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## Local Code of Practice 3

### Fire Safety arrangements – Section 3

#### (Version 2.01 – Sept 2017)

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#### **STATEMENT:**

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil statutory responsibility, the Council must make sure that:

- Appropriate advice, competence and resources are provided, to carry out the preventive and protective measures required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO);
- All properties have a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment;
- Appropriate information, instruction and training are provided to all employees and non employees on Barnet Borough Council premises.
- Each property has an appointed Responsible Person – Property Management

#### **SCOPE:**

This Local Code of Practice applies to:

- All Chief Officers, Head Teachers and Managers
- All employees of Barnet Borough Council
- All contractors working for or on behalf of the Council.

## Issue Control

This Local Code of Practice is issued and managed by the Safety, Health and Wellbeing team.

Issue		Revision		
Number	Date	Number	Date	Amendments
Version 1.00	2009			
Version 2.00	2015			Content amendment and formatting.
Version 2.01	2017			Content amendment and formatting.
<b>Review Schedule</b>				
Review Conducted		Next Review Date		
August 2015		August 2017		
June 2017		June 2019		

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## **1. AIM**

This document aims to introduce systems to reduce the risk of fire occurring, and the injury or damage that could result. To do this, we will describe how to comply with fire legislation and describe the responsibilities of managers and other people in control of premises or activities.

This document applies to all employees and covers all workplaces including Community Schools.

## **2. FIRE PRECAUTION REQUIREMENTS**

The primary purpose of the law on fire precautions is to protect people from fire. The law does this by placing a duty on employers to reduce the risk of fire as far as possible.

This involves a number of elements;

- Fire risk assessment
- Fire plans
- Fire evacuation drills
- Information, instruction, training and supervision
- Fire fighting equipment

## **3. GENERAL DUTIES**

**DU Directors / Head Teachers** - in charge of premises must ensure that suitable fire risk assessments and Fire Plans are in place for the premises they control. They must also ensure that all managers are aware of their duties for induction of all new staff, and are competent to carry out that induction. They must take special care to induct disabled staff as to any special arrangements that may be in place.

**Premises Managers** - Premises managers must ensure that in all workplaces:

- a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been carried out, by a competent person, and control measures implemented
- a suitable means is provided for sounding the alarm. This can range from a full fire alarm system in a large workplace to a hand bell in small workplaces
- adequate means of escape are provided for all employees and any other people on site at all times when the premises are in use.
- doors must be easy to open, and should open outwards. They must be suitable for all users of the building. (for example, disabled employees or visitors).
- furniture and equipment is arranged to allow easy access to a means of escape
- fire doors (that break the building up into small units to stop the spread of fire and smoke) are kept in a good condition. This means that they must close fully by a self-closer, and that any gap around the door is no more than 3mm.
- fire doors are kept closed at all times unless they are held open by an automatic system that will allow them to close if the fire alarm is sounded.
- Appropriate fire-fighting equipment is provided. The number and type of equipment can be decided as a result of the Fire Risk Assessment. Fire-fighting equipment must be inspected annually to ensure that it is ready to use at any time.
- Information and instruction is provided to all staff and managers, fire action notices must be displayed.

**Managers** - Managers must ensure that all new staff are provided with induction training to explain the fire precautions relating to their work and workplace, and are shown the correct escape procedure and assembly points. Managers are also required to notify the Premises Manager if a member of staff requires alterations to the workplace in order to react to the fire alarm or evacuate to a place of safety. Notification must be made before the employee starts their employment.

**Employees** – employees are under a general duty to take reasonable care of their own safety, and the safety of people around them. Employees must;

- Raise the alarm if you discover a fire
- Leave the building **immediately** on hearing the fire alarm, even if you think it is a fire drill and follow any instructions that are given
- Report to your manager any dangerous situations or fire risks that you see

#### **4. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of the fire risk assessment is to encourage those in control of buildings to think about how fire is prevented and managed in the premises. It will also assist with the drafting of a fire plan. For most office and school activities, it is sufficient to record what general fire precaution measures are taken and what checks are made to ensure that the measures are taken to the proper standard.

