

The London Borough of Waltham Forest

Fire Safety at Work

A work place Fire Safety Policy for Council Buildings and Community Schools.



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Effective from – June 2015

Introduction

1. The purpose of this policy is to give a corporate overview of how fire safety and Fire Risk Assessments should be managed in Waltham Forests Corporate buildings and Schools which are under the responsibility of the Local Education Authority (LEA).
2. Waltham Forest Council is required to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ('the Order') and is committed to providing a safe working environment for all its employees, service users and visitors.
3. The Council will ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, appropriate measures are taken to prevent or minimise the probability of all causes of fire in order to discharge its legal obligations to protect its staff and service users.
4. Management of fire risks will be undertaken in such a way as to prevent injury or ill-health to employees, students, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected by the activities of the organisation.
5. The Council will work together with the Trade Union representatives in accordance with the 1977 Trade Unions Safety Regulations in order to fulfil the requirements of this Policy.

Aim of Policy

6. This policy aims to ensure:
 - The health and safety of all employees, service users and visitors in Council premises;
 - Compliance with legislation on fire safety in the workplace; and
 - Standards and procedures for maintaining fire safety in premises are established, implemented, maintained and monitored.
7. The Council seeks to do this by implementing the following measures:
 - Fire Safety Policy;
 - Fire Risk Assessments undertaken on a planned basis;
 - Fire Precautions Maintenance Programme;
 - Fire Safety Guidance for managers and employees; and
 - Fire Safety Training.

Scope of Policy

8. This policy applies to all Waltham Forest employees (including temporary and contract staff).

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9. This policy document deals specifically with fire safety standards within Council buildings and LEA Schools but excludes buildings for which the Council do not have a direct control such as their commercial property portfolio, social housing or Academy Schools.
10. It is recognised that staff may work in temporary premises, partnership premises and other workplaces where similar standards will be expected for those workplaces. Here it is the responsibility of line managers to ensure these standards are implemented and maintained, and may mean cooperating with the host organisation's fire safety systems.
11. Contractors or partner organisations working in or around Council premises are required to familiarise themselves with and to adhere to the Council's fire safety policy.
12. The effective date of this revised policy is June 2015.

Responsibilities

13. There is a requirement in the Fire Safety Order 2005 to appoint a 'Responsible Person' for Fire Safety. This person has a duty to comply with the Order and is the employer or the person who may have control of the premises.
14. Within the Council, the Chief Executive assumes the duty of Responsible Person to ensure the Council's compliance with the fire safety legislation.
15. The Executive Director of Environment & Regeneration is the nominated and delegated Director within the Council with a responsibility for Fire Safety.
16. It will be the joint responsibility of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Environment & Regeneration to ensure that agreed programmes of investment in fire precautions are properly accounted for in the Council's annual financial planning.
17. The Fire Safety Order requires the Council to appoint one or more 'competent persons' to assist with fire safety. The Chief Executive and Executive Director of Environment & Regeneration have devolved the responsibility for the strategic planning and implementation of fire safety to a number of key posts as follows;
 - The Assistant Director of Strategic Property and Assets, The Head of Corporate Asset Management, the Compliance & Contracts Manager, and the Health and Safety Manager for the development of policy and strategy in relation to fire safety.
 - The Head of Corporate Asset Management for fire safety in respect of the Council's corporate property portfolio and a Head teacher for fire safety in respect a LEA Schools; both will ensure that fire safety systems are implemented, maintained and regularly monitored.

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- The Councils Compliance & Contracts Manager responsible for undertaking programmes of Fire Risk Assessments to the Councils corporate property portfolio and property related remedial works to emanating from the inspections.
- Managers with designated building responsibilities are responsible for implementing any management recommendations emanating from a Fire Risk Assessment.
- Manager should also implement the requirements of the Council's Fire Safety Guidance document, see link:

http://forestnet.lbwf.gov.uk/fire_safety_at_work_2011.pdf

- Headteachers of LEA schools are responsible for ensuring fire safety systems are implemented, maintained and regularly monitored in accordance with the following guidance documents:
 - Fire Safety for Schools, Local code of practice (LCoP) 34,
 - Schools' Emergency response plan (LCoP):36
 - The Role of the Fire Marshals (LCoP) 38

See link : thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk

Fire Risk Assessments

18. The Council will undertake Fire Risk Assessments to their Corporate Buildings on a rolling programme every three years. Some sites will require more frequent assessments based upon their type and risk profile as deemed necessary by the Contracts & Compliance Manager.
19. If a building is subject to a change of use or proposed alterations such as internal reconfiguration then the Contracts & Compliance Manager will be consulted as a new Fire Risk Assessment may be deemed necessary.
20. The Council will appoint competent contractors on a contractual basis to assist with fire safety measures including but not limited to Fire Risk Assessments, the undertaking of remedial works, maintenance of fire safety equipment and training.
21. Schools are themselves responsible for ensuring that a Fire Risk Assessment is carried out by a competent contractor. However during the year 2015 and as a one off exercise, the Council intends to undertake a planned programme of Fire Risk Assessments for LEA schools with their term contractor.
22. Schools that are not under the control of the LEA should continue with their own arrangements.

