

Rackheath Community Council

Fire Safety Policy

Adopted December 2021 | Review December 2024

Policy Statement

The issue of Fire Safety is taken extremely seriously and we will strive to ensure that Rackheath Community Council and its employees comply with the Regulatory reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹. More importantly we will strive to ensure the safety of all persons who have a legitimate right to be in, on or in the vicinity of the premises from fire and its effects.

These include residents, visitors, staff and contractors but exclude fire fighters in pursuance of firefighting.

Staff should be aware it is a criminal offence not to consider theirs and others fire safety whilst at work and breaches will be dealt with in a robust manner by the Community Council.

Responsibilities

The Responsible Person

The responsible person retains overall responsibility for policy and management of fire safety and under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 designated as the “Responsible Person”².

The Responsible Person has delegated the following roles:

	Task	Position or Name
1	Ensuring all exits are available and useable during time people are in the premises (recommended daily)	Community Clerk or Booking Assistant
2	Firefighting equipment is in place and undamaged (recommended weekly)	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk
3	Staff have received induction training	Community Clerk – administrative staff
4	The daily check of the fire alarm	Community Clerk or Booking Assistant
5	The weekly test of the fire alarm	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk
6	The monthly test of the emergency lighting	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk

¹ Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 - replaces most fire safety legislation with one simple order. It means that any person who has some level of control in premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire.

² In a workplace the employer is the designated Responsible Person (RP).

7	Completion of the Fire Risk Assessment	Health & Safety external consultants
8	Ensuring the fire alarm, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment (and other fire safety measures if found) is serviced by a competent person	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk
9	Ensuring portable electrical appliances are maintained as required (PAT)	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk
10	Ensuring fixed electrics are inspected at least once every five years	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk
11	Completion of refresher training	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk
12	Completion of an Annual Fire Evacuation Drill	Community Clerk or as designated by the Clerk

All staff

All staff have a responsibility for their own and others fire safety. They should report any possible dangerous issues to the Community Clerk or in their absence the Booking Assistant for action. Staff are forbidden from carrying out actions that could compromise theirs or others fire safety and where staff are found to carry out such actions they may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Fire Strategy

The fire strategy is to ensure there is a suitable means of alerting all persons who have a legitimate right to be in the premises to a fire in the early stages and provide sufficient number of exits to allow the safe evacuation to a place of ultimate safety.

The evacuation procedure is for all persons to evacuate immediately.

The type, number and level of fire safety measures will be decided by Fire Risk Assessment carried out by a competent person.

Whilst management accepts there is a legal duty to ensure there is some persons trained in the use of firefighting equipment they do not encourage the fighting of fires by staff and actively discourages the fighting of fires by any visitors unless they have received training.

Staff will receive fire safety training including the use of fire extinguishers but their overriding responsibility is to sound an alarm and initiate an evacuation of the immediate area.

Any Councillor called out after hours to respond to the activation of the fire alarm must not take undue risks to themselves and others and should carry out an external check of the building before attempting entry and only if satisfied the risk is not imminent then cautiously access through the main entrance and inspect the Fire Control Panel. If there is any doubt as to their safety or that of others, the emergency services should be contacted immediately.

The Council's fire strategy concentrates on life safety and not property protection.

Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)

Rackheath Community Council will employ a competent person to assist them with their duties under Article 18 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

A fire risk assessment will be completed for each work area. The FRA will be reviewed annually or when there is a major change in circumstance to the premises.

A hard copy of the FRA will be held on site in a safe place.

The fire risk assessment is a comprehensive assessment of the building, the processes taking place and the people expected to use it to ensure all relevant people are not at an unacceptable risk from fire or its effects. The assessment considers life safety and not property protection.

The assessment will provide a list of significant findings. These are items that are likely to present an unacceptable risk to people and will specify: what the problem is, what existing control measures are in place and what additional measures should be instigated.

Any Significant Finding will be prioritised as High, Medium, and Low or as a Note.

High, Medium and Low are an identification of the risk the hazard presents to relevant people. The Council will use this system as a way of prioritising the work to complete it.

Where a Significant Finding is stated as a Note, there is unlikely to be any additional control measure. The Note is a way of informing the reader that an issue has been identified but due to the existing control measures requires no further attention.

The Responsible Person is responsible for ensuring the Significant Findings detailed in the FRA receive appropriate attention.

Testing and Maintenance

Fire Alarm and Detection

The level of coverage will be set by the FRA and serviced in accordance with the relevant British Standard (BS5839 Pt 1: 2013) by a competent person.

The alarm will be inspected daily by staff to ensure it is showing a healthy supply (green light on panel).

The call points will be tested weekly by using a test key to operate a different call point each week on a rolling program.

Records of the tests will be maintained on site for inspection by fire risk assessors and enforcement officers.

Emergency Lighting

The level of emergency lighting will be dictated by the FRA.

The installed system will be tested monthly by staff by using a suitable test key or by isolating (using the local light circuit breaker) the lights.

The system will be serviced annually by a competent firm of engineers in accordance with BS 5266 Pt 1: 2005.

Records of the tests will be maintained on site for inspection by fire risk assessors and enforcement officers.

Portable Electrical Equipment

The portable electrical equipment within the building work areas will be tested annually to ensure it is fit for purpose and in a safe condition. The company will have equipment tested in accordance with HSE guidance.

Records of tests will be held to be able to show due diligence.

Portable Fire Fighting Equipment

The portable firefighting equipment will be inspected to ensure the equipment appears in good condition, all extinguishers have a safety pin and plastic tag fitted and all equipment is in its appropriate position.

The equipment will be serviced annually by a firm of competent engineers in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the BS 5306 Pt 3.

Means of Escape

The designated on-site staff will check daily that all corridors are kept clear of obstructions and combustible material.

Records of Testing & Maintenance

The Community Council will ensure accurate and true records associated with testing and maintenance of fire safety measures as well as staff training and evacuation drills are kept.

Records must be kept on site and except for staff training in a single file with the following information:

- Date of test
- Item tested
- Result of test
- Action taken
- Person completing test

In the case of staff training records they should be retained on site for the period the employee is working on site. The records should be kept confidential but may be shown to enforcing authorities for the purpose of showing due diligence to legislation.

Staff Training

All staff will be given induction training when employed; this will take place on their first day of employment and will encompass:

- Action to take on discovering a fire or hearing the alarm
- Location of exits
- Assembly points

Where necessary, nominated key staff will receive additional annual training providing detailed knowledge on the installed fire safety measures and use of firefighting equipment. Staff will sign the Fire Safety record to show they have completed the training. Continuation training should be completed annually.

Evacuation Drills

It is anticipated this will take place without visitors. The drill should take place at least annually. All staff should sign the Fire Safety record to show they have completed the drill.

Policy on Fire Fighting

Staff who have been trained in the use of portable firefighting equipment may attempt to fight an uncontrolled fire where they feel confident it can be dealt with safely however, they must not do this where they would put themselves or others at risk of harm from the fire or its effects.

Visitors are actively discouraged from fighting fire unless they have received specific training. Any such firefighting is carried out at their own risk.

Sufficient firefighting equipment will be provided in the premises for the purpose of immediate first aid firefighting. The level of equipment provided will be decided by the fire risk assessment or other competent persons.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's)

All staff known to have a disability will have a PEEP completed on them.

The purpose of the PEEP is to ensure the person is provided with a means of being alerted to a fire emergency and a safe means of escape taking into account their disability or illness.

The PEEP should not disadvantage the employee in their job role but ultimately the purpose of the PEEP is to ensure the safety of the employee and if no reasonable solution can be found to ensuring the safety of the person a restriction in their location within or on the premises may have to be considered.

When completing a PEEP the Manager should speak to the person involved to discuss:

- What fire safety issues present problems?
- How serious are the problems?
- How can they be overcome?

Where it is recognised a visitor has a disability that may affect their escape from the building the Responsible Person should consider discussing with them how they can be assisted.

Contractors on Site

Any contractors invited to site to carry out authorised repairs must provide onsite management with a method statement stating how the work is to be safely completed. This must include a section on fire safety.

Any contractor invited on site to complete “hot work” (work that could use open flame or heat producing equipment high enough to cause ignition to flammable material) must produce a risk assessment stating how the equipment is to be used and what precautions will be put into place to reduce the risk and deal with a fire.

All such contractors must bring their own firefighting equipment onsite suitable for the hazard they are introducing as specified in their risk assessment.

All such firefighting equipment must be in service (within one year). When the contractors have set up to work, onsite management must carry out an inspection and satisfy themselves they are working safely and to their risk assessment/method statement.

The Community Clerk, and in their absence, the Booking Assistant, has the right to stop any contractor from working in or on the premises where they feel there is an unacceptable risk to the contractors, staff and/or visitors.

Relevant Legislation

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005