Fire Risk Assessment is an analysis of three elements;

- What are the risks of fire, and how serious are they? (i.e. how likely is a fire to start, and how serious is it likely to be)
- What, if anything, needs to be done to remove or reduce the risks?
- What information and training to give to staff

The risk assessment must be carried out by a suitably competent person and must be revised if there has been any change in the use of the premises, equipment, substances or systems used at the site, or if it appears for any other reason to believe that the current assessment is no longer valid. Another opportunity for review would be after a fire or near miss.

Information about the measures identified in the assessment must be provided to all occupiers of the site. This may be by way of an information card to contractors, and information on notice boards for staff and other building occupiers.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations also require employers to compile and implement measures to deal with emergencies. This duty includes a need to plan for fire and bomb threats.

#### **5. FIRE PLAN**

A written plan must be produced of action to be taken in the event of a fire. This plan must account for all occupiers, whether employees or not, and details of the plan must be brought to the attention of all staff on site as well as being displayed in the form of safety signs. The purposes of the plan are to advise occupiers of the correct procedures to take in case of fire, and provide a standard for occupiers to follow.

The production of these plans must be undertaken by a competent person. A fire plan should include;

- location of alarm points and fire fighting appliances
- action to be taken in the event of fire (to be displayed by alarm call points and other locations as may be necessary). For example, "sound the alarm and leave by the nearest available exit".

- action to be taken outside normal working hours, if different from during normal hours, in particular if the premises is hired out at any time.
- the location of escape routes and fire exits, specifying routes for or individual groups
- alternative routes, to be used in the event of an exit being unavailable
- the method to be used to ensure that all people have left the building
- the locations of, and action to be taken at, assembly areas
- action with regards to visitors (such as public, clients, students) using the building
- any specialist action regarding equipment, processes, substances, etc. The safety aspects of most materials are now subject to the requirements of the dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (see Corporate Arrangement, section 26).
- the duties of nominated persons as part of the plan, including training of Fire Wardens, First Aiders, Evac-Chair operators, etc.
- procedures for bringing the plan to the notice of staff
- measures for, and frequency of, testing the plan, for example, frequency of fire evacuation drills and checks of the alarm system
- arrangements for fire when the building or part of the building is hired. For example, responsibility for facilities etc
- review date

## 6. ASSISTING DISABLED PERSONS

Special consideration must be given in the fire risk assessment to the design and provision of fire procedures for people with disabilities. Disability can be divided into three categories. Each category presents different challenges to the fire risk 6 assessment process.

**Physical and sensory impairment** –includes wheelchair users, people with vision and hearing impairment and people with mobility problems. There may be a need for additional physical precautions, for example, safe refuges, evac-chairs and visible alarms. Any additional precautions must be supported by procedures, including trained staff to help people to evacuate, and information and methods of communication for people who have to remain at refuge areas during an evacuation. Section 7 contains some more advice on evacuation for people with physical disability.

**Mental health support needs** – people in this group (represented in many of the council's settings) may need support as a result of their reaction to the alarm or an emergency situation. Some people can panic and show unusual reactions.

**Learning difficulties** – people in this group may also need support in understanding the implications of a fire alarm, and what to do. They may also need more support and supervision in evacuating the building.

## 7. FIRE EVACUATION

A fire drill is an important method of testing the fire precautions in place at any premises. It will help identify any weaknesses in the evacuation process or any problems in the evacuation route. It will also familiarise occupiers with the alarm itself and what action to take.

Fire drills should be carried out at whatever interval is appropriate for the activity or client

group involved but should be annually as a minimum. For schools it is recommended that this is done at least once per term. Here are some suggestions for making the fire drills more useful.

