Fire Safety Management in MRC Establishments Guidance

MRC policy is to provide a safe environment and to employ best practice to ensure health, safety and welfare within the workplace. This document sets the expected best practice guidance for the fire safety under MRC Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

Unexpected, dangerous and untoward events not only put staff and others at risk but also can seriously impede a unit or an external scientific staff (ESS) team from achieving its targets and goals. The most likely cause of disruption is fire and its aftermath.

Within the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the public sector relatively minor fires, where lives were not threatened, have led to major disruptions to research and teaching programmes. It is important, therefore, that this subject is adequately addressed by MRC establishments and ESS team leaders.

This document sets out the requirements to meet the expected standard in the management of fire safety under MRC Health and Safety Policy and that of UK legislation.

It is the duty of the MRC to protect its staff and assets within its premises from fire.

To minimise the threat of fire the MRC expects to have the following systems in place to protect people and property:

- Arrangements for minimising the risk of a fire emergency
- Emergency procedures for minimising damage or loss in the event of a fire emergency
- Staff training in emergency response
- Fire risk assessments to ensure that premises and work practices minimise fire risk
- Communication to staff of the significant findings of the fire risk assessment
- Planned, regular checks and maintenance
Scope

This document outlines the procedures and practices that should be in place to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This applies to all MRC units regardless of location. Where an MRC Unit sits within a host institution the host would normally have overall responsibility for fire safety for the building structure and communal areas i.e. corridors, stairwells etc. if accessed by other tenants. The fire safety of MRC staff remains the responsibility of the unit director and he must ensure that the requirements of this best practice guide are met.

Background

The previous regime of fire safety legislation was consolidated into The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 that places the onus on the responsible person to control risks through the process of risk assessment. In this context, the responsible person is the Unit Director.

The Corporate Safety, Security and Resilience team will be pleased to offer any additional advice on the application of all or part of this guidance. This document is for the attention of local safety personnel, maintenance managers and others with responsibility for fire safety.

Director’s Summary

All occupiers are required by law to have in place an accurate assessment of fire risks. A fire risk assessment is defined as a process for identifying fire hazards and determining the likelihood (risk) that such hazards will result in a fire. Through the fire risk assessment, directors and ESS team leaders can ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, potential sources of fire are identified and procedures are put in place to reduce or eliminate the risks of fire. The assessment will ensure that an emergency evacuation procedure is in place and that where appropriate staff are trained to use fire fighting equipment. The unit or ESS team continuity plan document should contain information that aids a rapid return to normal working in the event of a fire.
Directors and ESS team leaders can fulfil Council's best practice on fire safety by ensuring that:

- a fire risk assessment has been done,
- evacuation procedures are in place, and
- where appropriate staff are trained to use fire fighting equipment.

Guidance is given in the document on identifying hazards, risks and planning for immediate action following a fire emergency.

**Responsibilities**
Directors and ESS team leaders are responsible for ensuring that arrangements meet or exceed the requirements of this best practice guide. Directors and ESS team leaders should review, and amend as required, their present procedures to ensure they meet these requirements. Procedures should be monitored on a regular basis at least annually.

**Best Practise Summary**
To minimise the threat of fire the MRC expects to have the following systems in place to protect people and property:

- Procedures and practices for eliminating or minimising situations and conditions that could lead to a fire emergency.

- Procedures for an immediate response to fire emergencies that will ensure the safety of all those on its premises and minimise damage or loss to Council's assets, including property, material and data.

- Staff training (where appropriate) should be in place so that staff understand how to use fire-fighting equipment.

- Fire risk assessments to ensure that premises and work practices minimise the fire risk.

**MRC Safety, Security and Resilience Section**
**Head Office**
The best practice guidance specifically covers:

**Guidance Notes**
- **Guidance Note 1** – Fire Safety Management
- **Guidance Note 2** – Fire Risk Assessment
- **Guidance Note 3** – Emergency procedures and training
- **Guidance Note 4** – Fire Safety Precautions for Staff
- **Guidance Note 5** – Fire Safety Checks

**Appendices**
- **Appendix 1** Fire Risk assessment
- **Appendix 2** Fire Risk Assessment Summary

**Useful Links**

**Communities and Local Government Guidance**
The Communities and Local Government (CLG) website contains lots of information on fire safety legislation and enforcement relating to specific types of businesses and business premises.
Fire Safety Guidance Note 1 – Fire Safety Management

General precautions

The MRC has an obligation to take general precautions against fire, to assess and control risks and put into place controls and arrangements to detect, and mitigate the effects of, fire emergencies.

