



Corporate Policy

FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1.0 Policy

1.1 Introduction:

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (hereinafter referred to as the 'Fire Safety Order') together with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other associated fire safety legislation and Codes of Practice, impose duties on all employers in respect of fire safety at work. These duties extend to North West Leicestershire District Council (the Council) , its employees and other persons who may be affected by their work activities. As the employer, the Council has formulated a Fire Safety Policy to include these duties.

1.2 Statement of Intent

1.2.1 NWLDC recognises that the fire safety for all employees whilst working within Council premises is primarily the responsibility of the Council. In addition, the duty of care extends to other persons while they are on the Council's premises or affected by the Council's activities. To achieve this effectively, the Council, so far as is reasonably practicable and through the use of risk assessments, implements measures:

- (a) to reduce the risk and spread of fire on the premises.
- (b) in relation to the means for detecting fire on the premises and giving warning in case of fire on the premises.
- (c) in relation to the means of escape from the premises.
- (d) for securing that, at all material times, the means of escape can be safely and effectively used.
- (e) in relation to effective communication of arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire on the premises.
- (f) in relation to the means for fighting fires on the premises.

1.2.2 The Council arranges for the provision of competent, technical advice and support on matters where this is necessary for the implementation of this policy. This includes the provision of servicing of fire safety protective equipment.

1.2.3 No fire safety policy is effective unless it actively involves all employees, and the Council co-operates and consults fully in the appointment of Safety Representatives and non-union appointed representatives. The Council also supports the formation of regular meetings of a representative Health and Safety Committee operating within the Council and chaired by a suitably senior management representative.

1.2.4 The Council ensures that adequate resources are provided to meet its legal responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order and supports all persons carrying it out. In addition, it also periodically reviews the effectiveness of this policy and ensures that any necessary changes are made.

1.2.5 The Council reminds all its employees, whatever their status, of their duties under the Fire Safety Order to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others. They should also co-operate with management as far as is necessary to enable that duty to be performed or complied with.

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1.2.6 Further guidance and information supplements, and expands the arrangements where necessary, and is held within the departmental Health and Safety processes and upon the Councils Intranet. All documents will be added to or modified as legislation or the local situation dictates.

2.0 Organisation

2.1 The Council

2.1.1 The Council (corporate body), as the employer, is ultimately responsible in law for:

- (a) The fire safety of the Council's employees whilst at work.
- (b) The conduct of the Council's undertakings, to ensure the fire safety of the public, and other persons not in their employment.

2.1.2 To meet these responsibilities the Council will ensure that:

- (a) There is an effective overall policy for the fire safety of employees and other persons who may be affected by the Council's undertaking and that adequate funds are available to meet fire safety requirements.
- (b) Any necessary changes are made to the Council's fire safety policy.
- (c) The Council is organised and has sufficient numbers of competent staff to meet its responsibility for fire safety.
- (d) persons are adequately trained, and relevant policies and procedures are communicated.

2.1.3 Where officers hold fire safety responsibilities it is expected they will familiarise themselves with the relevant legislation and supporting guidance or to seek the relevant training or information as required, to fulfil their duties.

2.1.4 Day-to-day responsibilities for matters are delegated to officers as set out in section 2.2

2.2 Responsibilities

2.2.1 Chief Executive

Contained within the Fire Safety Order is reference to a 'responsible person' who has overall responsibility for fire safety within workplaces under their control. The 'responsible person' within the Council is the Chief Executive who is ultimately responsible for the following:

- To take such general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of their employees and others.
- In relation to relevant persons who are not their employees, take such general fire precautions as may reasonably be required in the circumstances.
- Establish procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to relevant persons.
- Arrange for fire safety matters to be discussed by the corporate management team.

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- Ensure arrangements are made for joint consultation of all employees.

2.2.2 Strategic Directors

The Strategic Directors are responsible to ensure the discharge of the fire safety function on behalf of the Chief Executive through the following means:

- Implement and administer throughout their department all legislation and Council policy decisions concerning fire safety, and to ensure that employees at all levels are aware of their responsibilities.
- Ensure that adequate fire safety information, instruction, training and supervision is provided to all employees within their directorate.
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available to meet the foreseeable fire safety requirements of their directorate.
- Written records are made and kept for all fire safety arrangements.
- Arrangements are made for joint consultation with all employees.

