



UHSP-16f: Planned Fire Evacuation Drills



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1. Introduction

The University will undertake fire drills of its premises for the following purposes:

- To test the effectiveness of the Emergency Evacuation Plan and identify areas for improvement
- To familiarise new occupants with procedures
- To test the procedure following any significant alteration or changes to working practices

2. Types of fire drill

Health and Safety Services-led drills

Non-residential premises will receive instruction from Health and Safety Services to undertake a fire evacuation drill either once or twice a year. The University Fire Safety Manager, or a member of the Health Safety Services, will observe drills where possible. In all buildings, one of the planned drills is to take place at the start of October to ensure new students are familiarised with the evacuation process.

Locally organised drills

Heads in control of the University premises and campus sites not included in the organised fire drills (as defined above) are to ensure they carry out a fire drill at least annually. The University Fire Safety Manager must be notified, in advance, as Health and Safety Services reserve the right to attend and observe the drill.

Unscheduled evacuation

Evacuations due to an unplanned fire alarm activation should be treated as a supplementary drill and do not substitute the need for a planned fire drill.

3. Participants

The evacuation drill will be for **all occupants** of the building except those who may need to ensure the security of the premises, or people who, on a risk-assessed basis, are required to remain with particular equipment or processes that cannot be closed down.

It is foreseeable that contractors, visitors and members of the public may be involved in the fire drill. They should have been informed of the evacuation procedures for each building or staff should be aware of the potential presence of these groups in the building. Due consideration should be given to these groups and any necessary health and safety issues addressed in the fire drill planning process

Where the University Department is a tenant occupying part of a commercial property, the planning of fire drills is normally the Landlord or Letting Agent's responsibility. In these circumstances, it is expected that University staff will participate and practice their emergency evacuation plan, but it remains the responsibility of the University to ensure its staff have received appropriate information, instruction and training.

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4. Assisted evacuation

Persons in control of a building must consider the evacuation of occupants who would require assistance to evacuate. A procedure must be in place (be it a Generic or a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) to provide appropriate assistance. Further guidance is available in the document UHSP-16d.

5. Considerations prior to undertaking fire evacuation drills

- **Staff Information** – Only key staff contacts should be made aware of the day and time of the drill as it is intended to test the emergency arrangements you have in place
- **Informing Security** - The Security Team must be informed before the drill commences and after it is completed (x2023 giving reasonable notice)
- **Weather Conditions** - If conditions are hazardous (ice, snow) immediately prior to the planned drill, it is recommended the drill be postponed until conditions are improved
- **Escape Routes** - check external stairs and routes to ensure that there are no hazards or conditions that may cause an accident e.g. slip hazards, moss, algae, damaged steps
- **Maintenance or Service Engineer Assistance** – If necessary, ensure that Estates maintenance staff &/or your fire alarm contractors are available to reset any building services and plant e.g. boilers, air handling units, gas (mains or laboratory cylinder) isolation systems, smoke control systems etc.
- **Final Exit Door Furniture** – [where appropriate] keep a stock of spare ceramic or glass components for tube bolts, break glass door release systems, green boxes and fire alarm call points. Should these be broken during a drill they can be replaced immediately to allow the building to be re-occupied
- **Consult & Coordinate** – it may prove helpful to co-ordinate the fire alarm drill with any other building occupants/departments to ensure the drill is beneficial

6. Carrying out the fire evacuation drill

The Head of Department should nominate a suitable person such as the Department Safety Officer (DSO), Building Safety Officer (BSS) to organise and supervise the fire drill. Drills must be used to test the effectiveness of the building Emergency Evacuation Plan so the aim must be to make them as realistic as possible e.g. operate a Manual Call Point (using the test key as it is not practical to break the glass)

Useful tips:

- Read the evacuation plan for the building beforehand
- Establish that any specialist/hazardous/sensitive equipment can be left safely or that closedown procedures are in place
- Nominate ‘observers’ to help monitor and record observations using the report form enclosed
- Consider introduction of ‘scenarios’ to test your plan i.e. a mobility impaired person on an upper floor, an unavailable evacuation route
- Think about how to re-occupy your building after the evacuation e.g. staff first, followed by students, to allow areas to be checked/prepared beforehand

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7. Observing the fire evacuation drill

Persons familiar with the building emergency evacuation plan should be nominated to observe the drill with an objective to determine if the correct procedures are followed and if any improvements may be required. The Fire Evacuation Drill Report Form can be used to assist them.

8. Actions post a fire evacuation drill

Once the drill is complete and the building has been re-occupied, the Lead Fire Warden should hold a de-brief with the observers and the Fire Wardens to receive feedback on what went well/not so well and where improvements/learnings can be made. This information should be used to revise the emergency evacuation plan. Where significant changes or poor execution of the evacuation plan are observed it is advisable to hold another planned fire evacuation drill, within a reasonable timescale, once the agreed changes have been made.

9. Additional actions

- Complete the Fire Evacuation Drill Report Form and send a copy to safetyservices@le.ac.uk

10. Revision History

Date of Issue	Version number	Amendments Made
31/01/2020	1.0	First issue
14/12/2020	1.0	No significant changes made. Header and footer changed and accessibility check run