

Guidance on Carrying Out a Fire Drill

This guidance is designed for anyone arranging and carrying out fire drills in Premises. To comply with the current legal requirements, formal fire drills should be carried out annually in low to normal risk premises or in line with the premises fire risk assessment.

Organising a fire drill is quite straightforward but needs a little planning to make it effective. The guidance below describes what to do plus issues that need to be considered as part of arranging and carrying out a fire drill.

What are the objectives / benefits?

A formal fire drill acts as a learning experience for all those involved:

Organisers and those with a responsibility for fire safety in a building can assess the effectiveness of their fire safety management procedures including:

- Use and effectiveness of fire marshals / wardens plus the control of the evacuation and assembly area;
- Effectiveness of the alarm investigation team
- Effectiveness of communications with and support from Security and Maintenance
- Suitability of procedures for evacuating those people who are unable to escape without assistance (personal emergency evacuation plans or PEEPs)
- It is an opportunity to get building occupants familiar with the alternative escape routes from buildings, rather than falling back on the normal way into and out of the building
- Staff and building occupants will learn the sound of the fire alarm and how to respond to it
- Staff and other building occupants will learn to use alternative escape routes and how to get from the final exits to the fire assembly area
- Staff and other building occupants will be familiar with who and how to report problems or hazards in relation to the building or people.

Who arranges a fire drill?

Normally the Director, Office Manager, Health and Safety Manager or the person who has control of the premises. The person will need to be able to make a decision on the best time for a drill, taking into account; the impact of work processes, occupants and disruption of services etc.

When should a fire drill take place?

There is no benefit in holding a fire drill when a building is empty or lightly occupied as it is a learning exercise. You need to know what goes wrong as well as what works well.

What to do before the fire drill

Having decided when it will be, the organiser needs to:

- Contact the facilities or maintenance persons to advise of the drill if there is a need to isolate certain services that would otherwise shut down when the fire alarm sounds.
- On the day of the drill, contact any automatic response service or alarm receiving centre that your fire alarm is connected to, and advise them when the drill will take place. This will prevent an automatic unwanted call to the local Fire Service and prevent an unwanted visit!
- There is no need to contact the Fire Brigade to make them aware.
- Ready the Fire Log Book for recording the drill
- Arrange a feedback time soon after the drill for all Fire Marshals and Response Team members to attend a debriefing. It would be useful to have a copy of the written procedures for all the attendees for information and review.

What to implement during the fire drill:

- Consider setting off the alarm from a manual call point rather than using the alarm panel. Doing it this way means alarm investigation teams can put their training into practice.
- Consider closing off one escape route each drill, especially the main way in and out. This encourages people to use the alternative escape routes. You could use disposable tape or a sign on the door or a fire warden to do this.
- Be aware of anyone working or studying in the building that has a mobility issue that would prevent them using the stairs to escape. It may be appropriate to discuss their wishes in advance of the drill: they may want to take part and be assisted out of the building using their agreed means of escape; they may want to go to the refuge and use the communications system but not be taken out of the building. They could wait at the refuge until the drill is over. If your building is part of a “complex” where it is possible to carry out horizontal evacuation from one building to another, that option could be practiced as part of the fire drill, if the disabled person is in agreement.
- Also consider anyone in the building with other forms of disability. For example, some heart conditions could make using the stairs in a potentially stressful evacuation a risky business. Do we want someone to take part if they could become ill as a result? Obviously if there was a real fire they would need to leave the building along with everyone else.

Should you tell people in advance?

Unless it is absolutely essential, building occupants, including fire marshals / wardens, should not be forewarned of a drill. If they are, the drill will not be realistic. Exceptions to this must be those situations where advance planning needs to be done to avoid unnecessary injury, loss of research or animal life. Those buildings where such risks exist should already have suitable procedures in place. Similarly, if there are large numbers of the public in a building, telling fire wardens in advance of the drill will enable them to reassure the visitors and direct them safely out of the building.