2.2.3 Heads of Service

Fire safety legislation as it affects each directorate, together with training, administration and day to day working requirements, justify the need for delegation to personnel under the directorate control. For this purpose, Heads of Service are responsible to the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors (as applicable) for all matters relating to fire safety within their service unit through the following means:

- Corporate safety arrangements, instructions and section guidance relating to fire safety are practised and information relating to regulations and codes of practice is disseminated to those employees for whom they are responsible.
- Publish written and signed safe working arrangements (systems of work) where necessary to safeguard against the risk of fire and to bring them to the attention of their employees.
- Maintain fire safety when reorganising workplaces, changing systems of work, or introducing new plant or machinery.
- Ensure that the responsibilities of their managers/supervisors are undertaken.
- Support the Chief Executive, and Directorate in implementing and discharging their duties under the Fire Safety Order
- Identify and ensure that suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision is provided and that all employees in their units are competent in the fire safety aspects of the work they are required to undertake.
- Identify and appoint enough fire wardens for their service units.
- Ensure that the appointed fire wardens receive suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to fulfil their role.

2.2.4 Managers and Supervisors

Managers/Supervisors are responsible to their Head of Service for all matters relating to fire safety within their section. Each manager or supervisor will be responsible within their section for ensuring that:

- Corporate safety arrangements, instructions and section guidance relating to fire safety are practised and information relating to regulations and codes of

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practice is disseminated to those employees for whom they are responsible. They will also ensure that safe working methods are practised at all times and necessary controls are maintained.

- They are familiar with the Corporate Fire Safety Policy, Organisation and Arrangements document, and any safety rules or codes of practice developed from it.
- All fire hazards are identified, the necessary Fire Risk Assessments are arranged, and control measures developed or maintained to reduce or eliminate the risk of harm to all persons who interface with the work area or operations.
- Suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training, and supervision is provided and that all employees in their section are competent in all aspects of fire safety.
- Additional fire safety training is provided for the appointed fire wardens within their areas of responsibility.
- Employees under their control comply with safe working arrangements and systems at work as it relates to fire safety.
- Fire safety provisions or procedures as set out in Section 3 'Arrangements' (see below), or elsewhere are understood and followed by all persons within their section including visitors and contractors.
- All new employees attend a health and safety induction that covers basic fire safety procedures,
- Fire safety inspections are conducted to determine the effectiveness of the safe working arrangements.
- To work closely with the Safety Officer and Safety Representatives in respect of matters that may affect the fire safety of their employees.
- To maintain and update their own skills, information and knowledge relating to fire safety matters.
- Plant, machinery, and equipment used at work as it relates to fire safety, is safe, maintained in good working order and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and inspection and maintenance records kept.
- Adequate supervision is always available where necessary, especially where inexperienced people are present.

2.2.5 All other employees

All employees will comply with the following requirements:

- To co-operate with the Council as far as is necessary to enable the Council to comply with their legal obligations.
- To act in accordance with all fire safety procedures, safe systems of work or instructions that have been initiated by management for their health and safety.
- To take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the health and safety of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- Not to interfere with intentionally or recklessly or misuse anything provided in the interests of fire safety.
- Report without delay any work situation to that person's line manager that represents a serious and immediate danger to fire safety.

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- Report without delay any matter to that person’s line manager that represented a shortcoming in the Councils protection arrangements.

