

CORPORATE PROCEDURE

FIRE SAFETY

1. Aims of the procedure

The aim of this Corporate Procedure is to prevent or adequately control the risk of fire in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) premises which will include any building in which the Council:

- is responsible for fire precautions; and/or
- occupies all, or any part, of the building (whether on a permanent, part-time or temporary basis); and/or
- is the landlord of a building in multiple occupation.

The procedure needs a high level of management commitment in support of a professional approach to managing fire related issues, including the training of staff.

In doing so it will act to provide the following benefits to NPTCBC and its employees: -

- Safer working environment
- Legal compliance Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order 2005.

Responsibilities

Corporate Directors

Corporate Directors shall be responsible for the overall implementation of this Corporate Procedure

Strategic

The Authority has appointed a Property Compliance Officer who is responsible to the Director of The Environment via the Head of Property and Regeneration and the Property Resources Manager.

The Property Compliance Officer has responsibility for co-ordinating the requirements of fire legislation through the implementation of the Fire Safety Corporate Procedure throughout the Authority.

The Property Compliance Officer will ensure:

- that Fire Risk Assessments of each of the Council's properties are undertaken.
- that any action plan set out in a Fire Risk Assessment is actioned and monitored until the actions are complete.
- periodic audits of buildings are undertaken in accordance with the procedure and make recommendations on the prioritisation of capital works to reduce fire risks having regard to available financial resources.
- Arrangements are made for the carrying out of capital works via the Council's Capital Programme.
- occupiers of buildings are notified of any maintenance or management issues that they need to address.
- that advice on fire safety issues is provided to occupiers of NPTCBC buildings.

Responsible Person

The "Responsible Person" for each premise will ensure that:

- a Fire Risk Assessment is in place for their building.
- employees and visitors to the workplace receive information in the action needed in an emergency.
- visitors and employees participate in fire drills.
- fire wardens are appointed and trained to assist with evacuation in the event of a fire breaking out.
- all requirements of the Fire Safety Corporate Procedure are implemented in respect of the workplace under his/her control, particularly any recommendations in a Fire Risk Assessment.
- persons providing maintenance services to the workplace do not impair or interfere with any aspects of fire precautions within the building, particularly building design and the provision, maintenance or test of fire protection equipment.
- all fire escape routes are kept clear and free from obstructions.
- fire alarm testing takes place weekly at a fixed time.

- fire drills are undertaken on the premises at least twice a year and more frequently should the demands of the service dictate.(Special requirements may be required for some establishments such as Homes for the Aged etc.)
- on-site records are kept as indicated below under “Records”.
- if there is a significant change to the building, its occupancy or the activities that are carried out there, the Fire Precautions Officer must be notified so that the Fire Risk Assessment is reviewed.
- they liaise with others sharing the workplace on fire safety matters, obtaining information and records, organising fire drills etc

Fire Wardens (where applicable)

Where it is safe to do so Fire Wardens are responsible for ensuring their designated area is clear of all personnel in an emergency situation.

Fire Wardens have the added responsibility of:

- reporting their area is clear to the Responsible Person at the fire assembly point
- attack fires with available fire-fighting equipment if the escape route is compromised and if safe to do so.
- conduct regular fire safety inspections of their area.

Corporate Health and Safety

The Corporate Health and Safety Section if required will provide advice on fire related issues to all Council workplaces throughout the County Borough via general health and safety inspections. These may identify fire precaution shortfalls of which any significant finding will be reported to the Fire Precautions Officer and Responsible Person to take appropriate action.

Employees

All employees shall:

- avoid creating a fire or damaging or interfering with any equipment that may be used in fire fighting or prevention.
- respect the no smoking policy within Council buildings
- refrain from bringing privately owned portable electrical items into the workplace. Other high fire risk equipment such as gas burning items should not be brought into the workplace either.

- ensure that sufficient clear space is maintained in rooms for unobstructed exit
- in the event of a fire or hearing the fire alarm, take appropriate action in accordance with the fire action notices or other instructions and training that has been received.

Co-operation between Directorates

Where buildings are occupied by more than one Directorate, it is essential that there is co-operation to ensure that all aspects of the Fire Safety Corporate Procedure are implemented in an appropriate manner. This will require the full co-operation of the Responsible Person appointed for the building by each Directorate. For example:

- the fire procedures for the building will need to take into account the requirement to avoid unnecessary disruption to Council services;
- housekeeping arrangements and waste management will require discussion between the Directorates;
- if a Directorate employs disabled persons, their personal evacuation plan will be the responsibility of that Directorate, but the arrangements may rely on equipment and personnel provided by another Directorate;
- the Responsible Person will appoint and train fire wardens
- in consultation with the Property Compliance Officer the Responsible Person shall identify any critical facilities that require special fire protection measures,.

