



University  
of Glasgow

# **FIRE SAFETY POLICY ORGANISATION AND ARRANGEMENTS**

Prepared by Safety and Environmental Protection Service in collaboration with Estates  
(Organisation and arrangements updated January 2023. Amended Sept 2023)

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# 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The University is committed to providing a safe environment for its staff, students and visitors and, alongside this primary goal, seeks to protect the built environment to a high standard.

It is recognised that fire is a major threat to the people who work, and live, in and around University premises and to research and teaching activities. An outbreak of even a small fire creates risk to personal health and safety and damage to property. A more serious fire may result in loss of life, serious property damage, major disruption to our research and teaching commitments and reputational damage to the University.

The University's overall aim is to avoid any fire incidents through a well-developed system of fire risk assessment and fire safety management and to establish procedures to mitigate the effects of any incident that may occur.

**Protection of human life is paramount and will always be the primary consideration above all other goals that may exist. It is recognised that large numbers of people use University buildings, many of whom will be unfamiliar with them. There are also residential buildings in which people sleep; in particular, the University recognises and commits to the highest standards of fire safety in this type of property.**

It is recognised that the University is the custodian of a significant number of historic and architecturally important buildings and has both a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that these buildings are protected from fire. History has shown the devastating effects fire can have on historic and heritage buildings and the significant cultural loss that fire in such properties may cause. The University aims to reduce the risk of fire within these properties and to provide effective measures to mitigate the consequences of any incident.

The teaching and research work of some University Schools and Colleges may create an increased likelihood of fire due to the use of combustible or flammable substances. Building work undertaken by contractors also creates potentially increased fire risk. We recognise these risks and aim to manage such higher risk activities in a robust manner to minimise the risk of fire.

The law sets fire safety standards in relation to building construction and working practices. These standards are treated as a baseline only and the University seek to go beyond them in order to achieve the highest standards of fire safety, where it is reasonably practicable for us to do so.

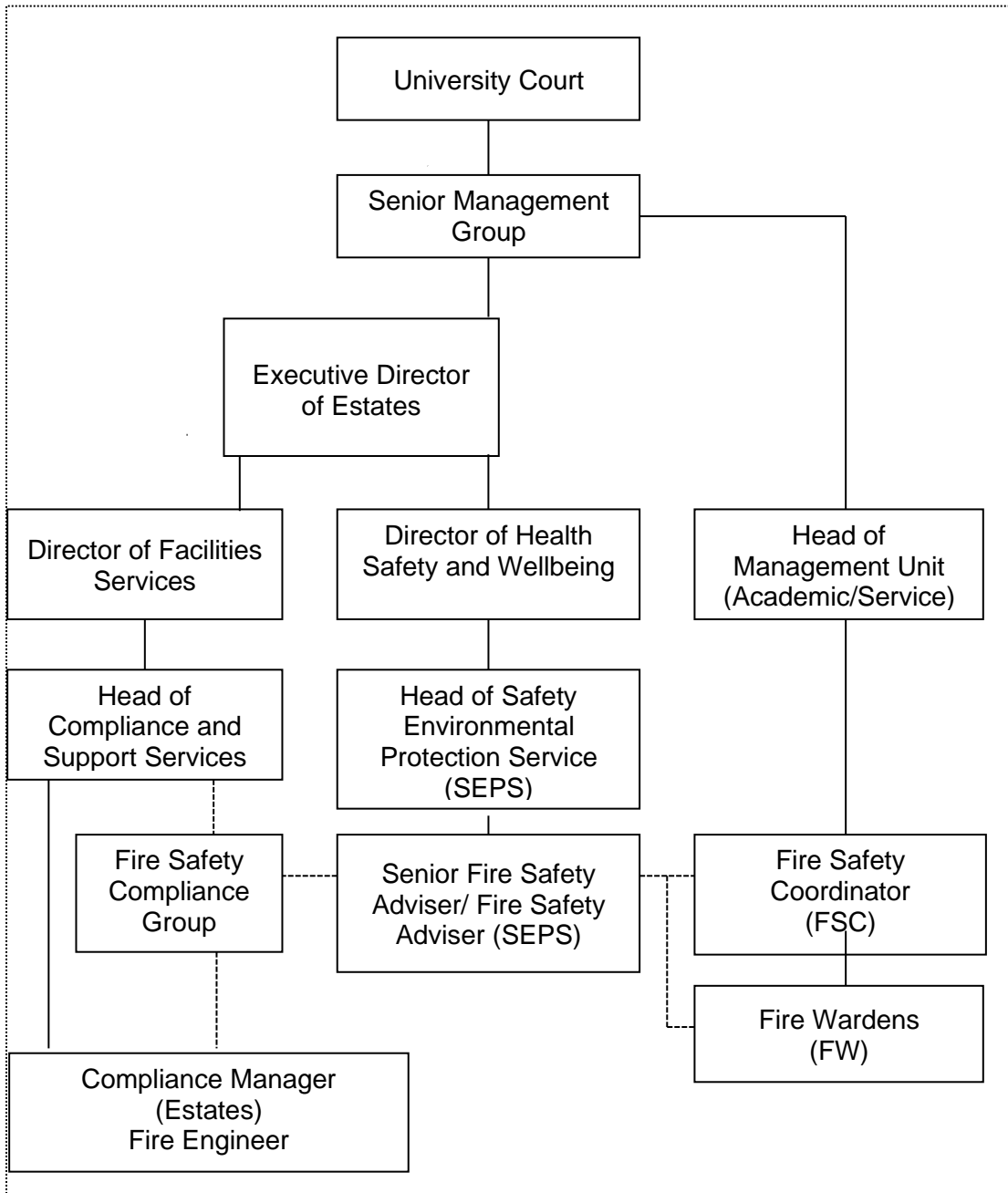
Dr David Duncan  
Chief Operating Officer

## 2. ORGANISATION

The procedures outlined in the following sections of the document set out the processes by which we aim to manage fire safety. These should be read in conjunction with the University's Design Standards which sets out our requirements for fire safety design in building works.