2.2.6 Health and Safety Officer

The Safety Officer will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide advice and assistance as the Councils competent person, on fire safety matters for the Council and its officers, to enable management to meet their statutory obligations and ensure consistent application of the Corporate Fire Safety Policy.
- Provide an appropriate enforcement role, when a discernible breach of fire safety legislation or non-compliance of any corporate fire safety procedures, is apparent.
- The maintenance, amendment, and distribution of the Corporate Fire Safety Policy and supporting documents.
- Advise and assist management to fulfil their responsibilities for the fire safety of employees and others affected by their actions.
- Generate corporate fire safety procedures for managers to supplement the Section 3 ‘Arrangements’ document.
- Promote and arrange fire safety training for all fire wardens.
- Liaise with statutory bodies such as the HSE and the Fire Service, as necessary.
- Conduct periodic assessments, inspections or audits and draw to the attention of the appropriate Head of Service, concerns as to any unsafe working practices, procedures, plant, or any breach of legislation concerning fire safety and wherever possible, advising on remedial action.
- Promote a positive fire safety culture in conjunction with line management, encouraging fire safety consciousness at all levels within the organisation.

2.2.7 Safety Representatives

In addition to their general duties as employees, Safety Representatives have fire safety responsibilities to their members to:

- Promote co-operation between management and employees and monitor the local arrangements for effecting the councils Fire Safety Policy.
- Make periodic inspections of selected areas of the councils workplaces and equipment in the interest of fire safety in conjunction with management and/or the Safety Officer.
- Make appropriate recommendations for the improvement of conditions as regards fire safety and receive and consider reports concerned with monitoring activities.
- Secure the co-operation of all employees in the promotion of fire safety.
- Participate in drawing up fire safety rules.
- Consider the means whereby regulations, instructions, notices, and other written and pictorial material relating to fire safety in the authority are brought to the attention of employees.
- Be aware of the fire hazards within the workplace relating to the employees they represent, and the measures in force to eliminate or minimise the risks.
- Attend Safety Committee meetings if requested to do so by their Union.

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3 Arrangements

The Council recognises its obligations under the Fire Safety Order 2005 and implements the following practical arrangements to meet these obligations.

3.1 Fire Risk Assessments

3.1.1 It is a requirement under the regulatory reform (Fire safety) Order that Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken for all properties owned by the Council where they are the responsible person or have an obligation as a duty holder. It is the responsibility of the Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service to ensure that Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) are completed.

3.1.2 The appropriate type of FRA will be arranged and undertaken by competent fire safety Consultant or Council officer. The FRA will relate to the fire safety of employees and of persons not in employment, (e.g., visitors to the premises), arising out of or in connection with the Councils undertaking.

3.1.3 The FRA's will be recorded for each building and will be stored on the system within each area. They will be readily available on the system. The FRA will identify any measures that need to be undertaken to comply with Fire regulations.

3.1.4 The FRA should be reviewed at least annually to ensure it is still relevant to the conditions that exist and that there have been no changes to the building or legislation that would affect its suitability.

3.2 Fire Precautions

3.2.1 The Council will implement fire preventative measures and will make and give effect to such fire safety arrangements as are appropriate, having regard to the size of the undertaking and the nature of activities.

3.2.2 These fire safety arrangements are more specifically referred to in the following sections.

3.3 Flammable Substances

3.3.1 Where flammable substances are present in or on Council premises, the Council will ensure that the risk to relevant persons related to the presence of the substance is either eliminated or reduced as far as is reasonably practicable.

3.3.2 The Council will so far as is reasonably practicable, replace a dangerous substance (or the use of a dangerous substance), with a substance or process which either eliminates or reduces the risk to relevant persons.

3.3.3 The Council will arrange for the safe handling, storage and transport of flammable substances and waste containing flammable substances.

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3.4 Fire Detection and Fire Fighting

3.4.1 All premises will be equipped with fire detectors, alarms and appropriate fire-fighting equipment. Measures will be taken for firefighting in Council premises and competent persons (fire wardens) nominated to implement those measures. The Council will ensure that the number of such persons, their training and the equipment available to them are adequate, considering the size of, and the specific hazards involved in, the premises concerned.

3.4.2 The Council will arrange for any necessary contacts with external emergency services, particularly as regards firefighting, rescue work, first aid and emergency medical care.

3.5 Emergency routes and exits

3.5.1 Emergency exits from premises and the exits themselves will be kept clear at all times.

3.5.2 Emergency routes and exits will lead as directly as possible to a place of safety.

3.5.3 The number, distribution and dimensions of emergency routes and exits will be adequate having regard to the use, equipment and dimensions of the premises and the maximum number of persons who may be present there at any one time.