- the drill should be without notice (only key managers and other key individuals should be informed)
- the telephone exchange or secretary should be advised, so that a false call to the Fire Brigade is not made
- the times of drills should be varied, to take account of different activities. This is particularly useful where part time staff are employed
- consider blocking off one exit to practice the use of alternative evacuation route(s)

### **Evacuation of people with a disability**

A written procedure must be in place to make sure that there are suitable means of escape for disabled people. This should include the following.

- the provision of safe refuge areas to be used as temporary waiting areas for disabled people. These areas should be clearly marked.
- Appropriate provision of sufficient staff to carry out specific duties in a fire emergency situation, e.g. Evac Chair operation.

A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) should be drawn up for every disabled person in the building. Regular building users, such as staff, should receive a copy of this PEEP. If the building has a large number of visitors fire evacuation instructions should, where possible, be handed to disabled visitors by reception staff.

Where possible, services should be provided so that disabled people do not need to use parts of the building where it would be difficult for them to get to a place of safety, for example some basement areas.

## **8. INFORMATION INSTRUCTION TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

Managers must ensure that all their employees are aware of;

- action to be taken on discovery of a fire
- action to be taken on hearing the fire alarm
- how to raise the alarm and the location of call points (a call point should be near each exit from the building)
- how to call the Fire Brigade, and who is responsible for making the call, (there may be an automatic system for this, connected to the alarm)
- the location and use of fire-fighting equipment
- the importance of fire/smoke doors and the need to close all doors at the time of a fire and on hearing the fire alarm
- evacuation routes and the method of escorting members of the public to a place of safety
- the locations of refuge areas (if any are provided)
- Any staff given specific duties must receive adequate information, training and instruction to enable them to carry out their duties.

- Pupils should be given information and instruction on all the agreed evacuation routes and assembly points.

These instructions must be given at the beginning of employment and should be repeated when necessary.

Supervision of staff and visitors is essential to ensure that the building has been successfully evacuated. This can be done by checking registers, as is common in schools, but for some buildings, where staff regularly come and go, and visitors are present, it is more practical to appoint fire wardens to check and report that zones of the building are clear.

## 9. FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Sufficient equipment must be provided at suitable locations on site. The type and location of the equipment depends on the type and scale of fire likely at any location within the building. For example, if the only fire likely is wood and paper, then only a water extinguisher is needed. If the fire is likely to be electrical, then a different extinguisher (such as carbon dioxide) is necessary. The following table shows the different types of extinguishers and their uses.

Extinguisher	Best For
Water	Wood, Cloth, Paper, Plastics, Coal etc. Fires involving solids
Dry powder	Liquids such as grease, fats, oil, paint, petrol etc. <b>but not on chip or fat pan fires.</b>
AFFF (Aqueous film-forming foam)	Wood, Cloth, Paper, Plastics, Coal etc. Fires involving solids. Liquids such as grease, fats, oil, paint, petrol, etc. <b>but not on chip or fat pan fires.</b>
Carbon Dioxide CO <sub>2</sub>	Liquids such as grease, fats, oil paint, petrol etc. <b>but not on chip or fat pan fires.</b>
Fire Blanket	Fires involving both solids and liquids. Particularly good for small fires in clothing and for chip and fat pan fires <b>provided the blanket completely covers the fire.</b>

## 10. FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

- The Fire Authorities are the main agency responsible for enforcing all fire-safety legislation in non-domestic premises. If they visit the premises the Inspector may request to see evidence of the Fire Safety Management Plan.
- Documents that may be requested include:
  - Fire Risk Assessment and action plan
  - Fire Precautions Log Book

- Records of staff training and drills
- Records of testing and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment
- Records of notification of faults and records of repair to fire-related equipment or passive fire protection
- Records of testing and maintenance of all fire safety systems including fire alarms, emergency lighting, sprinkler systems and smoke ventilation systems
- Records of fire inspections
- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures
- Confirmation of the 'Responsible Person' for the building
- The inspector may also wish to inspect all or part of the premises and to talk to members of staff.

## **11. MAINTENANCE OF FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT AND ROUTINE INSPECTIONS**

- Planned inspection, maintenance and testing procedures should be established and used to ensure that all fire protection systems can operate effectively when required. Arrangements should be made for all fire safety equipment, installations and systems to be inspected and tested on a regular basis by a competent person:
  - Fire detection systems
  - Automatic suppression systems
  - Door control mechanisms
  - Smoke control systems
  - Evacuation and fire-fighting lifts
  - Emergency lighting
  - Standby power systems
  - Escalators/lifts
  - Fire door inspections
- The Responsible Person must ensure that all inspections, maintenance and testing procedures are recorded and carried out by a competent person. Where the Responsible Person decides not to follow the guidance, they must justify their decision through risk assessment and in writing.
- All escape routes should be regularly checked to ensure that they are in good condition, particularly any external staircases or ladders which may be affected by corrosion, frost or rot. They should also be checked regularly to ensure they are not blocked and are not used as storage areas, in particular they must not be used to store combustible materials.
- Fire doors should be checked to ensure that they close properly and open easily in an emergency. Where security is a problem, external doors may only be secured in such a way that it can still remain easily opened from inside the premises.

## **12. CONTROL OF CONTRACTORS**

- Senior Managers/Headteachers must ensure that contractor's operations and the fire risks associated with such operations are adequately assessed and controlled. If 'hot works' are being carried out, these activities need to be authorised through the use of Permit to Work process. See LCoP – Managing Contractors.
- Any building works need to consider the hazard of fire and smoke, and incorporate appropriate precautions.

### **13. ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

- Electrical faults are a common cause of fires. Arrangements must be in place for the testing and inspection of both the fixed electrical installations and all portable appliances. See LCoP – Electrical Safety.

### **14. FIRE ALARM TESTING**

- In order to ensure staff, pupils and visitors are familiar with the fire warning system,
- the fire alarm should be tested weekly and records kept.
- The Premises Controller should ensure that weekly functional test is carried out on
- the fire alarm system by following the procedures below :
  - Ensure all occupants are aware that the test is to take place.
  - Simulate an alarm by operating a manual call point, using a different call point
  - each week.
  - Verify that all sounds and panel indicators function.
  - Close the manual call point cover or remove test key.
  - Re-set the fire alarm panel and ensure no faults are indicated.
  - Complete documentation.
  - Inform occupants that testing is completed.
  - Notify any defects immediately.
- If in doubt, contact electrical engineers for advice.
- Ensure that regular, planned maintenance is carried out by an appropriate contractor, who should submit a full report and Test Certificate.

### **15. FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT**

- All fire-fighting equipment should be visually inspected weekly so as to ensure its
- availability and that it has no obvious defect.
- Members of staff should be encouraged to read and understand instructions given on fire-fighting equipment provided within the premises.
- Any training of staff in fire-fighting be recorded and documentation available for
- inspection, along with records of weekly and annual checks undertaken.
- In the event of an extinguisher being discharged, arrangements must be made for
- replacement and the empty extinguisher must not be replaced on its bracket.

### **16. EMERGENCY LIGHTING**

- All escape routes must have sufficient lighting for people to see their way out safely.
- If there is insufficient light, emergency lights must be provided. These need to
- function not only on the complete failure of the normal lighting, but also on a localised
- failure if that would present a hazard.
- If emergency lights have been installed they should be checked weekly to ensure
- that they are operational and records maintained.

### **17. FIRE DOORS**

- The purpose of fire doors into stairway enclosures, access escape routes and as entrance doors to rooms which pose a higher risk than most others, e.g. boiler rooms, is to prevent fire, smoke and gases blocking the means of escape.
- Fire doors must be self-closing with an automatic device not rising butts. They must be kept shut whenever possible, otherwise they are ineffective. The only

exception to this is doors fitted with electro-magnetic devices which deactivate when the alarm is sounded.

However, these doors must be closed at night, weekends and during holidays.