### 2.1 Fire Safety Management Structure

The following chart illustrates the main organisational structure for fire safety management within the University. The specialist fire safety functions illustrated within the chart are explained within the following section.



## **2.2 Key Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.2.1 Estates Responsibilities**

#### **Estates Operations Board and governance processes**

The Estates Operations Board is a monthly senior managers' meeting chaired by the Executive Director of Estates and attended by all Estates Directors and senior managers. The Head of Compliance and Support Services presents a report including various Estates and University safety matters, including fire safety management.

Fire safety is also included in the Estates risk register which is reviewed at each meeting with any matters considered as significant being escalated to the Senior Management Group (SMG).

At higher level, the Estates Committee, attended by the Chief Operating Officer and Principal, also regularly reviews fire safety risk and management for buildings and across construction activities on each campus.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee receives submissions from various members, including Estates, concerning fire safety within the University and, where relevant, any lessons learned on fire safety management matters from national fire incidents that have occurred elsewhere.

#### **Estates Head of Compliance and Support Services**

The Estates Head of Compliance and Support Services manages fire safety matters within scope of the Estates function and chairs the Estates Fire Safety Compliance group (see 2.2.3), providing updates to Estate senior management and to relevant University committees on any significant matters. The post holder manages the budget for maintenance of fire safety alarm and detection systems, fire safety improvements identified from FRAs as well as highlighting wider fire improvement cost and resource to be considered across the Estate. All capital projects are designed separately with compliance against statutory fire safety measures the minimum standards, as well as adherence to the University Fire Design Standards.

#### **Compliance Manager (Estates)**

The Compliance Manager is a member of the Estates Compliance Team and holds key responsibilities for ensuring that PPM programmes are completed and that fire safety improvements are instructed to contractors and implemented. The role deputises for the Head of Compliance and Support Services.

The post holder works closely with the Fire and Security Framework contractor, the procurement team and with the Contracts team to ensure that the planned preventative maintenance (PPM) programme is in place and is being effectively implemented.

The Compliance Manager also works closely with Estates project managers, whose roles cover the co-ordination of building warrants and planning consent.

## **Fire Engineer**

The Fire Engineer is a member of the Estates Compliance team and provides technical fire safety input to inform the work of Estates project and maintenance teams. The Fire Engineer also manages fire safety improvement works arising from fire risk assessment recommendations or other Estates requirements. The Fire Engineer oversees maintenance programmes associated with fire safety, including management of contracts for maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and fire signage.

## **2.2.2 Safety and Environmental Protection Service (SEPS) Responsibilities**

### **Heads of Safety and Environmental Protection Service**

The Head of SEPS oversees the Institutional-level monitoring and training functions carried out by the Service. In particular, these include managing the fire risk assessment review process and provision of fire safety training for staff and for those in Fire Safety Coordinator, Fire Warden and other fire safety roles. SEPS also fulfil a governance and monitoring function, monitoring fire safety management and compliance across the campus and reporting on this, with recommendations and mandatory actions, as required to Estates, academic and service units and to relevant University Committees and groups. The Head of SEPS sits on the University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, providing periodic reports and data to this group to ensure oversight of fire safety at University level.

### **Fire Safety Advisers**

Two professionally qualified Fire Safety Advisers (FSA) are based within SEPS, providing specialist advice on fire safety management. The Fire Safety Advisers conduct independent fire risk assessments throughout the University and provide written recommendations and requirements arising from these to both Estates and to building occupiers. The FSAs provide specialist fire safety input in relation to building construction and more routinely in relation to maintenance projects within occupied buildings, where it is important that fire safety measures are fully maintained throughout building works. The FSAs may monitor construction work to ensure that suitable standards are maintained. They also provide day-to-day support and training for Fire Safety Coordinators, Fire Wardens and other staff with specific fire safety management roles and manage the staff 'Fire Awareness' training provision. The FSAs, in consultation with other University units, help develop fire safety policy and practices and may investigate fire incidents and alarm activations. The Senior FSA is a member of the Estates Fire Safety Compliance Group to ensure there is an effective link between SEPS and Estates regarding fire safety standards.

## **2.2.3 Fire Safety Compliance Group**

This Estates-led group reports any significant findings or issues at risk into the Safety Executive group. The group is chaired by the Estates Head of Compliance and Support Services and deputised by the Compliance Manager as required and is attended by colleagues across key areas of Estates and by the Senior FSA from SEPS. The Director of Facilities Services is updated on the outputs from the committee.

The groups operate under formal terms of reference which, in the case of the Fire Safety Compliance Group, covers the following:

- Review of the Fire Safety Policy, recommending updates where required
- Monitoring fire incidents and unwanted fire alarm activations;
- Establishing lessons learned from fire incidents
- Review, develop and monitor best practice standards
- Review of the status of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) across the Estates and including residencies.
- Prepare technical and /or governance papers, proposed actions and recommendations to be reported into the Estates Safety Executive and/or the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.
- Monitor and review progress against the fire improvement programme log
- Update against PPM programmes on fire safety matters across the Estate.
- Embed training standards required for fire safety awareness and any competencies required for the Estates team or our Fire and Security Framework contractor.
- Conduct or delegate audits on fire safety standards.

## 2.3 Departmental roles

### 2.3.1 Head of Management Unit and line managers

Although NOT responsible for the building structure nor for the Estates-managed fire safety equipment within it, Heads of Management Unit (HMU) do have a responsibility for day-to-day management of the activities directly carried on by their staff and students and must ensure that the work of their unit does not create inappropriate fire risks. This extends to ensuring that practical work is risk assessed (as is legally required) and that control measures are in place to minimise fire risks from the unit's activities. These day-to-day responsibilities will, in general, flow through the normal line management structures within all units and rest, to the extent that they have control, with any member of staff who controls, manages or supervises work. This is a similar principle to the more general safety management process.

