

## **P607 Fire Safety Policy and Procedures**

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### **Contents**

(If you are viewing this document online, click on the headings below to jump to the relevant section)

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Identify Hazards .....	3
3. Identify who could be harmed .....	3
4. Evaluating the risks and identifying controls .....	3
5. Recording and review .....	4
6. Evacuation plans.....	4

## **P607 Fire Safety Policy and Procedures**

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### **1. Introduction**

A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical appraisal of your premises and the activities carried on there with a view to identifying the possible sources of fire, how the chances of fire starting may be reduced, and safe ways of protecting and evacuating people from the premises if a fire were to occur.

This document provides the requirements for undertaking a fire risk assessment (FRA) for Norfolk County Council (NCC) premises. Where Departments or premises wish to employ an external agency to undertake an FRA they may do so at their own cost, however they must ensure that:

- The persons they contract to undertake the FRA are competent to do so (a template questionnaire is available on Schools PeopleNet to assist with this),
- They work with the premises manager to ensure the document truly reflects the use and occupation of the building,
- The resulting document covers all of the areas covered in this document,
- They use the FRA template provided on Schools PeopleNet or other accepted formats such as PAS 79 as their template.

Where premises managers undertake their own risk assessment they should attend the corporately provided premises managers training in relation to fire risk assessment.

Premises with a simple construction and layout can complete the risk assessment provided on Schools PeopleNet as soon as they have attended the training (you may wish to seek advice from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team regarding this). More complex premises or those with specific risks associated with them may need assistance and input at a technical level in order to fully complete the assessment. For these premises NPS Property Services Ltd (NPS) will provide detailed scale plans of properties on a prioritised risk basis. If you already have a current risk assessment provided by an external agency or NPS you may already have this information. If so and it is up to date you will be able to review your current FRA.

Like all risk assessments a FRA should follow 5 key steps:

- Identify hazards
- Identify the people at risk, and specifically those with any special risk attached or needs
- Evaluate the risks and identify controls
- Record the findings and actions
- Keep the assessment under review and up to date

## **P607 Fire Safety Policy and Procedures**

---

### **2. Identify Hazards**

Any fire needs 3 things to establish itself: a source of ignition, oxygen and fuel. So when considering the hazards in your building you should be thinking about these three things. Removing or reducing any one of these will reduce the risk of a fire starting. Detailed guidance on each of these factors is provided in the Fire Safety Policy.

### **3. Identify who could be harmed**

You need to consider who could be at risk from a fire and where they may be when a fire starts. You need to ensure the safety of staff, contractors, clients, customers, service users and anyone else that may be in the premises if a fire breaks out.

Specific considerations include:

- Does anyone work in an isolated area?
- Could everyone respond to an alarm?
- Could everyone evacuate without assistance?
- Would anyone be working in an area where they may become trapped or not be aware the alarm had been raised?
- Who might be affected by smoke travelling through the building?
- Are there people who sleep on the premises?
- Do you share the building with others?

### **4. Evaluating the risks and identifying controls**

Controls will include provision of:

- Emergency exit routes
- Reasonable distance of travel (the time it takes to get out the building)
- Fire resistant constructions, compartments and doors
- Emergency lighting
- Means of raising alarm
- Fire fighting equipment
- Emergency signage
- Evacuation assembly point
- Emergency evacuation management
- Systems to control contractors and activities on site
- Adequate staffing levels
- Housekeeping systems to control and manage ignition and fuel sources
- Systems to control and manage site e.g. maintenance of fire protection devices, control of smoking on site, control of hot works
- Systems to manage the safety of people who need assistance

You may also need to consider setting a maximum occupancy number for the building.

## **P607 Fire Safety Policy and Procedures**

---

You will need to consider the controls available at different times of the day. Are any controls compromised or different at different times? Are the risks different?

Detailed guidance on all of the above fire risk controls including the maintenance of equipment and systems, staff training and evacuation drills etc is available in the Fire Safety Policy.

### **5. Recording and review**

Once you have considered all of the above you need to record your findings in your FRA document, and take forward any necessary actions for completion.

Where you already have a current and adequate FRA in place i.e. one that covers all of the areas outlined in this document, you do not need to redo the assessment. However when reviewing your assessment, if changes are needed you should transfer the relevant information into this document and complete the remainder as necessary.

Reviews of risk assessments are needed on a regular basis to check that they are still valid- at least every year or earlier if there is a significant change. This would include:

- Changes to the layout of premises or if new buildings or extensions are added
- Residents move to different bedrooms or new residents move in
- Staff changes
- New materials, stock or equipment are introduced
- Changes in legislation

### **6. Evacuation plans**

Once you have completed your FRA and identified the potential fire safety issues for your premise(s), you need to produce an evacuation plan that reflects the people and use of the building. The plan needs to include:

- All foreseeable events
- The specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or groups of employees in the event of an evacuation
- The agreed means of raising the alarm both in the premises and with the fire service
- How the evacuation will be carried out
- Assembly points
- Procedures for checking the premises have been evacuated
- Identification of escape routes
- Fire fighting equipment available (and policy for use)
- Where appropriate the isolating of machinery, processes and energy sources
- Responsibility for liaising with the fire service on arrival

## **P607 Fire Safety Policy and Procedures**

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Where staff and regular visitors have been identified as having a specific need or support during evacuation a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) must be produced to identify the specific needs of the person, their location on the premises, the nature of the help they require, who is responsible for providing that and the equipment that will be used to support them along with its location. A standard format for a PEEP and guidance on producing one can be found on Schools PeopleNet.

Where the premise is open to the public or casual users standard evacuation plans known as General Emergency Evacuation Plans (GEEP) should be developed for such visitors to chose from when entering the building. Standard plans should take account of: the types of escape that can be made available; building fire systems; operational procedures in the building; movements around the building and existing fire plan. Further guidance on the development of standard evacuation plans is also available in the above mentioned policy on Schools PeopleNet.

Where evacuation plans are being considered for residential care homes the production of separate PEEPs for each resident may not be required if there are sufficient details provided in personal care plans. Reference to the plans must be made within the risk assessment document and staff responsible for assisting residents in the event of an emergency must be provided with the information. However residential care home managers must consider whether a PEEP is required for persons other than residents, for example any members of staff or visitors.