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| <b>Policy / Procedure Details</b>  | Title:                            | <b>Fire Safety Guidelines</b>               |                   |  |
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|                                    | Related Personal Outcome Measure: | <b>I Feel Safe</b>                          |                   |  |
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| <b>Current Version Details</b>     | Written By:                       | <b>Pat Foley, Health and Safety Officer</b> |                   |  |
|                                    | Reviewed By:                      | <b>Leadership Team</b>                      |                   |  |
|                                    | Approved By:                      | <b>Executive Director</b>                   |                   |  |
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## **1. Introduction**

This procedure is written in support of the outcome 'I Feel Safe'. It is the responsibility of every person having control over premises to take all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire on such premises and to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, the safety of persons on the premises in the event of an outbreak of fire. Fire safety should be part of a manager's regular workplace risk assessment wherein risks and controls are identified and reviewed.

## **2. Fire Safety Awareness**

- a. The premises should be checked on a daily basis to ensure that in the event of a fire, all escape routes are clear of obstruction and that fire exits are capable of being opened and that fire extinguishers are in place.
- b. Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, other fire safety equipment and fire alarm systems should be regularly tested and serviced by a competent person in line with the manufacturers recommendations.
- c. A weekly bell test from different call points, Break Glass Units (BGU's), should be carried out.
- d. Fire hazards such as rubbish, waste paper, etc. should not be allowed to accumulate and should be removed from the premises.
- e. Paints, flammable liquids, polishes, etc. should be kept in metal containers, preferably outside the building.
- f. Attention should be paid to the maintenance of clearances around heaters.
- g. The non-slip even surfaces of floors, landings, passages, ramps, etc. forming part of escape routes should be maintained.
- h. All electrical and gas fired equipment should be regularly serviced and maintained.

### **3. Safety of Persons in the event of an Outbreak of Fire**

The following is a general description of a process which should ensure the safety of the occupants of a particular premises should a fire occur. Variations may be adapted to reflect the particular nature of the building or the service.

a. **Action on Discovery of a Fire.**

A fire may be discovered by a person or by the triggering of an alarm. In the first case, the person should immediately raise the alarm using the system provided, e.g. Break Glass Point. Staff who have received training in the use of fire-fighting equipment may decide to deal with the fire in circumstances where they consider the fire to be manageable.

b. **Calling the Emergency Fire Service.**

The Fire Service should always be called to a fire however small the incident may appear. The correct dialling procedure and the giving of the address should be posted conspicuously at appropriate places and this should be common knowledge to all staff working in the building.

c. **Evacuation Procedure in the event of a Fire.**

In the event of an alarm going off, all occupants should immediately evacuate the building in an orderly manner and assemble at the designated assembly point which must be clearly marked.

Staff members should supervise the evacuation and check that no one is left behind. Stores and toilets should also be checked.

Staff should fight the fire only if it is safe to do so.

Special arrangements will need to be followed for individuals with mobility difficulties. All staff should be familiar with these for the service they work in.

A member of staff should meet the Fire Service on its arrival and give relevant information.

On completion of the evacuation, a check should be made to ensure that all occupants are accounted for. No one should re-enter the building without the permission of the local Fire Brigade service officer in charge.

#### 4. Fire Safety – Specific Requirements

- **Fire Plan.** All buildings must have a Fire Plan which will identify the fire escape routes from the building and will inform all staff of what to do in the event of a fire. All staff should be aware of particular issues of exit for people with mobility problems and what to do in the event of a fire to help them out of the building. Individuals requiring particular support should have an identified strategy written up in a Personal Risk Management Plan (PRMP) which is contained in the Associations’ procedure “Risk Management for People Using Association Services”.
- **Induction and Training of Staff.** It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre/Home or a delegated Person in Charge to ensure that all new staff will receive fire safety guidance and information including the location of all fire exits, assembly points, extinguishers and blankets on their first day of working as part of their Induction. It is mandatory for all staff to do the Fire training course which will enable them to use fire fighting equipment when appropriate. All staff are required to refresh their training every three years so their knowledge and skills are kept up to date.
- **Practice Fire Evacuations.** Fire evacuations *must* take place *at least* every *three months*. Fire evacuations are an opportunity to regularly practice evacuations and alarm tests so that people become familiar with the process and any problems can be picked up on and addressed. Fire evacuations should take place at different times of the day and night and should be timed. A Fire Evacuations Log Book should be completed after every evacuation by the member of staff carrying out the fire drill. A copy of this should be sent to the Health and Safety Officer at the end of each quarter i.e. 31<sup>st</sup> March, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 30<sup>th</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December.
- **Fire Safety Reporting.** The Health and Safety Officer will compile a Quarterly report containing the details of fire evacuations which will be available to the Leadership Team. The Report will also be sent to each Senior/ Regional Services Manager/ Head of Department who will follow up with the service manager in the event of an evacuation not taking place or in the event of any difficulties arising from an evacuation.
- **Fire Safety Audits.** The Health and Safety Officer will make regular audits to ensure that all work sites are keeping up with good practices in Fire Safety.

#### ***Policy and Procedure Feedback Form***

*A Policy and Procedure Feedback Form is available on the Western Care Association Intranet (under Procedures) which will provide an opportunity to comment on any policy/procedure.*

*Your comments will be forwarded to the person who has the lead for the on-going development of the policy/procedure.*

*All comments will be collated by the person responsible and will inform the three-yearly review cycle for updating procedures.*