For the following buildings the role of the Responsible Person will be assumed by the Facilities Manager of the Environment Directorate.

- Port Talbot Civic Centre
- New Neath Civic Centre
- Old Neath Civic Centre
- Penllergaer Civic Centre
- Aberavon House
- Ffrwdwyllt House
- Archives- Addison Road

- First Shop Stop, Pontardawe
- Neath Demountable Office

Records

Records will be kept by the Responsible Person in a single location, along with any fire risk assessment in respect of:

- testing, maintenance and repair of fire protection equipment, lightning protection systems, etc.;
- staff training and fire drills;
- fire alarm activations;
- fires;
- approval of alterations to the building.

All such records must be readily accessible for inspection at any reasonable time. A fire safety logbook shall be held at the reception or security desk at the building entrance.

If records are computerised, rather than kept in a logbook, access to the records must be readily available.

Procedural Guidance and Testing of Fire Safety Systems and Equipment

Fire alarm system

Testing

The fire alarm shall be tested as described below. (These tests will, unless otherwise stated be carried out by the Responsible Person)

Daily:

The fire alarm control panel shall be checked to see that it indicates normal operation, if not, any fault shown is recorded in the logbook and remedial action taken. All faults are to be reported to the helpdesk immediately.

Weekly:

The correct operation of the alarm system shall be checked by actuating at least one trigger device, i.e. detector, call point or end of line switch, on any one zone. Each zone is tested in turn and at every test a different trigger device is used so that all trigger devices are tested over a period of time. The entry in the

fire precaution logbook must identify the zone and trigger device used for each test.

Additional tests:

Additional tests shall be arranged by the Responsible Person quarterly, annually, and five yearly in accordance with British Standard 5839 by an approved competent person e.g. Building Services.

Escape Lighting

The Escape Lighting shall be tested and examined as described below. (These tests will, unless otherwise stated be carried out by the Responsible Person)

Daily:

A check shall be made to ensure that steps have been taken to remedy any fault recorded in the logbook.

Monthly:

Every luminaire and internally illuminated exit sign is energised from its emergency supply by simulating a lighting circuit power failure. During the power failure simulation, all luminaires and signs are checked to ensure that all lamps are illuminated. The test needs to continue only until this has been done.

Additional tests:

The Responsible Person shall arrange for additional tests six monthly, annually, and three yearly by an approved competent person in accordance with the relevant British Standard.

Fire fighting equipment

All fire extinguishers shall conform to British Standard 5423 and are to be hung on wall brackets with the base of the extinguisher at a suitable height for use by the occupants of the building, or they are sited in permanent Fire Points.

The extinguishers shall be of a suitable size and weight for use by the occupants of the building.

Testing

Monthly:

All fire extinguishers shall be examined by the Responsible Person to ensure they are in good condition and that extinguishers are in place, have not been discharged or lost pressure and have not been damaged.

Annually:

All fire fighting equipment shall be inspected and serviced by a competent person.

Means of escape

Escape routes (corridors, stairways, gangways, walkways etc.) and exits shall be kept free from combustible materials, obstructions, and trip hazards. All doors that may be used as a means of escape are to be opened easily without the use of a key, by anyone escaping from the premises.

Signage

Emergency escape routes and exit doors that are not in common use should be clearly indicated, as appropriate, by suitable signs. However, in certain circumstances, such as places of public assembly, all doors should be signed. These signs must conform to BS 5499.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

The Council has published guidelines on this issue, and is available to download off the Intranet. Ref. NPT/SP/GN-9

Flammable materials

Workplaces in which large amounts of flammable materials are stored or used can present a greater hazard than those where the amount kept is small.

Wherever possible:

- quantities of flammable materials should be reduced to the smallest amount necessary, and kept away from escape routes;
- highly flammable materials should be replaced by less flammable ones;
- employees who use flammable materials should be properly trained in their safe storage, handling and use; and
- stocks of office stationery and supplies and flammable cleaners' materials should be kept in separate cupboards or stores – if they open onto a corridor or stairway escape route, they should be fire-resistant with a lockable or self-closing fire door.