWA – the overarching framework for occupational health and safety.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

And associated guidance, where applicable.

OTHER LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant to specific workplaces and activities.

THE EXACT REQUIREMENTS DEPEND ON

- [ ] The premises
- [ ] The activities undertaken
- [ ] The number and characteristics of occupants
- [ ] The hazards present

Follow your organisation's **fire risk assessment**, emergency plan and current procedures. Your Responsible Person will confirm what applies to your workplace.

KEY POINT
Legislation sets the duties. Fire Marshals help the organisation meet them in day-to-day practice.

03 REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

The primary fire safety legislation for most non-domestic premises in England and Wales.

The Order places duties on the **Responsible Person** to ensure fire risks are assessed and appropriate measures are taken to protect relevant persons.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

A suitable and sufficient assessment should identify:

- ☐ Fire hazards and people at risk
- ☐ Existing fire precautions and their effectiveness
- ☐ The likelihood of fire and potential consequences
- ☐ Measures required to reduce risk

Review when appropriate, particularly when significant changes occur.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS & MAINTENANCE

Appropriate precautions may include:

- Fire detection and warning systems
- Emergency lighting
- Firefighting equipment
- Fire doors and compartmentation
- Emergency escape routes and signage
- Emergency procedures

Systems and equipment must be maintained so they remain effective – alarms, emergency lighting, extinguishers, fire doors and smoke control systems.

PROCEDURES, TRAINING & REVIEW

- Suitable emergency procedures should be established and communicated
- Employees should receive appropriate fire safety instruction and training relevant to the workplace and their responsibilities
- Arrangements should be monitored and reviewed to ensure they remain effective

04 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974

The two areas of legislation work alongside each other.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974

An overarching framework for occupational health and safety.

- ☐ Employee health and safety
- ☐ Safe systems of work and workplace safety
- ☐ Training and information
- ☐ Protection of people affected by work activities

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REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

Focuses specifically on fire safety management within relevant non-domestic premises.

- ☐ Fire risk assessment and fire precautions
- ☐ Emergency procedures and fire safety equipment
- ☐ Maintenance, training and fire safety management

HOW FIRE MARSHALS SUPPORT COMPLIANCE

Identifying hazards | **Reporting defects** | **Monitoring housekeeping**

Checking escape routes | **Supporting drills & evacuations**

05 RESPONSIBLE, COMPETENT AND RELEVANT PERSONS

Understanding who holds duties – and who is protected.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON

Has **legal duties** for fire safety under the RRO.

Depending on the circumstances, this may be an employer, the person who controls premises, the owner, or a person with control of a workplace or activity.

Must ensure appropriate fire safety arrangements are in place.

COMPETENT PERSON

Has sufficient **training, knowledge, experience** or other appropriate ability to assist with fire safety matters.

May provide specialist advice or undertake specific fire safety tasks where appropriately competent.

RELEVANT PERSONS

People who may be lawfully present on the premises, and people who may be at risk from fire as a result of work activities.

- [ ] Employees
- [ ] Contractors
- [ ] Visitors and customers
- [ ] Members of the public
- [ ] Others affected by the workplace

Report concerns to the **Responsible Person** or appropriate manager. Fire Marshals support – but do not replace – the Responsible Person's legal duties.

06 IMPACT AND COST OF FIRE IN THE WORKPLACE

The consequences of fire can extend far beyond the immediate damage caused by flames.

INJURY AND LOSS OF LIFE

Smoke, heat, flames and toxic gases can cause serious injury or death.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Buildings, machinery, computers, furniture, stock, records and vehicles may be damaged or destroyed.

BUSINESS INTERRUPTION

A fire may prevent operations for days, weeks or months.

FINANCIAL LOSS

Repairs, replacement equipment and stock, temporary premises, lost working hours, insurance excesses and increased premiums.

REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE

Customer confidence may be affected, potentially resulting in lost contracts or business.

PREVENTION PROTECTS PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

The best outcome is a fire that never starts. Good fire safety management protects lives first, then property, operations and reputation.

07 HOW FIRES START

Common causes of workplace fires.

ELECTRICAL FAULTS

Damaged cables, overloaded sockets, faulty equipment, poor maintenance and incorrect use of extension leads.

SMOKING MATERIALS

Carelessly discarded cigarettes, matches or other smoking materials may ignite combustible materials.

HOT WORKS

Welding, cutting, grinding and soldering can produce heat, sparks or flames.

COOKING EQUIPMENT

Appliances can create significant risks, particularly where oils and fats are involved.

ARSON

Fires may be deliberately started inside or outside premises.

POOR HOUSEKEEPING

Accumulated combustible waste can increase fire loading and allow fire to spread rapidly.

08 ROLE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Support safe evacuation and fire prevention – without taking unnecessary risks.