- All fire doors should be labelled '**Fire Door, Keep Shut**' on both sides.
- Fire doors must never be locked and always be free of instructions which would prevent them from opening or create a hazard for persons evacuating.
- The Premises Controller should ensure that all fire doors are checked regularly.
- Door checks should include the following points :
  - Any damage to the door.
  - Effective operation of door closers. Doors should close from fully open within 30 seconds.
  - Rebated double leaf doors may require a selection device to close the doors in the correct order.
  - Where electromagnetic holders are installed, do these release the door leaf on test.
  - All notices are in place.
  - Fire doors are not obstructed, wedged or hooked open.
- Any defects Identified during the weekly inspection should be notified to the relevant person and recorded in the documentation.

## **18. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

You may find it useful to record the following information with your Fire Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan:

- Postal address including post code
- Name of employer/governors and contact numbers
- Premises owner or agent (if applicable)
- Nature of occupancy
- Use of remainder (if applicable)
- Construction of building, i.e. type of materials used mainly, such as concrete, glass etc.
- Location of workplace in building, e.g. ground and first floors
- Total number of floors in building. Number of staircases in building available as exit route from workplace
- Size of the workplace (total area in sq. metres)
- Size of the building (total area in sq. metres)
- Detection and alarm systems installed and their locations/control points
- Number of final exits (number of exits from the ground floor used by persons in the workplace)
- Maximum number of employees in the workplace
- Maximum number of other persons (pupils and other persons, i.e. contracted catering staff) in the workplace
- Name of Fire Safety Manager
- Person completing Risk Assessment (if different)

## **19. DOCUMENTATION**

It is suggested that the following forms (Fire Log) are used for the recording of :

- Alarm audibility tests
- Practice Evacuation Records
- Annual audit
- Record of staff training
- Record of weekly fire checks

## 20. MAIN LEGISLATION RELEVANT TO THIS DOCUMENT

- [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)

## 21. FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on fire precautions can be obtained from the following sources:

[The London Fire Brigade](#)

[The Health and safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)

[Fire safety in construction](#)

Barnet Council's **Safety, Health and Welfare team (SHaW)**, for general information call 02083 597955



**RECORD OF FIRE ALARM AUDIBILITY TESTS**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Number and Date</b>	<b>Call point number and location</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Signature</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Signature of Premises Controller/manager \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRE EVACUATION DRILLS - TO BE CARRIED OUT TERMLY FOR SCHOOLS**

Annual record for the year \_\_\_\_\_

Date of fire drill	Comments	Action required	To be taken by (name)	Target date	Signature of manager

Signed by Premises Controller \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL FIRE PRECAUTIONS CHECKLIST**

Building address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	Answer y/n
<b>1. Alarm system</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly audibility check carried out and recorded?</li> <li>• Annual system check carried out?</li> <li>• Is the alarm audible in all areas?</li> <li>• Are all alarm call points easily accessible?</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Means of escape</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are escape routes clearly sign posted?</li> <li>• Are escape routes kept clear of obstructions at all times?</li> <li>• Are final exit doors easy to open?</li> <li>• Are internal fire doors kept closed?</li> <li>• Has the emergency lighting system been checked as per manufacturer's requirements and monthly by Premises Controller?</li> <li>• Are refuge areas clearly marked for disabled people?</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a fire plan in place for the site?</li> <li>• Are fire risk assessments complete?</li> <li>• Is adequate training and instruction given to staff?</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Equipment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all extinguishers checked each year?</li> <li>• Are all extinguishers properly located?</li> <li>• Are all extinguishers properly labelled?</li> </ul>	

Checklist completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Action to be taken (if necessary):

Action required	To be taken by (name)	Target date

Signed by Premises Controller \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**WEEKLY FIRE CHECKS**

Date	Fire Alarms	Fire Doors	Extinguishers	Emergency Lighting	Defects	Signature

Signature of Premises Controller:

Date: