

Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences

Fire Safety Policy

In conjunction with Oxford University
Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 covers general fire safety in England and Wales. For the purposes of this document, the 'responsible person' is the employer The University of Oxford with many of the premises owned and under the control of Oxford University NHS Foundation Trust (OUH). The Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences (NDS) has a presence on a few sites: The John Radcliffe Hospital (JR), The Botnar, The Old Road Campus Research building (ORCRB), NHSBT, The Churchill Hospital, The Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism (OCDEM), The Transplant Centre, Radiobiology Research Institute (RRI) and The Institute of Regenerative and Developmental Medicine (IDRM).

A fire can result in catastrophic consequences should it occur, and all fires no matter how small they are to start with, have the potential for developing into larger incidents which can cause death and injury, widespread damage to buildings and significant disruption of services, loss of equipment or facilities, insurance claims or prosecutions. It is of vital importance that all possible measures are taken to promote the principles of good fire prevention and to prevent fires from occurring in the first place.

The underlying risk from fire in healthcare buildings services is considered to be generally higher than the risks in many other types of premises; it is therefore of vital importance that all possible measures are taken to promote the principles of good fire prevention and to prevent fires from occurring in the first place. Most fires are preventable. Those responsible for workplaces and other buildings to which the public have access can avoid them by taking responsibility for and adopting the right behaviours and procedures.

Scope

This policy is intended for employees in the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences, contractors or visitors that have reason to be on the premises; with the aim of providing a safe working environment. To cover The John Radcliffe Hospital, The Botnar, The Old Road Campus Research building, NHSBT, The Churchill Hospital, The Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism, The Transplant Centre, Radiobiology Research Institute (RRI) and The Institute of Regenerative and Developmental Medicine (IDRM).

Document History

Review date	Version number	Reason for update or review	Written by
2021	1	New document required to update and replace Local Fire Policy Rules For Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences 24/03/2017 by Jakub Kupinski	Jessica Doondeea
2022	2	Head of Department sign off added, no further changes	Jessica Doondeea
2023	3	Change of University Fire Officer and update on site contacts	Jessica Doondeea

Next review due: February 2024

Related documents

- Fire risk assessment
- Fire safety folder and evacuation plan

Responsible person

Heads of department, as defined by the Health and Safety Management Responsibilities Policy Statement, S2/11, and including the Registrar, have delegated authority to act as the 'Responsible Person' for buildings, offices, laboratories, residential accommodation or other structures under their control.

Heads of department are expected to appoint an individual to the role of departmental fire officer. The departmental fire officer will act as the 'Competent Person' in the areas they cover and can assist or, where appropriate, oversee the implementation of this policy statement on behalf of the head of department.

Site Fire Officer and Fire Wardens

- Level 5 and 6, JR
 - Jessica Doondeea (FO), Jo Snoeck (FW), Adam Lambert (FW) and Dimitrios Doultinos (FW)
- The West Wing, JR
 - Maen Bazo (FO) – maen.bazo@ndcn.ox.ac.uk Facilities Team available 24/7 (tel: 07521 161 549)
- The Botnar
 - Dave Banfield (FO) - dave.banfield@ndorms.ox.ac.uk
- Old Road Campus Research Building
 - Charles Parkins (FO) - orcrb.reception@ndm.ox.ac.uk
- NHSBT
 - Letizia Lo Faro (FO) - letizia.lofaro@nds.ox.ac.uk Abigail Lamikanra (FW) and Pat Tsang (FW) – NDCLS
- OCDEM
 - Rebecca Spires (FW)
- The Transplant Centre
 - Jon Milton (FW – fire training pending)
- Radiobiology Research Institute
 - Caroline Fitchett (FO) and Dimitrios Doultinos (FW)
- Institute of Developmental and Regenerative Medicine
 - Ed Moar (FO) and Sarah Short (FW – fire training pending)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees, patients and others on premises it occupies, and has a specific duties under the Fire Safety Order in regards to matters relating to fire precautions and fire safety. This commitment is demonstrated through continuing compliance with all relevant statutory fire safety legislation, and recommendations as set out in HTM Guidance, British Standards and other codes of practice in all premises for which it is responsible in regards to fire safety to the extent that they have control.