3.5.4 Emergency doors will open in the direction of escape unless in so doing they create additional hazards whereby persons could be struck by the door.

3.5.5 Sliding or revolving doors will not be used for exits specifically intended as emergency exits.

3.5.6 Emergency doors will not be so locked or fastened that they cannot be easily and immediately opened by any person who may require to use them in an emergency.

3.5.7 Emergency routes and exits will be indicated by signs.

3.5.8 Emergency routes and exits requiring illumination will be provided with emergency lighting of adequate intensity in case of failure of normal lighting.

3.6 Procedures for Serious and Imminent Danger

3.6.1 The Council will establish and where necessary, implement appropriate procedures, including fire drills, to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to relevant persons. The Council will ensure that persons will be prevented from resuming work in any situation where there is still a serious and imminent danger.

3.6.2 The Council will nominate enough competent persons to implement those procedures as far as they relate to the evacuation of persons from premises. The competent persons nominated to implement procedures for the evacuation of

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persons from premises will have complete authority with respect to and during this evacuation.

3.7 Maintenance

3.7.1 The Council will ensure that its premises and any facilities, equipment and devices provided in respect of the premises are subject to a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

3.7.2 Where the premises form part of a building, the Council will make arrangements with the occupier of any other premises forming part of the building for the purpose of ensuring that the requirements of the above paragraph are met.

3.8 Safety Assistance

3.8.1 The Council will appoint competent persons to assist in undertaking the preventative and protective measures. These persons will be the appointed Fire Wardens and the Health and Safety officer.

3.8.2 The Council will ensure that the persons appointed have adequate time available and the means at their disposal to fulfil their functions.

3.9 Provision of Information to Employees

3.9.1 The Council will provide all employees with comprehensible and relevant fire safety information on:

- The risks to them identified by the risk assessments
- The preventative and protective measures
- The procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger
- The identities of the appointed fire wardens

3.10 Training

3.10.1 The Council will ensure that all employees are provided with adequate fire safety information:

- At the time when they are first employed
- Periodically repeated thereafter

3.10.2 The training will include suitable and sufficient instruction and training on the precautions and actions to be taken by employees to safeguard themselves and other relevant persons on the premises.

3.10.3 The training will be provided in a manner appropriate to the risks identified by the fire risk assessments. Specific fire safety training will be provided at regular intervals to the Council's appointed fire wardens. Particular attention is to be paid to young and inexperienced employees to ensure that they are properly supervised.

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3.11 Fire Evacuation - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)

3.11.1 Line Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) are provided for staff where assisted emergency evacuation is required. The PEEP template is available from the Health and Safety SharePoint pages or via the Health and Safety Officer.
- Ensuring those assigned responsibilities for assisting persons to which a PEEP applies are aware and receive appropriate training in the use of equipment required for evacuation e.g., Evac Chair training.
- Ensuring Fire Wardens for the building area are aware of the presence and content of the PEEP and for whom it is provided.

3.12 Records

3.12.1 The Council will ensure that there are suitable and sufficient arrangements for keeping of statutory records. The statutory records will include risk assessments, safe systems of work, fire evacuation procedures, completed fire safety logbooks, fire safety training records etc.

3.13 Monitoring

3.13.1 Monitoring of fire safety performance will be undertaken. This will be achieved through fire safety inspections, surveys, sampling, and study of fire safety documentation. There will be sufficient staff with adequate facilities to conduct the monitoring.

3.13.2 In the event of a fire safety incident the performance of individuals or groups will be measured against the extent of compliance with the Fire Safety Policy objectives as set out within this Policy and specific procedures.

3.14 Review

3.14.1 The Fire Policy will be reviewed as a result of any change either to the applicable legislation or within the Council or any of its operations that have an effect upon the arrangements for fire safety. Reviews will be conducted by the Health and Safety Officer in consultation with senior management. Amendments will be circulated to the Unions and made available to all employees as part of the consultation process prior to the final document.

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