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23. The objectives of a Fire Risk Assessment are to

- Identify all current significant fire hazards to which relevant person on the premises, or in the immediate vicinity of the premises will be exposed.
- To reasonably quantify the level of residual fire risk that is attributed to the premises and its use, with regard to existing (preventive and protective) controlling measures and,
- To advise on the nature and extent of any additional (preventive and protective) controlling measures which should be implemented in order to counteract this residual risk, in accordance with the 'Principles of Prevention' as defined in the Fire Safety Order 2005.

24. The Fire Risk Assessment provides both property and management actions where it is the responsibility of the Contracts and Compliance manager to undertake any property related remedial works and for managers to undertake respective management actions.

Fire Safety Measures

25. The Councils Property Services team will ensure that fire safety systems are in place which maintains fire prevention and protection such as fire alarms systems and fire-fighting equipment for council buildings. **Community** Schools will need to ensure that they have appropriate arrangements in place.

26. To create a culture of fire safety which engages the support and commitment of staff, Managers with building responsibility and Head teachers will ensure that they make arrangements for:

- Appointing sufficient fire marshals, see LCoP 38 and arrange appropriate training for themselves and their staff in fire safety precautions;
- Quarterly inspection of their work areas, using LCoP 34
- Maintaining the fire log and alarm test records; and
- Carrying out or participating in fire drills as appropriate.
- Ensure that DDA requirements are incorporated into the emergency response plan
- Carrying out any management recommendations from a Fire Risk Assessment.

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- Ensure that fire safety documentations, copies of checks carried out are kept inside the 'Red Box' for auditing/inspection purposes.
 - Consult with Trade Unions on all of the above.
27. In some larger Council buildings the Facility Management Service may support managers by maintaining the fire precautions, fire logs, fire alarm tests and fire drills. However, managers occupying such premises will still have ultimate responsibility for compliance with all of the above requirements
28. Within school buildings, support staff is provided via the Site Service Officers or the Private Financial Initiative (PFI) to assist Head teachers/Senior Management with the day to day maintenance of fire precautions, fire logs, weekly fire alarm tests and termly fire drills. However, senior managers occupying such premises will still have ultimate responsibility for compliance with all of the above requirements.
29. The Council, however, acknowledges that despite these measures it cannot be assumed that fire will never break out. The Council therefore requires all staff to be vigilant when going about their normal duties and to report the following:
- Any potential fire risk
 - Damage to fire precautions or fire fighting equipment.
30. As with health and safety generally, ALL staff have a duty to adhere to the guidelines on fire detection and prevention and to attend Fire Safety and Evac chair training which can be arranged via the health and safety unit or the Adult Education, Community Learning & Skills Services (CLaSS).

Monitoring and Review

31. The responsibility for ensuring compliance with, this policy rests with senior management of both corporate and school buildings to liaise with the Contracts & Compliance Manager so that any deviation from the above is address.
32. The Contracts & Compliance Manager will monitor the contract with regards to the maintenance of the physical fire safety systems.
33. This policy will be reviewed annually or where it becomes necessary to implement revisions required by significant changes, new information, national guidance or legislative.

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Consultation

34. This policy has been drafted in consultation with the Assistant Director of Strategic Property and Assets, Head of Corporate Asset Management, Health & Safety Team, and Trade Union representatives.

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Version control

Document Information

Title	Fire Safety at Work
Document Type	A policy on fire safety for Waltham Forest Council
Document summary	This document outlines the responsibilities and systems for managing fire safety in Council buildings
Policy Owner	Compliance, Contracts and Premises Manager
Location of original	CSD/Portfolio/Asset Management/Compliance 2015/ Policies and Guidance 2015.

Version History

Revision date	Summary of changes
October 2013	agreed by CHSC 3
June 2015	Subject to approval by CHSC subject to final comments now included.
June 2016	For review.