Competent Person

All units should have a competent person in place with suitable experience, qualification and resources to ensure fire risks are managed.

The scope of technical knowledge or experience should include,

- Adequate knowledge of fire
- Adequate experience of fire, control measures and emergency response
- Understanding the hazards which may arise during the work and the precautions which need to be taken

The competent person will normally be formally qualified to a recognised standard, for example with NEBOSH Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management or the Fire Protection Association.

Fire Safety Arrangements

All units should ensure that a fire risk assessment is completed, with controls in place to minimise the risk, and an improvement plan to ensure that fire risk is adequately controlled and control measures are maintained. The significant findings of the risk assessment should be communicated to all staff.

Monitoring and Record Keeping

All fire risk management policies, procedures and guidance should be monitored on a regular basis. If no significant change has occurred then your unit safety committee should consider fire risk at least annually.
The following records should be kept:

- Fire risk assessments and changes made
- Fire detection, alarm and fighting equipment checks, testing and servicing
- Evacuation practices
- Training of staff, including refresher courses

Where host institutions have carried out some or all of the above procedures directors and ESS team leaders should have appropriate records.

The Corporate Safety, Security and Resilience Section in co-operation with Unit Safety Co-ordinators and Unit managers will be pleased to assist in any of the above matters.
Fire Safety Guidance Note 2 – Fire Risk Assessment

The Responsible person must ensure that sufficient resource is provided to maintain fire risk assessments to cover all activities and premises which remain under their control. Where necessary a competent person should be employed to carry out the fire risk assessment.

The fire risk assessment should be reviewed at least annually unless a significant change to premises and or activities occurs which would require the review sooner. A review may also be required if as a result any incidents, accidents or near misses which involved fire, explosions or dangerous substances.

A fire risk assessment should consider the following:

- The potential fire hazards e.g. the use of flammable solvents and gases or the storage of large amounts of combustible material.
- The risk control required i.e. the action to be taken to reduce or eliminate the risks associated with the fire hazards identified.
- The effectiveness of the fire detection and alarm system.
- The evacuation procedure and its effectiveness including emergency routes and exits.
- The type and effectiveness of the fire fighting equipment.
- The provision of communication and training to staff on fire prevention and what to do in the event of a fire.

The fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at the premises and activities undertaken and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises. The aims of the fire risk assessment are:

- To identify sources of;
  - ignition
  - fuel
  - oxygen
• To identify
  o people at risk in and around the premises
  o people who are especially at risk.
• Evaluate, remove or reduce, and protect from risk
  o Evaluate the risk of a fire starting.
  o Evaluate the risk to people from a fire.
  o Remove or reduce fire hazards.
  o Remove or reduce the risks to people from a fire.
  o Protect people by providing fire precautions.
• Record, plan, inform, instruct and train
  o Record any major findings and action you have taken.
  o Discuss and work with other responsible people.
  o Prepare an emergency plan.
  o Inform and instruct relevant people.
  o Provide training.
• Review
  o Annual review of the fire risk assessment
  o Review of fire risk assessments if there are any significant changes
  o Make changes where necessary

Fire Risk Control

There are two principle types of fire risk control:

Safe place controls

These are the physical or mechanical means that eliminate, reduce or control the fire hazard and fire spread including:

• Building fabric and layout including storage facilities for flammable solvents, gases and materials
• Maintenance schedules for plant and equipment
• Air handling systems to control hazardous and combustible atmospheres
• Safe person controls - people management systems and include:
  o Safe systems of work e.g. permit to work and standard operating procedures.
  o Training and supervision.
Communication of fire safety information e.g. findings of risk assessment

The safe place control option is the more effective and preferred approach to fire risk control.

**Fire Protective Measures**

These include internal building design to contain a fire outbreak and the fire fighting equipment located throughout a building. Fire protective measures also include staff training in fire emergency procedures. Included would be the following:

- Fire detection and alarm systems.
- Fire-resisting doors.
- Fire fighting equipment.
- Fire warning signs.
- Emergency lighting.
- Emergency plan.
- Staff training for fire emergency procedures.

**Carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment**

To assist in the undertaking of a fire risk assessment two documents are included as appendices. The first provides a comprehensive process for identifying potential fire risks, fire prevention measures and fire protective measures. It is intended that this full assessment be carried out initially and the results transferred to a more accessible format e.g. document 2, for ease of communication to staff and visitors. All areas of a unit must be adequately assessed and this assessment must be reviewed regularly i.e. annually or when the situation changes e.g. new equipment, refurbishment, and alterations to the fabric or structure of the building etc.

Appendix 1 Fire Risk Assessment
Appendix 2 Fire Risk Assessment Summary

Additional guidance can be found in the following document:

[HM GOV Making Your Premises Safe From Fire](#)
Fire Safety Guidance Note 3 – Emergency Procedures and Training

Emergency planning

One of the fundamental requirements of fire protective measures and the fire risk assessment is to ensure that persons within a building can evacuate safely in the event of an emergency.

The emergency plan should include the following procedures and information for fire emergencies:

- The fire alarm procedures, including how to contact local emergency services
- Evacuation procedures for staff and visitors
- Fire assembly points
- Communication procedures with local emergency services at the site

The evacuation procedures may also address other threats to both staff and premises, for example, the response to a bomb threat, but these may well be a separate component of the emergency plan.

Vulnerable persons may require particular consideration, and should be addressed through Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) which may be developed in consultation with the emergency services. This group may include pregnant workers, young persons, visitors and volunteers, and includes those with physical and mental impairment.

Whatever is decided this must be in the emergency plan and the risk assessment and known to relevant staff and the local emergency services.

Emergency Fire Management Team

In any MRC establishment or ESS team, it is beneficial to appoint a number of people to a fire management team, even when the fire management structure of a host institution has been adopted.
The Fire Management Team is likely to include a number of competent persons or teams who have particular duties and who have received appropriate training prior to undertaking these duties.

In addition to the preventative management structure outlined in Guidance Note 1, an emergency scenario will require competent persons to implement emergency response measures (defined through risk assessment) such as “fire officer and deputies”, the “fire wardens or marshals,” the “fire appointed persons” and the “fire emergency teams”. Training appropriate to the task in hand must be undertaken prior to appointment.

**Fire officer**

All MRC establishments should have an appointed fire officer with one or more deputies (where appropriate).

The role of the fire officer would be to:

- Liaise with the local fire authority, MRC estates management and the host institution in matters associated with fire procedures.
- Ensure that fire evacuation practices are carried out at least twice annually, a fire risk assessment is completed and competent persons are trained.
- Communicate with the emergency authorities on site and the host institution where appropriate.

**Fire Marshalls/Wardens**

MRC establishments should have in place a number of “Fire wardens” or “Fire Marshals” to ensure evacuation.

Their main duty would be in the event of a fire evacuation to:

- Ensure (providing it is safe to do so) that their immediate work area has been safely evacuated
- Close doors and windows (if safe to do so)
- Carry out a roll call at the fire assembly point
- Report to the fire officer or their deputy
The number of fire wardens or marshals required would depend upon the work activities, staff complement and size of the establishment. The fire risk assessment should assist in determining how many persons are required. Remember to appoint sufficient numbers to cover absences due to illness and vacation.

**Appointed persons**

Fire appointed persons are individuals who have been trained in the use of certain types of fire fighting equipment.

The local management should have a policy in place to determine the level of training that is required and the number of persons that require to be trained. MRC establishments may wish to train all staff to a certain level of competence in the use of fire fighting equipment. The decision may be that only a proportion of staff need be trained. The number of staff trained as fire appointed persons, and their level of training, will vary with the work activity and size of the establishment.

The fire risk assessment will aid in determining the number of fire appointed persons that are required and their training needs. The type of equipment required to combat a fire will vary according to a number of parameters. The work activity, the size and number of buildings on the site require to be considered.

Fire appointed persons must only tackle a fire providing the MRC first principles are followed.