What to monitor during the drill

- A record of the overall evacuation time will be needed to provide information for past and present drills on improvements and to consider if the time was adequate to ensure no risk to life. Average times are approximately 3 minutes, however these may be more depending on the size and complexity of the building.
- Check that those with specific roles carry them out effectively, e.g. fire wardens, alarm investigators, porters, security officers; etc.
- Are fire doors shut, are all escape routes clear?
- Are all areas checked (swept) to ensure empty of occupants?
- Does every one go to the assembly area or just mill around outside the front door?
- Are all escape routes used or just the main entrance?
- Are there people in the building who need assistance to evacuate? Did the procedure work if they chose to take part in the drill?
- Have those trained to operate evacuation chairs put the training into practice as part of the drill? Did it work/do they need more practice?
- Was information collated from the Fire Marshals and reported adequately to the person in Charge ready for further action and reporting to the Fire Service on their arrival?

What if people refuse to co-operate and remain in the building?

Except by prior arrangement and only in exceptional circumstances as outlined above, everyone in a building must leave and go to the assembly area. This is not just your health and safety procedures it is a requirement of fire safety legislation. Staff or students who deliberately fail to comply without a valid reason can expect to be subjected to your internal disciplinary procedure.

Ensure your staff are trained in their roles as Fire Marshals and contact Swan Fire for an onsite cost effective dynamic course or send delegates offsite to our wonderful parkland training venue at Egrove Park in Kennington, in Oxfordshire.

We wish you every success in your future fire drills.

Fire Marshal & Fire Marshal Refresher

You have a legal responsibility to train Fire Marshals for your organisation and implement a Fire Safety Policy to be legally compliant, so here is Swan Fire's solution to ensuring that you are in control with minimum fuss and minimum cost.

Course Aim:

- To build knowledge on the nature and causes of fire.
- How to manage Evacuation of employees in accordance with your own company fire safety policy.
- Fire safety management and Fire Marshal duties including use of fire extinguishers on small fires.
- To gain knowledge on the types and appropriate use of different fire extinguishers.
- We provide a Hi-Vis vest, example fire safety policy and log book template for each Fire Marshal.

Course Contents Include:

- Explanation on how fire starts, develops and travels
- The immediate effects of smoke and fire
- Your emergency response and evacuation procedures
- Human behaviour and how to control it in an emergency situation
- What is legally required in a Fire Safety Policy and a template document to use on return to work
- Full explanation on extinguisher types, their uses and limitations
- Hands on practical with extinguishers on variety of small controlled live fires

Course Costs:

Hold a 4 hour course at your premises for up to 15 delegates for the cost of £565 plus VAT.

A refresher 2 ½ hour course is offered to all clients for up to 15 delegates for the cost of £495 plus VAT. This is for delegates who have attended a Fire Marshal course within the last 3 years and this covers the same topics as above in a condensed format.

For Individual delegates or where you are unable to hold training at your premises, you can attend our popular Open Fire Marshal Courses held monthly at Egrove Park Conference Centre on the Outskirts of Oxford from 9am to 1pm for just **£99** per person plus VAT. See the course dates on **page 9** www.swanfire.co.uk or call 01993 892000.

Free Hi Vis
Vest and
Fire Policy
Template



2018 OPEN FIRE MARSHAL COURSE DATES

- Thursday 18th January 2018
- Tuesday 20th February 2018
- Thursday 8th March 2018
- Wednesday 18th April 2018
- Thursday 17th May 2018
- Wednesday 20th June 2018
- Thursday 12th July 2018
- *August 2018 - no course*
- Thursday 20th September 2018
- Thursday 18th October 2018
- Wednesday 14th November 2018
- Thursday 13th December 2018

The cost is only £99 plus VAT per delegate!

“ I loved Egrove Park as a training venue, easy and free to park, welcoming and more importantly an amazing selection of free beverages and biscuits”



Egrove Park Conference Centre Location and Venue Details for Fire Marshal Course

Training Venue:

Egrove Park Conference Centre, Kennington, Oxford, OX1 5NY.

Egrove Park is Said Business School's executive education centre situated in its own grounds of 37 acres of parkland just two miles from Oxford City Centre, just before entering Kennington Village.

Public transport - Bus from Oxford centre number 35 drops outside the entrance every 20 minutes.

Car: Once you reach the southern bypass, immediately get in the left hand lane and look out for the slip road on your left to Kennington. Egrove Park is located before you enter the sign posts for Kennington.

Onsite free parking, unlimited complimentary beverages and biscuits for delegates throughout the course. Egrove Park Conference Centre delivers a professional yet relaxing environment to learn in, with an outstanding building and parkland backdrop.

There are limited places on course dates, so please contact us to reserve your place on 01993 892000 or email admin@swanfire.co.uk