PROMOTE FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS

Encourage colleagues to keep escape routes clear, close fire doors, report defects, store combustible materials appropriately and follow workplace fire procedures.

CARRY OUT INSPECTIONS

Depending on local arrangements, routine checks may cover escape routes, fire doors, extinguishers, alarm call points, emergency lighting, signage and housekeeping.

SUPPORT EVACUATION

Direct people towards safe exits, sweep designated areas where safe, check areas in accordance with local procedures, prevent re-entry and report information to the person coordinating the evacuation.

REPORT HAZARDS AND DEFECTS

Report fire hazards and defects in fire safety equipment, and report concerns to the Responsible Person or appropriate manager.

09 HUMAN BEHAVIOUR DURING FIRE

People do not always react to a fire as expected.

DELAY

People may seek confirmation that there really is a fire.

FAMILIARITY

People may use their usual route rather than the nearest safe emergency exit.

GATHERING INFORMATION

People may collect belongings, contact colleagues or investigate.

FOLLOWING OTHERS

People may follow colleagues instead of independently selecting the safest exit.

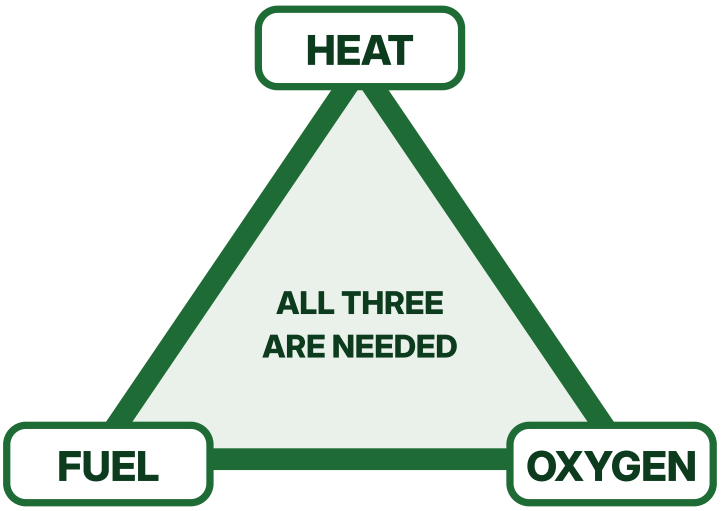
HOW FIRE MARSHALS CAN HELP

Clear and confident instructions can help people make quicker and safer decisions.

- ☐ Remain calm and use clear instructions
- ☐ Speak confidently and direct people towards safe exits
- ☐ Do not create unnecessary panic or encourage people to take risks

10 FIRE SAFETY PRINCIPLES – THE FIRE TRIANGLE

A fire requires three essential elements: HEAT, FUEL and OXYGEN.



CONTROL ONE SIDE OF THE TRIANGLE

Removing or controlling one part of the triangle can help prevent or control fire.

- ☐ Removing combustible waste **(fuel)**
- ☐ Controlling ignition sources **(heat)**

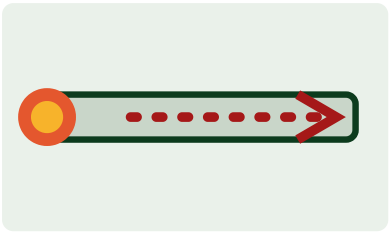
⚠ DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SMOTHER OR ISOLATE A FIRE

Unless this is part of a safe, trained response.

11 METHODS OF FIRE SPREAD

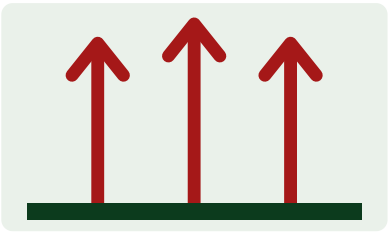
Understanding how fire, heat and smoke travel.

CONDUCTION



Heat passes through a solid material. For example, a metal pipe heated by a fire may transfer heat to another area.

CONVECTION



Hot gases and smoke rise and move through a building. Heat and smoke may travel through stairwells, corridors, voids, ducting and open doors.

RADIATION



Heat energy travels from a hot object or fire source. Radiant heat can ignite combustible materials **without direct contact with flames**.

SMOKE TRAVELS FAST

Convection carries smoke and hot gases through open doors, stairwells and voids – keep fire doors closed.

12 FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES

Good prevention keeps people safe and escape routes available.

FIRE SAFETY SIGNAGE

Clearly visible, appropriate to purpose, maintained and positioned where people can easily see them.

MANUAL CALL POINTS

Must remain accessible, clearly identifiable and unobstructed.