It is not a requirement to have fire appointed persons. If however extinguishers are installed it is best practice to train at least a proportion of staff in their use, alternatively explicit instructions must be given to staff that they must not use the extinguishers and they are there for fire service use only.

**Fire emergency teams**

In certain instances it may be necessary to have “Fire emergency teams” within establishments. These teams will be trained to a high level of competence in the
use of all types of fire fighting equipment including the use of breathing apparatus. Fire emergency teams will only be used where the fire risk assessment has shown that it is necessary for one to be formed. The MRC first principles must be followed.

**MRC First Principles in Fire Emergencies**

Never place yourself or others in danger by tackling a fire. Only ever tackle a fire if:

- The fire alarm has been activated.
- Your escape route is ensured.
- The fire is minor and confined to a small area.
- You have been trained to use an appropriate fire extinguisher and feel confident enough to do so.

**General Awareness**

All staff are responsible for working in a manner which reduces the risk of fire.

All staff should be familiar with the fire evacuation procedure. For all new starters the first priority is to ensure that they are fully aware of the fire evacuation procedure. Visitors must also be aware of the fire evacuation procedure.

MRC policy on visitors is explained in greater detail in MRC Policy and Guidance on ‘Visitors and Contracted Services’.

In summary all staff should know:

- How to raise the alarm
- The evacuation procedure
- The fire assembly points
- The significant findings of the fire risk assessment

It is particularly important that staff working out of hours and lone workers know the fire evacuation procedure for their situation.
Emergency Services

For larger fire emergencies, assistance from the emergency services will be needed. To ensure rapid response, particularly on complex sites, planned measures can be implemented, such as:

- Inviting the local emergency services for familiarisation
- Drawing up plans of the building to show hazardous areas
- Agreeing fire plans for radiation areas
- Giving access cards/passes for site entrances
- Installing a “red-box” that contains plans and passes that the fire brigade can open

Rehearsal of plans

It is important to rehearse emergency plans to ensure that they work in practise, and that all staff know which actions to take in such a scenario. Rehearsal of evacuation plans should occur twice per annum. Fire plans for specialist areas requiring a dedicated fire emergency team should be rehearsed more frequently as determined by risk assessment.
Housekeeping

Good housekeeping and fire precautions will reduce the possibility of a fire occurring. Poor housekeeping, carelessness and neglect not only make the outbreak of fire more likely they are also likely to contribute to fire development.

Common causes of fire and explosions include;

- smoking and the careless disposal of smoking materials
- faulty electrical wiring, plugs and sockets, which are overloaded or inadequately protected by the correct fuse or circuit breaker
- electrical equipment left switched on when not in use (unless designed to be permanently connected)
- accumulations of rubbish, paper or other materials that are easily ignitable
- combustible materials left too close to sources of heat
- obstruction to the ventilation of heaters, microwaves, machinery or office equipment
- open flame sources left unattended, careless use and disposal of flammable liquids,
- carelessness by contractors,
- arson and deliberate fires.

Deliberate Fires and Arson

Deliberate fires and arson are often opportunistic but their effects can be devastating to the building and its users. The risk of fires caused by arson can be reduced by;

- reducing the opportunity for fires to occur,
- making it harder for the arsonist to operate,
- taking steps to prevent it.
The MRC is at an increased risk of animal rights protestors wishing to cause a disruption and therefore the following specific measures should be taken where practicable to reduce the risk from arson and deliberate fires;

- minimise the amount of combustible material that is left in and around buildings, ensuring that property is secure with adequate locks on doors and windows and the provision of security lighting and CCTV cameras
- ensure doors and windows are in a good state of repair and locked when not in use
- use good quality locks and padlocks
- ensure stored materials are not being stacked adjacent to fences and walls where it can be set alight from the outside. This is particularly appropriate to rubbish and recycling bins and wooden crates, which should be secured preventing them from being moved to the perimeter of a building
- ask staff to challenge anyone who should not be on the premises and report any suspicious activity to Security immediately
- prohibit the use of high fire risk areas (e.g. server rooms) for the storage of combustible materials
- ensure the premises are secured at the end of the day and any flammable liquids and materials are locked away
- maintain the landscaping around buildings to minimise the natural fire load from trees, shrubs and bushes, this is particularly important in long dry summers

**Smoking**

Careless discarding of cigarette and cigar butts or smoking in inappropriate places can cause fires. The MRC operates a restricted smoking policy where smoking is only permitted in private vehicles or in one of the designated smoking areas.

Each smoking area should be identified by a smoking area sign (pictured below) and is provided with provisions for the safe disposal of smoking paraphernalia, which you are kindly asked to use. If you discover anyone smoking anywhere other than the designated areas you are encouraged to approach them and request they move to the correct location or report them to security.
Storage of Flammable Materials

Flammable and highly flammable liquids present a particularly high fire risk. For example, a leak from a container of flammable solvents, such as acetone, may produce large quantities of heavier-than-air flammable vapours. These can travel large distances, increasing the likelihood of them reaching a source of ignition well away from the original leak, such as a basement containing heating plant and or electrical equipment on automatic timers. Flammable liquids stored in plastic containers can be a particular problem if involved in fire because they readily melt, spilling their contents and fuelling rapid fire growth.

All hazardous substances that are decanted from the original container must be stored in a suitable container with the correct hazard labels identifying the content. Where the substance is diluted it is essential to ensure if hazards still persist and if so they must be identified as before. An example of this is 70% Ethanol which remains flammable once even when diluted; it therefore requires appropriate storage and labelling.

A suitable solvent cupboard will have the following features;

- at least 30 minute fire-resisting construction
- sealed carcass (with bonded or otherwise fire stopped joints)
- high melting point (i.e. greater than 750 °C) hinges and fittings
- display a flammable hazard warning sign (yellow / black triangle with a flame symbol) and the wording ‘highly flammable liquid’
- no vents or, where there are vents, vents which are protected against passage of flame by means of a fire damper (not just a flame arrester)
- bunded storage (e.g. shelves with lips turned upwards).
- rebated doors or lid (preferably with seals)
Whilst this guidance is not primarily concerned with storage of compressed gases, there may be a number of small (i.e. below 500 ml capacity) pressurised gas canisters or cartridges such as aerosol or propellant cans used and stored within labs. Often these cans will utilise a flammable gas such as methane, propane or butane as their propellant and so present a flammable and explosion risk. Ideally these cans should be stored in a dedicated gas store which is in a well-ventilated, safe place outside the laboratory. However, provided the number and volume of flammable gas canisters is kept to a minimum (less than 6), they may be stored within the laboratory, in a separate flameproof and ventilated cupboard.

The key incompatibles to segregate from each other are strong acids from strong bases and strong oxidisers from organic or flammable materials. If mixing of these incompatible materials occurs due to spillage, breakage or leakage the danger is one of reactions that generate heat, toxic vapours, fire and even explosion.

Flammable storage cupboards must not be used for storing any other chemicals.

Where hazardous chemicals need to be stored under controlled temperature conditions to prevent or delay their deterioration. This is often achieved in the laboratory by means of a dedicated refrigerator or freezer. Fridges and freezers used to store flammable and highly flammable liquids must be of a ‘non-sparking’
design and labelled to indicate this. However, it should be noted there is no accepted or formal definition of what consists a ‘non-sparking’ fridge. It is essential that the interior of a fridge used contains no sparking components such as lights, switches or thermostats and is sealed, with no openings or pathways down which flammable vapours from the inside can travel to sparking or non-protected components mounted externally.

Solvents with a flashpoint below 4°C (such as diethyl ether) are able to create an explosive atmosphere within the confined, unventilated enclosure of a fridge. Ideally, all fridges in laboratories should be purchased as non-sparking from the supplier.

**Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Storage and Use**

Where LPG in cylinders or cartridges is present, following risk assessment particular care should be taken to minimise the possibility of its involvement in a fire. The following control measures should act as a guide to ways of minimising the risk from LPG;

- the total amount of LPG in use should be kept to the minimum necessary to meet your needs
- only that required for immediate use should be kept within the premises
- the maximum stock should not exceed 70kg, which should be kept in a safe place, where it cannot be interfered with, and away from stairways, exit doors and places where it might obstruct means of escape
- keep stored LPG cylinders, both full and empty, separate from other flammable and incompatible materials, in a safe and secure location, either in the open air or in a properly constructed and adequately ventilated storeroom

**Compressed Gas Cylinders Storage and Use**

Depending upon the gas contained in the cylinder they have 3 main hazards in relation to fire safety which should be considered;

- They can provide a fuel source (e.g. Hydrogen) to fuel a fire or explosion.
• They could provide an additional source of oxygen (Oxygen), which can either increase the risk of fire and explosion or help it to develop.
• They also can explode in fires due to the stored pressure,

Therefore it is essential to store cylinders correctly and inform the Fire and Rescue Service of their location. Where practicable the use of compressed gas cylinders should be avoided or minimised and control measures put in place to minimise the risk of fire and explosion.

**General Electrical Fire Safety**

Electricity can be a potential ignition source and it is therefore important that where possible the risks from this occurring is minimised. The following acts as a brief guidance on the measures to reduce the risk from fires caused by electricity.

• All electrical items should carry a ‘Portable Appliance Test ’ pass label.
• The user must remember to check the lead and equipment each time it is used for signs of wear and tear or damage, and if anything is found it should be removed from use until it is either repaired or disposed of.
• Throw away and replace damaged cables. Never use tape to mend or join them.
• All work involving electrical infrastructure or equipment MUST be carried out by a competent individual and records should be maintained.
• To prevent the overloading of electrical sockets, the use of cuboid adaptors is NOT PERMITTED. Where necessary the use of individually switched UK fused mains extension leads is permitted where there is a need for additional sockets.

• Always ensure the correct fuse is used for every appliance.
• The maximum load of any socket MUST not exceed 13amps at any one time. Where necessary additional sockets should be requested through the Building Manager.
• Where extension cables are used they shouldn’t be daisy chained (piggybacked) on to additional extension cables.

Where extension cables are used they should be made specifically for the location they are to be used so that they contain the minimum length of cable possible. Where coiled extension cables are to be used they should be fully uncoiled to prevent the build-up of heat within the coil.

Microwave Ovens

Microwave ovens are used every day, both in kitchen and laboratory areas within the workplace. When used properly, the microwave is safe and convenient for heating in a short time. When you become complacent about microwave safety, however, your appliance can cause painful burns and become a potential fire hazard. The following tips will reduce the risk of fire when using microwave ovens:

• Before using a new microwave oven, always read the manufacturers operating procedures and safety precautions first.
• To minimize risk of fire, never attempt to heat articles that are not approved for use in microwave ovens (e.g. tin foil).
• Remove food from packaging before defrosting in a microwave oven. Do not use plastic storage containers, foam trays and plastic wraps in microwave ovens because they are not heat stable at high temperatures.
• Never use recycled paper products in microwave ovens unless they are specifically approved for microwave use. Some recycled products including paper towels and even waxed paper may contain minute metal flecks. When a microwave oven is operating, the interaction between microwaves and the metal can cause sparks and even flames.
• Do not leave a microwave oven unattended when in use, since the heat buildup can cause fires.
• Microwave ovens should be both PAT tested and leak tested annually by a competent tester.
• Ensure that all vents are free from obstructed and that there is a clear area around all microwaves allowing any excess heat to dissipate.
If you have a fire in your microwave oven, turn it off immediately. This will stop the fan so it won’t feed oxygen to the flames. Then simply wait until the fire suffocates. Never open the oven door until you are absolutely certain that the fire is out. If in doubt, call the fire department.

**Portable Electric Heaters**
Portable Electric Heaters can be a potential source of fire ignition, it is therefore important that there use is strictly restricted. The following acts as general guidance to their use

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<tr>
<th>Type of Heater</th>
<th>Open Electrical Bar Heaters</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are NOT PERMITTED for use due to the risk they pose as an ignition source.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Heater</th>
<th>Convector (Including Fan) Heaters</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are NOT PERMITTED for use. Therefore any existing units can be used until replaced with a recommended model providing the following guidance is followed. However no new convector (including fan) heaters should be purchased.</td>
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<td>A clear area around the heater should be maintained at all times to prevent the unit from overheating. This is especially important for the combustible and flammable materials.</td>
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<td>No items should ever be draped over or hung on the heater blocking the grilles as this can cause fires.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Type of Heater</th>
<th>Oil Filled (Radiant) radiators</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Are Recommended for use. These heaters are much safer and not likely to be affected by conditions that may cause them to overheat.</td>
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Please ensure you follow the following general safety measures for all portable heaters:

- Heaters are positioned clear of curtains and furnishings
- A common location for small electric heaters is under desks. In cramped and or untidy workspaces this may pose a potential risk and source of fire. It is difficult to maintain clearance around the heater as papers can easily fall or be accidentally knocked over
- Heaters with timer-switches are disabled or deactivated so that they cannot switch themselves on, when not supervised by staff
- Sit at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from the heater so you do not set fire to your clothes or chair
- No personal heaters are permitted without written permission from the responsible person. Any heaters that are used MUST be inspected and tested as a ‘Portable Electric Appliance’ before use and then included on a schedule for continuous inspections and testing
- If any of the following danger signs are noticed the heater should be removed from service by removing the plug and disposed of;
  - Staining, sooting or discolouration of the appliance or surrounding areas
  - A strange smell when the appliance is working
Fire Safety Guidance Note 5 – Fire Safety Checks

FIRE SAFETY CHECK LIST

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<th>Location:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<th>DAILY CHECKS (NOT NORMALLY RECORDED)</th>
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<td><strong>ESCAPE ROUTES</strong></td>
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<td>Can all fire exits be opened immediately and easily?</td>
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<td>Are fire doors clear of obstructions?</td>
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<td>Are escape routes clear and unobstructed?</td>
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<td><strong>FIRE WARNING SYSTEMS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ESCAPE LIGHTING</strong></td>
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<td>Is emergency lighting and sign lighting working correctly?</td>
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<td><strong>FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT</strong></td>
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<td>Are all fire extinguishers in place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are fire extinguishers clearly visible?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are vehicles blocking fire hydrants or access to them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEKLY CHECKS</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ESCAPE ROUTES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all emergency fastening devices to fire exits (push bars and pads, etc.) work correctly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are external routes clear and safe?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FIRE WARNING SYSTEMS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does testing a manual call point send a signal to the indicator panel? (Disconnect the link to the receiving centre or tell them you are doing a test.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did the alarm system work correctly when tested?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did staff and other people hear the fire alarm?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did any linked fire protection systems operate correctly? (e.g. magnetic door holder released, smoke curtains drop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all visual alarms and/or vibrating alarms and pagers (as applicable) work?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY LIGHTING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are charging indicators (if fitted) visible?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is all equipment in good condition?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is all equipment in the correct location?</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONTHLY CHECKS</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ESCAPE ROUTES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all electronic release mechanisms on escape doors work correctly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do they ‘fail safe’ in the open position?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all automatic or card operated doors on escape routes ‘fail safe’ in the open position, including final exit doors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are fire door seals and self-closing devices in good condition?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all roller shutters provided for fire compartmentation work correctly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are external escape stairs safe?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all internal self-closing fire doors work correctly?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ESCAPE LIGHTING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all luminaires and exit signs function correctly when tested?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have all emergency generators been tested? (Normally run for one hour.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the pressure in ‘stored pressure’ fire extinguishers correct?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SIX-MONTHLY CHECKS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has any firefighting or emergency evacuation lift been tested by a competent person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has any sprinkler system been tested by a competent person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have the release and closing mechanisms of any fire-resisting</td>
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<tr>
<td>compartment doors and shutters been tested by a competent person?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FIRE WARNING SYSTEM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the system been checked by a competent person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all visual alarms and/or vibrating alarms and pagers (as</td>
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<tr>
<td>applicable) work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do voice alarm systems work correctly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was the message understood?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are charging indicators (if fitted) visible?</td>
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<td><strong>ESCAPE LIGHTING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all luminaires operate on test for one third of their rated value?</td>
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<td>Has any dry/wet rising fire main been tested by a competent person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the smoke and heat ventilation system been tested by a competent</td>
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<tr>
<td>person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has external access for the fire service been checked for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>ongoing availability?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have any fire-fighter’s switches been tested?</td>
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<td>Has the fire hydrant bypass flow valve control been tested by a competent person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are any necessary fire engine direction signs in place?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TWELVE-MONTHLY CHECKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the fire alarm system and fire extinguishers are maintained by external contractors via the Fire Safety Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure an evacuation drill is carried out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>