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust:

- a) The fire warning and detection systems are to be checked, tested and maintained in accord with the contract set up between the Trust and the Fire Alarm Contractor.
- b) Emergency lighting is provided to assist the safe evacuation of all people in Trust premises in the event of a fire involving a power failure to the normal lighting systems.
- c) Portable Fire Fighting Equipment is provided to enable trained staff to efficiently and effectively deal with small fires where considered safe to do so, based upon their training and knowledge.
- d) In order to assist employees, patients, visitors and other persons in the premises owned or occupied by the Trust a range of obligation / advisory / hazard and prohibition notices will be posted in conspicuous locations as necessary. This is to inform and remind people in the buildings of any fire safety instructions and the correct procedures to follow in case of fire.

General fire precautions are in place:

- a) to reduce the risk of fire and to prevent the spread of fire
- b) to provide a means of escape from the premises
- c) to ensure that at all times, the means of escape can be safely and effectively used
- d) to provide fire-fighting equipment on the premises
- e) to have a method of fire detection on the premises to provide warnings in the event of a fire
- f) to instruct and train employees; and ways to mitigate the effects of fire

The role of the Fire Officer will ensure:

- a) that a Fire Risk Assessment is completed with relevant personnel on a minimum of a two yearly basis, or sooner if changes occur in legislation, personnel, premises or other circumstance effecting fire safety
- b) that records are kept up to date on the testing and maintenance of relevant fire safety systems, equipment and training of staff as required in the fire safety policy
- c) that all staff are trained and competent in fire management commensurate with their roles and responsibilities
- d) the management of any report of potential or actual fire hazardous situations or near misses
- e) correct writing and implementation of Fire Safety Protocols including the writing of standard and individual "Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans" (PEEPS) for disabled persons and those requiring assistance
- f) ensure that routes to emergency exits from premises and the exits themselves are kept clear at all times

The role of the Fire Warden is to carry out a floor 'sweep' of designated areas reporting to the assembly point to inform the relevant persons of spaces that are empty or any unchecked areas within 5 minutes if safe to do so.

Maintenance

Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust has a no smoking policy on the premises.

Equipment used on site is subject to annual portable appliance testing (PAT). If work includes welding or soldering a permit is required, and any heating element devices should not be plugged into multi-sockets. The Trust regularly tests the smoke and heat detectors which is carried out by a contractor.

Preventative and Protection Measures

The buildings occupied by the NDS have smoke detectors fitted and an alarm system in place, as well as fire-fighting equipment such as extinguishers available for use in the event of a fire. Exit routes are sign posted and there is emergency lighting fitted. Some doors are held open by magnets and will close if the alarm is activated; others are labelled as fire doors and must not be propped open.

The Principles of Prevention:

- (a) Avoiding risks
- (b) Evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided
- (c) Combating the risks at source
- (d) Adapting to technical progress
- (e) Replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or less dangerous
- (f) Developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work and the influence of factors relating to the working environment
- (g) Giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures
- (h) Giving appropriate instructions to employees.

Individual Responsibilities

- a) Take reasonable care for the safety of yourself and of other relevant people who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work
- b) Co-operate with the appointed fire officer or wardens to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with
- c) Inform your manager or colleagues if any work situation might present a serious and immediate danger to safety or if as a result may result in shortcomings of protection arrangements made by the employer
- d) Electrical items e.g. chargers, brought on-site should be in good working order and not faulty and electrical circuits must not be overloaded

Dangerous substances

The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR) require employers to assess the risk of fires and explosions arising from work activities involving dangerous substances, and to eliminate or reduce these risks.

Dangerous substances that cause fire and explosions, where a dangerous substance is present in or on the premises

- a) risk to relevant persons related to the presence of the substance is either eliminated or reduced so far as is reasonably practicable
- b) 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

- c) if unavoidable, apply measures consistent with the risk assessment and appropriate to the nature of the activity or operation

If staff need to use dangerous substances, they should be aware of how to handle them. For instance:

- a) Flammable reagents – reasonable quantities kept in secure flame retardant cabinets
- b) Acid reagents – these are kept in acid cabinets, bases to be stored separately
- c) Compressed gases – regulators are checked annually
- d) Spare butane cylinders – kept in a flame retardant cabinet

Risk assessments are carried out to identify what fire precautions need to be implemented in order to comply with regulations. They are to be completed annually using the University Safety Office proforma and must be carried out by a trained individual. A copy is to be forwarded to the University Safety Office who will maintain a central register.