EMERGENCY LIGHTING

Maintained and tested in accordance with the premises' arrangements. Helps occupants identify escape routes if normal lighting fails.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

- [ ] Prevent accumulation of waste
- [ ] Keep escape routes clear
- [ ] Store materials appropriately
- [ ] Keep combustibles away from ignition sources

FIRE DOORS

- [ ] Keep doors closed when required
- [ ] Do not wedge or prop open unless designed and controlled for that purpose
- [ ] Keep seals and self-closing devices effective
- [ ] Report damage and defects

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Systems and equipment should be appropriately inspected and maintained: fixed installation inspections, portable appliance testing (PAT) where appropriate, visual checks and defect reporting.

PAT testing should form part of a suitable **risk-based electrical safety programme**. It is not a substitute for electrical maintenance.

13 PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS (PEEPS)

An individual plan for someone who may have difficulty evacuating safely.

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WHO MAY NEED A PEEP

Someone who has difficulty walking, hearing an alarm, seeing signs or escape routes, understanding emergency instructions, using stairs or evacuating without assistance.

- ☐ Wheelchair users
- ☐ People with visual or hearing impairments
- ☐ Pregnant workers
- ☐ People with mobility difficulties
- ☐ People with relevant medical or other needs

WHAT A PEEP MAY IDENTIFY

- ☐ Emergency escape routes
- ☐ Assistance requirements and evacuation procedures
- ☐ Refuge arrangements and communication methods
- ☐ Specialist equipment needs

ⓘ PEEPs should be **reviewed regularly** and whenever circumstances change.

REFUGE AREAS

A refuge is a **temporary protected space** where a person may wait for assistance as part of an evacuation strategy. It is not necessarily a final place of safety.

Fire Marshals should understand:

- ☐ Where refuges are located
- ☐ Who may require assistance
- ☐ What arrangements are in place
- ☐ How information should be communicated during an emergency

14 FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND THEIR USES

For trained people only – and only where it is safe to do so.

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WHICH TYPE FOR WHICH FIRE?

WATER RED label • Class A	**Wood, paper, textiles** Never on electrical or oil fires
FOAM CREAM label • Class A & B	**Solids; some flammable liquids** Check label and electrical rating
CO_2 BLACK label • Class B; electrical equipment	**Flammable liquids; electrical risks** No Class A deep-seated fires
DRY POWDER BLUE label • ABC (if labelled)	**Solids, liquids, gases** Can impair visibility/breathing
WET CHEMICAL YELLOW label • Class F	**Cooking oils and fats** Check additional class ratings

Always check the actual extinguisher label and your workplace fire risk assessment. Evacuation comes first.

THE PASS TECHNIQUE

P	A	S	S
Pull the pin	Aim at the base	Squeeze the handle	Sweep side to side

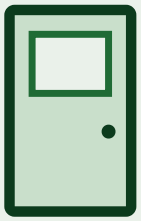
Only if trained, safe to do so, and your exit is clear.

- ☐ Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and the extinguisher's suitability markings
- ☐ Check the label before use

⚠ **LIFE SAFETY AND EVACUATION COME FIRST**
If in doubt, evacuate.

15 FIRE DOORS AND COMPARTMENTATION

Passive fire protection that helps restrict the spread of fire, heat and smoke.



Keep fire doors closed

Report damage or faults

NEVER WEDGE OR PROP DOORS OPEN

Unless designed and controlled for that purpose.

ROUTINE VISUAL CHECKS – LOOK FOR

- ☐ Damage to the door or frame
- ☐ Gaps or damaged/missing seals
- ☐ Damaged glazing
- ☐ Faulty self-closing devices, where fitted
- ☐ Obstructions or doors wedged/propped open
- ☐ Defects around frames

Fire doors and compartmentation form an important part of a building's **passive fire protection**.

Fire doors should **not be modified or repaired by unauthorised persons**. Report defects through the organisation's established procedure.

16 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

If you discover a fire or hear the alarm – follow the workplace procedure.

1 RAISE THE ALARM

Activate the fire alarm immediately. Do not delay the alarm while investigating.

2 CALL THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Follow workplace procedure. Where appropriate dial **999**. Give the premises address, known fire location and other information requested.

3 EVACUATE

Leave by the nearest safe exit. Do not stop for belongings or use lifts unless authorised in the evacuation strategy.

4 ASSIST OTHERS

Assist in accordance with your training and local procedures, paying particular attention to people who may need help.

5 GO TO THE ASSEMBLY POINT

Proceed to the designated assembly point and remain there.

6 REPORT INFORMATION

Tell the coordinator about areas checked, anyone missing, people needing assistance, the fire location and known hazards.

DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING

Never put yourself at unnecessary risk.

17 FIRE MARSHAL INSPECTIONS

Routine inspections help identify problems before an emergency occurs.

ESCAPE ROUTES

- [ ] Clear and unobstructed
- [ ] Correctly signed
- [ ] Doors operational

FIRE DOORS

- [ ] Closed when required
- [ ] No obvious damage
- [ ] Seals intact
- [ ] Self-closing mechanism operational, where fitted

FIRE ALARM

- [ ] Manual call points accessible
- [ ] No obvious damage
- [ ] Indicators visible

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- [ ] Accessible and correctly positioned
- [ ] No obvious damage
- [ ] Seal/pin appears intact
- [ ] Inspection and servicing arrangements in place

EMERGENCY LIGHTING

- [ ] Fittings unobstructed
- [ ] No obvious damage
- [ ] Testing arrangements in place

HOUSEKEEPING

- [ ] Waste controlled
- [ ] Combustible materials stored appropriately
- [ ] No blocked exits
- [ ] No obvious ignition-source hazards

Reporting: record and report defects promptly using the organisation's procedure. The frequency, scope and recording arrangements should follow your fire safety procedures.

18 POST-INCIDENT ACTIONS

Learn from every incident to keep people safer.

INVESTIGATION

Fire Marshals may be asked to provide factual information about:

- [ ] What they observed
- [ ] Where and when the incident occurred
- [ ] Actions taken
- [ ] Relevant hazards or defects

Record facts rather than assumptions.

LESSONS LEARNED

- [ ] What happened and why?
- [ ] Was the alarm effective?
- [ ] Was evacuation effective?
- [ ] Were escape routes suitable?
- [ ] Did anyone experience difficulties?
- [ ] Did communication work effectively?
- [ ] Were PEEPs effective?
- [ ] Were there equipment or procedural failures?

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Agreed actions should be:

- [ ] Recorded
- [ ] Assigned to appropriate persons
- [ ] Given suitable timescales
- [ ] Followed up
- [ ] Closed when completed

The fire risk assessment and emergency procedures should be reviewed where necessary.

19 FIRE MARSHAL QUICK REFERENCE CHECKLIST

Prevent. Respond. Review.

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BEFORE AN EMERGENCY – PREVENT

- [ ] Keep escape routes clear
- [ ] Check fire doors
- [ ] Report damaged equipment
- [ ] Maintain good housekeeping
- [ ] Keep fire alarm call points accessible
- [ ] Report electrical hazards
- [ ] Understand emergency procedures
- [ ] Know the assembly point
- [ ] Understand local PEEP arrangements
- [ ] Participate in fire drills

DURING AN EMERGENCY – RESPOND

- [ ] Raise the alarm
- [ ] Call the Fire and Rescue Service as required
- [ ] Evacuate
- [ ] Direct people towards safe exits
- [ ] Assist those requiring help in accordance with procedures
- [ ] Never put yourself at unnecessary risk
- [ ] Go to the assembly point
- [ ] Report relevant information
- [ ] Do not re-enter

AFTER AN EMERGENCY – REVIEW

- [ ] Report observations
- [ ] Support the investigation
- [ ] Record lessons learned
- [ ] Identify corrective actions
- [ ] Review procedures where required
- [ ] Follow up outstanding actions

20 KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Test your understanding – answers shown beneath each question.

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1 What is the primary fire safety legislation for most non-domestic premises in England and Wales?

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2 Who has the legal responsibility for fire safety under the RRO?

The Responsible Person.

3 What three elements make up the Fire Triangle?

Heat, Fuel and Oxygen.

4 What is convection?

The movement of heat and smoke through moving gases.

5 What should you do if you discover a fire?

Raise the alarm immediately and follow the workplace emergency procedure.

6 What does PASS stand for?

Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep.

7 What type of extinguisher is commonly used for cooking-oil fires?

Wet Chemical.

8 What is the purpose of a fire door?

To help restrict the spread of fire and smoke.

9 What is a PEEP?

A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan designed to support an individual who may have difficulty evacuating safely.

10 Should a Fire Marshal put themselves at risk to fight a fire?

No. Life safety and evacuation take priority.

21 THE ESSENTIALS

Prevent • Protect • Evacuate • Report

PREVENT

Identify hazards and maintain good fire safety standards.

PROTECT

Support measures that protect people and restrict fire and smoke spread.

EVACUATE

Support a calm, prompt and safe evacuation.

REPORT

Identify and report hazards, defects and concerns.

SAFETY FIRST

Never put yourself or others at unnecessary risk. If there is a fire, raise the alarm, evacuate and follow the established emergency procedure.

BE PREPARED. ACT CONFIDENTLY. SAVE LIVES.

DISCLAIMER

This handbook is intended as a quick reference guide and does not replace formal fire marshal training.

Fire extinguishers are for trained people only, when it is safe, the fire is small and the escape route is clear. Always prioritise raising the alarm and evacuation.

Always follow your organisation's fire risk assessment, emergency plan and current procedures.



QUALITY TRAINING. CONFIDENT RESPONDERS. SAFER WORKPLACES.

Expert Instructors | Practical Training | Quality Regulated | Workplace Focused | Saving Lives

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