Unless alternative arrangements have been established by agreement between Estates and the Service or School, Heads of Unit should appoint someone from amongst their team to carry out specific local fire safety tasks, acting in the role of Fire Safety Coordinator (FSC). The FSC duties are shown at Appendix 1.

Weekly fire alarm tests and other maintenance checks will normally be done by the Estates Facilities Services team, rather than the occupying department(s), although alternative arrangements may be formally agreed within particular buildings.

Appointment of Fire Wardens to assist during fire drills and emergency evacuations is helpful in all situations where this is practical, particularly in larger, busier buildings with large numbers of occupants. The University recognises that Fire Wardens, Fire Safety Coordinators or Facilities Services staff may not always be present, particularly in out of hours periods, or in unstaffed buildings and Security support, emergency fire action plans, and building user information are in place to support safe evacuation, without a reliance on the presence of Fire Wardens.

Heads of unit, and all line managers, should ensure that their staff undertake fire awareness training on starting work in the University and thereafter at least once every three years. This is currently provided by an online module and by supplementary face-to-face training provided by SEPS for those appointed to FSC or Fire Warden roles. This helps ensure that staff understand the need for the fire safety measures in place and their own role in keeping these effective.

### **2.3.2 Fire Safety Coordinator (FSC)**

To support fire safety within each of our buildings, the University operates a system of locally appointed Fire Safety Coordinators.

At least one FSC should be appointed within each University-managed building by the Head of each academic or service unit occupying the building. Where buildings are occupied by several units this can be a joint appointment. The FSC is a specialist supporting role, comparable to that of the local Safety Coordinator. At least one Deputy FSC should also be appointed

Generally, heads of academic and service units will need to make this appointment. However, within some buildings that are communally occupied and managed by Facilities Services, the FSC role will be undertaken by the Facilities Services team. Information on where this applies is available from Facilities Services.

Facilities Services staff will normally undertake weekly testing of fire alarm systems in all buildings except where different local arrangements have been formally agreed.

The role of the FSC and Deputies is to carry out local day-to-day fire safety management tasks as set out within Appendix 1. This includes helping to ensure that fire escape routes are kept clear and readily usable and assisting in arranging fire drills.

SEPS provide a half-day training course for FSCs and recommend repeat training on a 2-yearly basis. Day-to-day advice and support is also available from SEPS Fire Safety Advisers.

### **2.3.3 Fire Wardens**

SEPS require the appointment of Fire Warden teams in larger buildings, particularly those with high occupancy numbers, wherever it is possible to do so, to assist during evacuations and fire drills.

Where Fire Wardens are drawn from amongst local staff, the University recognises that their presence within any building cannot be guaranteed, and their role is to provide an additional support to evacuation rather than to be an essential element of safe evacuation. In all buildings, escape routes are clearly indicated and building users should be able to use these without direct guidance. Where that is not the case, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans may be required. (See Section 3.3)

Where Fire Wardens are available during an evacuation, they can help by directing building users to exit routes and, **where it is safe to do so**, carrying out a sweep of their assigned area to ensure that all occupants have left. They may also help occupants who need assistance with stairs or may offer support to disabled occupants while in a Temporary Waiting Space and awaiting Security assistance with full evacuation.



University Security, Facilities Services staff or the FSC, if present, will normally co-ordinate and manage the Fire Warden team during fire drills and alarms.

SEPS provide a 2-hour training course for Fire Wardens, covering safe evacuation and zone clearance, and recommend repeat training on a 3-yearly basis. Example Fire Warden duties are provided at Appendix 1.

#### **2.3.4 All employees**

All employees have general duties to meet with regard to fire safety, namely to:

- Complete the online fire safety awareness training at least once every 3 years
- Familiarise themselves with the fire arrangements for those buildings in which they regularly spend time
- Follow any signing in and out procedures in operation in their building(s).
- Keep fire doors closed and report any obstructions on or blocked escape routes to the Facilities Services team or to the local Fire Safety Coordinator
- Respond appropriately to fire alarms sounding, ensuring that they leave the building promptly and gather at the appointed assembly points
- If in charge of a class or group, direct and support students, or visitors, to leave the building, so far as it is safe for them to do so.
- Make safe equipment/ processes they are working on before leaving the building, if practical, or, if this is not possible, ensure a responsible person/ Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are aware of a potentially unsafe condition on exiting the building.

## **3. ARRANGEMENTS**

### **3.1 Fire Risk Assessments**

The University recognises its legal obligations under Section 53 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 to carry out and regularly review fire risk assessments within the buildings under our control.

Within the University, responsibility for conducting fire risk assessments rests with the Fire Safety Advisers (FSA) based within SEPS. The FSAs carry out fire risk assessment review on a rolling programme and prepare written assessments based on these activities.

Fire Risk Assessments contain details of the fire risks within the building and of the fire precautions in place. Where appropriate, they also include prioritised recommendations to maintain or improve fire safety measures. These recommendations may include structural or maintenance works, falling under the responsibility of Estates or may concern working practices of the academic or service units who occupy the building. On completion, assessments are issued to Estates and to building managers/occupiers.

The Fire Safety Coordinator should ensure that a copy of the FRA is held within the building Fire Precautions Register.

The recommendations within fire risk assessments relating to the building structure and Estates managed systems are reviewed by the Fire Engineer in the Estates Safety and Compliance team. All priorities highlighted in the FRA are instructed with the appropriate actions required. The Estates Compliance team monitor and track work programmes that they have established for improvements associated with Fire Risk Assessment Action plans.

Heads of Schools/Colleges/Institutes/Services should ensure that procedures are in place to address any fire safety issues that fall within the occupying unit(s) area(s) sphere of control.

#### **Non-University buildings**

University staff working within NHS premises will follow the fire safety procedures in place locally and, in most cases, FRAs will be conducted by the NHS Estates unit for the relevant site. SEPS Fire Safety Advisers will liaise with their NHS colleagues in such situations to ensure effective co-operation and co-ordination between the University and NHS.

Within other non-University premises, local arrangements will be specific to each site. The fire safety responsibilities of the parties involved may be set out in any contract or lease agreement. Where there is multiple occupancy a building fire risk assessment covering the common areas should be prepared by the building landlord. This will normally be supplemented by a University-led fire risk assessment covering the areas occupied by the University. An occupier FRA is essential where the University conducts higher risk activities within a building. This FRA would be prepared by the SEPS Fire Safety Advisers.

## 3.2 Procedure on Fire Alarm Activation

On fire alarm activation, all building occupants should immediately leave the building by the nearest evacuation route or, if physical assistance is needed, proceed to the nearest temporary waiting area and alert Security by using the communications system (if fitted), by using the SafeZone app, or by phone call to the relevant emergency number, as shown below.

Gilmorehill Campus 0141 330 4444  
Garscube Campus 0141 330 2222

If present, Fire Wardens should assist occupants to leave and carry out a brief check that their assigned floor area is clear, if possible, closing doors as they progress.

The FSC or Depute, if present, should proceed to the fire alarm panel to determine the location of the activation. Facilities Services staff or a senior member of staff based within the affected building may usefully assist Security in managing the incident.

Within non-residential buildings, the following situations may be identified:

- If the cause is known to be a false alarm the FSC (or other responsible staff member) should immediately contact Security via 0141 330 4444 (Gilmorehill) or 0141 330 2222 (Garscube) to advise on the cause and that Fire and Rescue Service attendance is not required.
- If the cause is not known, but the area of activation is identified and can be safely investigated within a short period of time (a few minutes) Security can be advised that a check is being carried out and that an emergency call should not be placed at this time. Security should then be advised promptly of what is discovered and whether emergency service attendance is needed.
- If the cause of the activation is known to be a fire, Security should be asked to place an immediate 999 emergency call to the Fire and Rescue Service.

When a fire alarm signal is received at either of the Security control rooms (Gilmorehill and Garscube) involving a non-residential building a call will NOT normally be made to the Fire and Rescue Service unless confirmation of a fire has been received. This is in accordance with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service policy for minimising unwanted fire alarm signals. Security staff will attend the activation to manage the incident and help determine the cause of the fire alarm activation.

Within residential buildings the Fire and Rescue Service will be immediately called in response to ANY fire alarm activation.

### 3.2.1 Reporting and investigation of fire incidents

When the fire alarm has been activated, reports of fire incident will be compiled by Security and submitted via a centrally managed online system. SEPS FSAs receive copies of these reports and may contact local staff for further information or to conduct more detailed

investigation. Any recommendations arising from such monitoring or investigation will be submitted to the relevant person(s) as advice or for remedial action. Depending on the nature of the recommendations, this may be the FSC, Facilities Service manager or the head of unit.

Incidents that have not resulted in alarm activation should be reported directly to SEPS using the online **Incident Report Form** available on the University Helpdesk or via the 'Report an Incident' link on the SEPS website. An immediate telephone notification to SEPS should also be made for more serious occurrences, with a follow-up online report.

### 3.3 Assisted Evacuation

The University recognises that some buildings users may have difficulty evacuating the building unaided in an emergency. In the event of fire alarm activation normal exit routes involving the use of lifts will generally be unavailable and, in some multi-storey buildings, the only exits routes available from upper storeys will involve use of the stairs. People with permanent physical disability, or temporary impairment (e.g. from a broken leg) may be unable to use stairways unaided.

Individuals requiring only minor help to descend to exit level should be assisted to use the stairs where possible. Where this is not possible, the University has campus-wide arrangements in place to provide assistance by the Security team. Where such help is needed building occupants should proceed to a temporary waiting area (sometimes known as a Refuge Area) and contact Security by one of the methods below.

- Emergency voice communication system, if fitted. (Activation of a communication point automatically alerts Security to the location, allowing them to respond even when no voice communication has taken place.)
- SafeZone mobile app emergency button. (Provided the app is installed and pre-registered this can be used to contact Security for any emergency. Use of the emergency button triggers an immediate audible alarm at the Security Control Room and opens voice communication via the app.)
- Mobile phone (or an internal phone) can be used to contact Security, using the emergency numbers for the Gilmorehill Campus (0141 330 4444) of Garscube Campus (0141 330 2222)

In some buildings evacuation lifts are available and can be manually operated by Security or other University staff, if required. These need to be switched to evacuation mode and cannot be self-driven by building users.

Evacuation chairs are provided at various locations across campus and provide a means of evacuation where evacuation lifts are not available. Security staff can use an evacuation chair to enable a person unable to descend the stairs to leave the building, where this is necessary.

To minimise unnecessary physical risk to the user, Security will typically only use an evacuation chair when this is necessary for the user's safety. If it is assessed by the

incident management team as the safer alternative to evacuation, users can be supported to remain in the temporary waiting area, while the situation is resolved rather than being fully evacuated from the building by evacuation chair, should they choose to do so. Full evacuation will not normally be carried out during known false alarm and fire drills unless this is specifically requested.

Evacuation chairs can only be used where the individual requiring help is able to self-transfer into an evacuation chair or to do so with minimal assistance. If this is NOT the case, a specific individual arrangement will need to be agreed and recorded in a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan. (PEEP)

Individuals with hearing impairments may have difficulty knowing when to evacuate if they are unable to hear the fire alarm. To combat this a pager system is installed in various building across campus, including some residences, allowing users in possession of a compatible pager device to receive a vibrating signal when the fire alarm activates. Staff or students who would need to make use of this system should discuss their situation with SEPS FSAs, Disability Service Adviser or Accommodation manager.

Further details of the arrangements for assisted evacuation and PEEPS are provided within the fire safety section of SEPS website.

### **3.4 Fire Drills**

The University aims to conduct a minimum of two fire drills each year within each of our buildings. Exceptions may apply where there is very low or infrequent occupancy or low risk building. e.g. farm sheds.

Facilities Services will arrange and undertake drills in all buildings where they have primary management control and act in the Fire Safety Coordinator role.

In other buildings Facilities Services will act in consultation with the building Fire Safety Coordinator to agree suitable drill times and to activate the alarm and reset the fire alarm panel. The Fire Safety Coordinator should ensure that arrangements are made for appropriately timed drills to be carried out.

Drills should normally be conducted during the first and second semesters and should, ideally, be timed to ensure that there is a high level of occupancy. There is limited value in conducting drills when occupancy is very low.

Evacuations carried out due unwanted fire alarm activations may be counted in lieu of planned fire drills with the agreement of the University Senior Fire Safety Adviser.

Drills should be timed to avoid unnecessary disruption to key events such as exams, graduations and conferences. This can best be achieved by local arrangement of drills *via* the FSC. The FSC should liaise with key building staff to select an acceptable time for each drill. Planned drills can be communicated to key staff but should not generally be advertised to all building users in advance unless there is valid reason for doing so.

If there are known users with disabilities or who may require assistance it is appropriate to have an advance discussion with them so that suitable drill arrangements can be agreed

and practiced, either during the drill, or separately. Partial evacuation during a drill to a Temporary Waiting Space (e.g. designated “refuge” area or protected stairway) is acceptable to reduce the physical risk to the disabled person from use of an evacuation chair in a busy, but non-emergency situation. However, the individual should always be given the opportunity to practice with an evacuation chair at a suitable alternative time, if they wish to do so. Although we consider waiting in situ to be the safest option, disabled users have a right to be fully evacuated from the building during a normal fire drill if they wish to do so and should be carried out by the normal Security assisted arrangements if the person requests this.

The FSC/ Fire Warden team should monitor the conduct of the drill throughout, checking that all occupants leave the building using appropriate exits and that evacuees move away from the final exits. The overall evacuation time should be noted and a record of the drill, together with any relevant comments should be entered in the building Fire Precautions Register.

ALL OCCUPANTS are required to leave the building during any fire alarm activation unless they are performing fire safety duties or supporting someone requiring assisted evacuation. Failing to evacuate is both a potential disciplinary and legal offence.

SEPS Fire Safety Advisers may attend drills for monitoring purposes, particularly within some of our larger buildings.

### 3.5 Fire Safety Training

Line managers should ensure that new members of staff are provided with a practical building fire safety familiarisation when they first begin work within a University building. This should include basic instruction on:

- Fire action arrangements
- What the fire alarm sounds like
- Means of escape
- Location of fire exits
- Location of fire-fighting equipment
- Details of any special local hazards or procedures
- Assisted evacuation arrangement, if applicable

This information may be provided by the line manager or by the FSC. The new member of staff must also complete the online Fire Safety Awareness training (see below) as soon as practicable after beginning work. Line managers must ensure that staff under their supervision complete this training as part of the induction process.

SEPS provide formal fire safety training to various groups of staff across the University.

- **Fire awareness training** – This is provided using an online training system to deliver basic fire safety awareness and is aimed at ALL staff. Students may also participate. All members of staff must undertake this training as part of their basic induction training. It is strongly recommended that all staff should repeat it as a refresher at least every three years. If use of an online system is not suitable,

alternative options can be provide and should be discussed with SEPS Fire Safety Advisers.

- **Fire Safety Coordinator training** –Face-to-face training is provided to equip those appointed as FSC or Depute to carry out these roles. This is delivered by a half-day course. Given the key nature of the FSC role, this is repeated every 2 years.
- **Fire Warden training** –Face-to-face training is provided for Fire Wardens *via* a shortened version of the FSC course. This should be repeated every 3 years.
- **Fire training for specialist groups** – Some staff groups, such as Security staff, residence managers or those working in higher hazard environments have a need for bespoke fire safety training to equip them for fire safety management tasks and to undertake emergency support work during incidents, or alarm activation. Specialist training is provided to these groups. The requirement for this training, content and refresher training interval should be discussed with the FSA.
- **Evacuation chair and evacuation lift training** – This is provided by Security for their staff teams to enable them to support assisted evacuation arrangements.

### 3.6 Fire Alarm and Detection Systems

Fire risk assessment and building design processes establish the type of fire detection and alarm system required within individual buildings.

Virtually all University fire alarm systems incorporate extensive automatic fire detection, covering all, or parts, of individual buildings. Alarms can always be activated by manual call point but will also activate automatically if any of the fire detectors within the building operate. Such systems provide an effective early warning of fire, allowing occupants to escape at an early stage of any fire. University Design Standards indicate the criteria used to determine the type of system provided in new buildings. Subject to practical limitations, the University seeks to apply similar standards to existing buildings, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Maintenance of installed fire alarm and detection system hardware is carried out by an Estates appointed contractor with records of these tests held by Estates.

In addition to maintenance of such systems, regular functional tests are required to provide assurance that that system is in working condition. This includes a weekly fire alarm test but may involve test of other associated local systems. Responsibility for conducting these tests rests with Facilities Service unless they have formally agreed alternative local arrangements with building occupiers. Such arrangements will typically be for sites away from the main campus but may include some on campus premises.

### **3.6.1 Unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS)**

Automatic fire detection systems, particularly those of an older design, can be prone to unwanted activation triggered by conditions other than fire. This can include dust, water leaks, steam (kettles, showers), insects, aerosol sprays etc. or by day-to-day activity that could potentially escalate to fire. E.g. cooking, making toast.

Whilst more modern types of detection system are better at avoiding unwanted activation, building occupiers are expected to exercise reasonable diligence to avoid activities that will foreseeably cause unwanted alarm activations. These are disruptive to all building occupiers and may also result in unnecessary attendance of the Fire and Rescue Service, placing fire fighters and the public at risk.

Where the cause of a UFAS is known, and the Fire and Rescue Service attendance is NOT required, Security and the local FSC should be advised of the circumstances as soon as possible. Users are encouraged to reporting the cause of an accidental activation immediately as this can help to avoid unnecessary Fire and Rescue Service attendance.

Accidental activation of the fire alarm through normal activities, or manual activation with good intent (e.g. on smelling burning), will not attract negative consequences for the individual involved. However, if following advice the individual subsequently fails to adopt appropriate precautions to avoid alarm activation and negligently causes further UFAS, it may then be appropriate to consider disciplinary action.

### **3.6.2 Fire alarm isolation and system failure**

In the event of building works which have the potential to activate the fire alarm detection system there is a process and permit arrangement to cover and isolate detector heads. All project managers, building managers, FSCs and other responsible persons are directed towards the Estates Safety and Compliance Team for guidance on the management requirements for isolation of detectors.

In the event of failure of a significant part of a fire detection or alarm system to the extent that it impairs occupant safety or building protection, mitigations need to be put in place to protect both building users and the building itself. Also, the University insurers require notification if such an impairment will last for more than 7 hours. SEPS Fire Safety Advisers should be notified of any significant system failure to allow assessment of the risk and notification of the insurers, if required.

## **3.7 Fire-fighting Equipment**

### **3.7.1 Portable fire-fighting equipment**

The University provides fire-fighting equipment throughout its buildings, generally in the form of portable fire extinguishers. Carbon dioxide, water and foam extinguishers are all in general use, depending on the risk within the area. Fire blankets are provided within some kitchen areas.



Estates procure general portable fire-fighting equipment selected on the advice of fire safety staff employed by the University and ensure that it is regularly maintained by contractor.

In some circumstances more specialist extinguisher types may be needed. These may include Type F extinguishers suitable for oil fires in commercial kitchens or non-magnetic extinguishers for MRI scanner areas. Where Schools/Colleges/Institutes/Service require specialist extinguishing equipment advice should be sought from SEPS FSAs. The cost of specialist equipment may need to be met by the unit involved.

**Fire extinguishers should only be used to fight a fire if the user has been trained to use an extinguisher, if it is safe to do so and there is a clear escape route from the fire. The alarm should be raised before attempting to fight a fire.**

Practical training in the use of portable firefighting equipment can be provided by SEPS FSAs. This is not offered routinely to all staff but is targeted to those acting as FSC and Fire Warden. Such training can also be provided to staff in areas where there may be an increased risk of fire above that encountered in normal office and teaching areas. (e.g. commercial kitchens and some higher risk laboratories or workshops). Managers or FSCs who feel that staff within their area require additional fire extinguisher training should discuss this with SEPS FSA.

If an extinguisher has been used, whether on a fire or otherwise, this should be reported via the online Estates Helpdesk System so that arrangements can be made to have it replaced. Alternatively, one of the fire team within SEPS, can be contacted to report the incident and to request a replacement. A written incident report should also be submitted to SEPS via the Helpdesk Incident Report Form.

### **3.7.2 Fixed fire-fighting equipment**

Some areas are equipped with fixed fire-fighting systems. These will typically be systems within high voltage electrical substations, electrical switch-rooms, or in IT facilities. These areas will normally have access controls and limited staff access. New buildings may also have sprinkler systems installed depending upon the building design requirements.

These systems are normally under the management of Estates who are responsible for arranging maintenance and keeping records. Advice on maintenance requirements should be sought from the system supplier or from relevant industry standards.

The University insurers require notification of any event which will impair the operation of fixed fire-fighting systems from more than 7 hours. SEPS Fire Safety Advisers should be advised of any failure or planned work on such systems to allow this requirement to be met.

## **3.8 Escape Lighting and Emergency Lighting**

The University provides escape lighting and emergency lighting where this is legally required or where a need is identified through risk assessment. Regular maintenance and functional checks on these systems is arranged by Estates. Most systems are illuminated

only on failure of mains electrical power and need to be tested by Estates contractor to demonstrate correct operation. However, where permanently lit (“maintained”) emergency lighting systems are installed, the function of the lighting units can be visually assessed. As part of their routine escape route checks, FSCs should report any obviously defective units to Estates.

### **3.9 Fire Signage and Information**

The University provides fire signs within all its buildings. This includes fire directional signs, and signs indicating fire doors, manual call points and portable fire-fighting equipment. The nature of signage across the University is varied. However, we aim to ensure that all meet the basic requirements of the Health and Safety (Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 in terms of colour size and shape, and relevant UK standards in relation to content.

Estates are responsible for the provision of fire signage within University-owned buildings. Fire signage is examined as part of the fire risk assessment process.

FSCs should report any identified defect in signage via the Helpdesk Estates Maintenance Request system. Advice on the adequacy of signage can be obtained from SEPS FSAs.

#### **3.9.1 Fire Action Notices**

Fire Action Notices are posted throughout all University buildings, including residences. All occupants should make themselves familiar with the information on these notices. This indicates the type of audible sounder within the premises, simple guidance on the action to be taken on hearing the fire alarm and the location of the building assembly point.

On leaving a building during an evacuation it is important that occupants-move away from the final exits to avoid congestion. This is particularly important in larger and heavily occupied buildings. Where present, FSCs and Fire Wardens, or Security, should try to manage these areas during fire alarm activations to ensure that delays to evacuation are avoided and that roadways and paths are kept clear for the possible arrival of the fire service.

Occupants should gather at the designated assembly point as this allows colleagues to notice if someone is obviously missing and helps those managing the incident to communicate with the group. The University does not operate a formal roll-call system as the large-scale movement of staff and students around the campus make this impractical. However, if anyone suspects that someone is likely to be inside an evacuated building, they should make this known to those managing the incident.

#### **3.9.2 Emergency Fire Action Plans**

All buildings require a specific Emergency Fire Action Plan outlining the action that staff and other people in the premises should take in the event of fire. Often this is covered by the University generic plan but specific local plans may be necessary for some buildings.

Within larger buildings, or those with certain types of work going on, it is sometimes necessary to establish specific processes to be adopted when there is a fire alarm

activation. This may be needed to ensure that the flow of people during the evacuation is managed to best effect, or that the work being conducted can be safely shut down, or otherwise dealt with e.g. veterinary operating theatres or where high risk biological or chemical work is in progress.

Locally produced risk assessments for the work should take account of possible risks arising from unplanned interruption of work. The need for a local Emergency Fire Action Plan should be considered by FSCs and by other senior staff responsible for managing work of a type that may be seriously affected by an unplanned interruption. The need for local plans and their content should be discussed with SEPS Fire Safety Advisers.

SEPS Fire Safety Advisers will also consider the need for such procedures during FRA reviews and will discuss the requirement in relation to our larger buildings with occupiers.

### **3.9.3 Dangerous substances and emergency information**

Some University buildings contain hazardous chemicals, biological and radioactive material or equipment. Although these are rarely present in industrial scale quantities and so do not present a major accident hazard, they can present a risk to fire fighters entering the building, or delay their entry. So far as practicable, building users should ensure that appropriate and proportionate signage is in place to warn first responders of any substantive risks within a room. Subject to security considerations, signage appropriate to the area should be displayed to ensure that warning of hazards, high risk materials and large quantities of hazardous material is given. In deciding what is needed, account should be taken of the building type and use. e.g. it may be safe to assume that the presence of chemicals could reasonably be anticipated within a lab area, but not within an office environment where supplementary signage may be needed to highlight the presence of an unusual hazard. In some locations it will be necessary to conduct formal DSEAR (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres) assessments as a legal requirement. Advice on this can be sought from SEPS Chemical Safety Adviser.

SEPS periodically conduct a survey of science and engineering areas asking building users to identify, in broad terms, the nature and locations of key concentrations of risk materials within various buildings. Information on this is held by SEPS and is made accessible to Security so that they can provide information to emergency services, if required. FSCs /Senior Technicians may wish to lodge a copy of the survey information for their building within the building Fire Precautions Register or local emergency pack so that it is accessible to emergency services. Sensitive information should NOT be included, but should be discussed with SEPS if it is relevant to emergency response.

## **3.10 Other Fire Safety Features and Procedures**

### **3.10.1 Fire doors**

Fire doors are designed to restrict the spread of fire and the products of combustion within a predicted time period and will normally feature a self-closing device and fire door sign. All fire doors must be kept closed, as indicated by the blue and white mandatory sign affixed to the door. To maintain their effectiveness regular maintenance checks are undertaken of the University's fire doors. FSC should also report any defects that come to their notice.

The use of electromagnetic hold-open devices on fire doors can be beneficial in some circumstances. Such devices may impact on the fire safety provision, therefore, full consultation with SEPS Fire Safety Advisers is required before fitting.

The use of wedges and other items to hold open fire doors is not permitted within any of the University's premises and must be actively discouraged by local managers.

### **3.10.2 Exit Routes**

All exit routes are indicated by green and white fire exit directional signage.

Fire-protected corridors and stairways that form part of escape routes should be kept clear and hazard free. Items that may be a source of fuel or ignition should not be located within such escape routes. This includes portable heaters, cooking appliances, upholstered furniture, coat racks, vending machines, gas pipes and meters, photocopiers and other electrical equipment, seasonal decorations and combustible display material.

The walls within stair enclosures and protected routes should be kept free from any form of combustible wall decorations. Notice boards may be accepted in such areas provided they are enclosed and effectively managed but extensive areas of exposed paper or display material pose a fire risk and are not acceptable. Advice should be sought from the SEPS Fire Safety Advisers before any sources of ignition, fuel or equipment is sited within corridors or stairways. FSCs should monitor escape routes to ensure that they are kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials. Matters that cannot be remedied locally should be reported to the University Fire Safety Advisers.

### **3.10.3 Structural Alterations to Existing Buildings**

Where any structural alterations are carried out within a building that are likely to impact on the fire safety provision it is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure that a copy of the proposals are made available to the SEPS Fire Safety Advisers or discussed with them at an early stage. The Fire Risk Assessment may need to be reviewed by the FSAs prior to any works and it is important that they are consulted at an early stage, particularly where works will affect fire compartmentation, escape routes or other fire safety arrangements.

Heads of management unit should note that no work may be carried out on the building fabric or structure without authorisation from the Executive Director of Estates or their authorised nominee.

### **3.10.4 New Buildings.**

A set of University Design Standards has been produced to guide designers as to the desired standards and fire safety outcomes within new buildings and during alterations to existing buildings.

### **3.10.5 External Waste Containers & Refuse Bins**

External waste containers, refuse bins and industrial skips are a potential fire hazard to all buildings. Fires often occur in such receptacles and where they are placed near a building, the potential for fire spread through direct flame or radiated heat is a possibility.

To ensure that this risk is minimised such receptacles should be sited away from buildings, including temporary construction site cabins, where it is practicable to do so. Where, due to operational reasons, a waste skip must be placed near a building, it should be of the enclosed type sited with the opening facing away from the building and kept locked overnight to reduce the risk of wilful fire raising.

### **3.10.6 Control of Contractors**

Where contractors are on site it is the duty of the relevant person with the responsibility for the works undertaken by them, to ensure the appropriate level of fire safety provision is incorporated within any work schedule, contract agreement or risk assessment. Where such works are likely to impact on the existing fire safety provision the SEPS Fire Safety Advisers must be consulted in advance of the work to ensure that appropriate fire safety arrangements are maintained.

Contractors must also be made aware of the Emergency Fire Action Plan relevant to the area within which they are working. Where any work requires be undertaken that is likely to involve the application of a naked flame or other heat source a “*Hot Work Permit*” must be acquired from Estates with agreed control measures prior to the commencement of such works.

The main controls in place for contractors is managed through:

- A weekly contractor activity meeting
- Quarterly contractor forums covering safety compliance, including fire safety management, with the main Estates contractors
- Issue of fire safety alerts across the contractor base covering good fire safety standards expected of all contractors
- Estates-led safety observation and near miss reporting system that includes fire risk reporting
- Leadership safety inspection in Estates designed to look at good safety practices as well as areas where improvement is required.
- Estates processes and procedures covering safe working practices on roofs including safe arrangements for fire safety given the potential risk of fire spread across roofs.

## **4. Monitoring and Review Arrangements**

### **4.1 Estates Procedures**

Estates are responsible for ensuring there are adequate technical measures in place to manage the estate in relation to fire safety. This includes all new build, refurbishment projects and for the fabric of buildings within the University Estate. A key control is ensuring that there is a competent Fire and Security Framework contractor in place who tests and maintains the fire safety systems within buildings including; fire alarms, escape

lighting, portable fire-fighting equipment and provisions for fire-fighters (hydrants, dry risers, fire-fighting lifts etc).

Schedules of planned preventative maintenance for the above systems are in place with any works arising or reactive instructed by Estates to be actioned by the contractor.

The main means of monitoring and reviewing arrangements are covered under the descriptions of the Estates Safety Executive group along with the Fire Safety Compliance Group as covered in Section 2.1. of this document.

The University has a procedure for escalating significant risks to the Senior Management Group. Following review at the Estates Safety Executive group fire safety is one of the key managed risks on the risk register that can be escalated to the senior group if required.

#### **4.2 SEPS Procedures**

Fire safety policies, procedures and fire safety management are the subject of regular reviews. This may be as a result of a scheduled review or be undertaken as a result of a local fire incident, national fire incident or change in national fire safety policy. The fire risk assessment program is continually monitored on a regular basis to ensure fire risk assessment, reviews and post incident reviews are carried out in line with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service guidance and legislative requirements.

Training delivery is monitored as part of the fire risk assessment programme and on an annual basis as part of the HSW Annual Report that is submitted to the University Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

SEPS will arrange periodic review and update of this document where significant changes occur and, in any event, at intervals of no more than 3 years.

## **Appendix 1 Facilities Services, Fire Safety Coordinator and Fire Warden roles**

The following information sets out the typical distribution of fire safety duties amongst the three groups described below. There may be some variation to this for specific buildings, particularly those that are off campus.

Facilities Services teams will normal also undertake the fire Safety Coordinator role within some larger communal buildings where Facilities Services have the primary building management role.

The University recognises and accepts that working requirements and patterns mean that those in FSC or Fire Warden roles will not be present within the building that they cover at all times and can carry out these tasks only when available on site.

### **1. Facilities Services**

- Carry out regular fire alarm tests (target frequency-weekly) and maintain a record of these within the building Fire Precautions Log Book.
- Monitor the building fire alarm panel on at least a weekly basis, reporting any indicated fault to Estates for prompt attention and repair.
- Carry out and record inspections of escape routes within their area of responsibility with the aim of ensuring that they are kept clear and able to be used in an emergency. Rectify or report faults via local management and, where appropriate, to SEPS and/or Estates.
- Keep a check on existing fire protection equipment (fire extinguishers, signs, permanently lit emergency lighting etc.) reporting any damaged or missing items promptly.
- Support the Estates-led fire alarm isolation permit and procedures for the building.

### **2. Fire Safety Coordinator**

- Complete the FSC training course provided by SEPS fire safety team.
- Monitor building escape routes arranging for any obstruction of routes or accumulation of combustible materials to be rectified locally or where this is not possible, reported to Facilities Service and SEPS.
- Support the formal checks carried out by Facilities Services by reporting any fault indicators seen on the fire alarm panel or any defect in any fire protection provision such as emergency lighting, signage or fire-fighting equipment.

- Ensure that fire incidents are reported to the SEPS.
- Ensure that at least two fire drills per annum are conducted. These should be arranged in consultation with Facilities Services. SEPS can provide additional advice or support
- Co-ordinate the activities of the local fire warden team where such arrangements are in place.
- In conjunction with Security, Facilities Services and SEPS, assist in the development of appropriate arrangements for assisting the evacuation of sensory or mobility impaired occupants.
- In collaboration with other staff within the building, ensure that adequate emergency information is available on the presence and location of hazardous materials and processes within the building where these may pose a particular risk to emergency services. (Information on this is formally sought periodically by SEPS and for higher risk areas and is likely to primarily apply to buildings containing laboratories or workshops.)
- Ensure that a current copy of Fire Risk Assessment is held within the building Fire Precautions Register and that any actions required of the service/ academic units occupying the building are brought to the attention of the relevant senior managers.
- During a building evacuation, undertake fire warden duties to support the evacuation, unless required to carry out other functions.

### **3. Fire Warden**

- Undertake the Fire Warden training course provided by SEPS fire safety team.
- Be familiar with exit routes from the building in which they normally work.
- Draw the attention of the FSC, Facilities Duty Manager or Head of Unit to any deficiency or obstruction on these routes.

#### **DURING A FIRE DRILL OR ALARM ACTIVATION, SO FAR AS THEIR OWN SAFETY ALLOWS:**

- Instruct personnel in the area in which they find themselves to vacate the building pausing only to make any equipment safe.
- Guide occupants along exit routes and help those whose routes are obstructed to find alternative routes.



- Provide support to those requiring assisted evacuation, helping them to reach either an evacuation lift (if present) or stairway waiting areas and to use emergency communications systems provided, SafeZone or mobile phone, or by verbal communication, to advise Security that assistance is required.
- On leaving the building, help to move building users from the vicinity of the exits and towards assembly areas.
- Help to prevent building users from re-enter the building until so instructed by a senior Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Officer or by University Security acting on SFRS advice. (Trained evacuation teams may enter to provide assisted evacuation, if this is required.)
- Should any person refuse to co-operate with the Fire Warden, to warn such persons and note the incident for reporting to the Head of Unit and to SEPS Senior Fire Safety Adviser.
- Report the successful evacuation of their area of responsibility to the Security team managing the incident.
- Report any difficulties experienced during the evacuation to the Security team, Fire Safety Coordinator, or to SEPS.