- a) Hazardous properties of substances need to be identified
- b) Control measures need to be in place to remove the risk or if this is not possible, control them
- c) Put measures in place to reduce the effects of any incidents involving dangerous substances
- d) Circumstance of the work
 - Substances used and their possible interactions
 - The amount of substance used
 - Arrangements for safe handling, storage, transportation and disposal of waste
- e) The likelihood that an explosive atmosphere will occur
- f) the likelihood that ignition sources, including electrostatic discharges, will be present and become active and effective
- g) If places are connected to areas which may cause an explosive atmosphere
- h) The scale of anticipated effects
- i) Places connected via openings to where an explosive atmosphere could occur
- j) Any additional information which may be useful

Staff training

All responsible persons, departmental fire officers, and competent persons will attend a suitable training course provided by the University Safety Office every two years. Individuals will undertake refresher training every five years.

All staff will be required to have fire training at induction and to do annual fire training to ensure all staff are able to undertake their individual roles in regard to fire safety measures in a competent manner.

Evacuation

- a) Routes to emergency exits from premises and the exits themselves will be kept clear at all times and lead as directly as possible to a place of safety
- b) People should be able to evacuate the premises as quickly as possible
- c) Emergency routes and exits are indicated by signs
- d) Illumination is provided with emergency lighting with adequate intensity in the case of failure of the normal lighting

Personal emergency evacuation plan

To ensure all staff are able to leave the building in the event of a fire, personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEP) will need to be completed. Please ensure that your line manager is aware if you have any of the following disabilities that may have an impact on your evacuation procedure.

- Mobility-impaired people
- Wheelchair users
- People who are deaf and hard of hearing
- Blind and partially sighted people
- People with cognitive disabilities

On discovering a fire

- a) Raising the alarm will always be the first priority, and the person discovering the fire should provide a verbal warning to nearby people and then operate the nearest fire alarm call point.
- b) Contact must be made with the relevant switchboard by dialling 4444 and providing them with the information requested about the location and nature of the fire and any persons potentially exposed to harm by it.
- c) Leave the building or fire area via the nearest fire exit – make experiments safe before leaving
- d) Do not run
- e) Do not stop to collect belongings
- f) Do not use the lifts
- g) Go to the evacuation point
- h) Do not re-enter the building till you are told it is safe to do so

If you have the opportunity as you evacuate the building:

- Ensure doors are shut
- Escort any persons who may require help out of the building by the nearest available exit.

OUH – two types of alarm

When the fire alarm operates the staff in the relevant alarm zone will hear a continuous fire alarm signal. In any areas adjacent to the alarm zone an intermittent signal will be heard.

In non-clinical areas where a continuous fire alarm signal is heard, the relevant emergency plan is to be implemented and evacuation is to commence immediately.

In any area where an intermittent alarm is heard staff should be prepared to evacuate if the alarm signal changes to continuous.

Reporting any concerns

Please contact either your local fire officer or wardens if you have any questions. If you would like to report a fire hazard or a near miss please contact Jessica Doondeea.

The Trust, in the event where fires involve significant damage, serious injury, or the potential to have caused serious damage or injury, will formally write a fire investigation report and escalate it appropriately.

The report will seek to establish the actual cause of the fire, how it spread, who was affected by the outbreak, how it was contained / controlled and whether the emergency response was adequate and effective. The report will include both the positive observations and those setting out opportunities for improvement by the Trust and / or those individuals involved in the incident. It will also include a proposed remedial action plan to resolve any hazards and risks emerging from the investigation.

Useful contacts

Jessica Doondeea
Email: jessica.doondeea@nds.ox.ac.uk
Tel: 01865 612267

Caroline Tilling
Acting University Fire Officer
Email: caroline.tilling@safety.ox.ac.uk
Tel: 01865 (2)70882

Adam Lambert
Email: adam.lambert@nds.ox.ac.uk
Tel: 01865 612282

Resources

- Fire Safety Management, University of Oxford 2021
- Fire Safety Arrangements and Procedures, OUH 2019
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations, Health and Safety Executive 2002

Signed by the Head of Department: Professor Freddie Hamdy, Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences

