

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

**Fire Safety Policy**

**Contents**

1. [\*\*Introduction\*\*](#)
2. [\*\*Policy Statement\*\*](#)
3. [\*\*Policy Objectives\*\*](#)
4. [\*\*Application\*\*](#)
5. [\*\*Organisational Responsibilities\*\*](#)
6. [\*\*Monitoring and Review\*\*](#)
7. [\*\*Advice and Guidance\*\*](#)
8. [\*\*Glossary of Terms\*\*](#)

## Fire Safety Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) places duties on “responsible persons”<sup>1</sup>, to the extent that they have control over premises, to:

- assess the risks posed by fire to the health and safety of their employees and to anyone else who may be affected by their activities; and
- to eliminate those risks, so far as reasonably practicable, or to otherwise reduce those risks as low as reasonably practicable.

In the Cambridgeshire County Council context the “responsible person”, as defined by the FSO, is the body corporate. The Chief Executive, as the Council’s most senior officer, represents the Council in this capacity. On a day-to-day basis, the responsibility for ensuring that the duties of the responsible person are undertaken is delegated to individual officers within the County Council (see *5. Organisational Responsibilities* below).

### 2. Policy Statement

Cambridgeshire County Council (*hereafter the Council*) recognises and acknowledges its responsibility to take general precautions to protect the safety, so far as reasonably practicable, of its employees and anyone else potentially affected by its undertaking, against fire, dangerous substances which could give rise to fire and the effects of fire.

### 3. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that:

- roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined and understood in order to secure fire safety and both corporate and individual compliance with relevant legislation.
- one or more competent persons is appointed to provide fire safety advice;
- risks from fire, or from dangerous substances<sup>2</sup> which could lead to a fire, are assessed and control measures commensurate with the general principles of control<sup>3</sup> or the principles of control (dangerous substances)<sup>4</sup> described in the FSO are implemented to either eliminate risk or to reduce residual risk as low as reasonably practicable;
- measures are devised and implemented to ensure that satisfactory procedures are in place to reduce risks to persons in the event of a fire and that all persons affected, including any persons that are unable to evacuate a building unaided (e.g. due to a temporary or permanent physical, sensory or mental impairment or any other health or physical condition, such as pregnancy), are able to reach a place of safety<sup>5</sup> in the event of an emergency;
- any aspect of Council owned, occupied or managed premises and any equipment provided in connection to assuring fire safety is maintained, by a competent person, in a fit and efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;

- all people working for or on behalf of the Council or visiting Council premises are provided with clear and relevant information regarding fire risks and measures taken to prevent fires occurring or to mitigate against the consequences of fire;
- Council buildings are designed in accordance with relevant fire safety standards and codes of practice;
- employees are properly consulted about policy, procedures and arrangements for ensuring fire safety;
- workers are provided with appropriate information, instruction and training at appropriate intervals about the fire precautions in place in Council owned, managed or occupied premises;
- the Council co-operates and co-ordinates, as necessary, with any other “responsible persons” as defined by the FSO;
- the Council will liaise with relevant statutory authorities as required by the FSO and any other relevant statutory provisions.

#### **4. Application**

This Fire Safety Policy applies to all premises and activities falling, to any extent, under Cambridgeshire County Council’s control. This includes Community and Voluntary-Controlled schools, Pupil-Referral Units and Special Schools. The policy sets down the framework by which the County Council, its workers and its contractors will be expected to meet their fire safety duties. NB. In the context of this policy, the term “workers” includes any person engaged to carry out work on behalf of the County Council and as such includes employees, agency workers, consultants and volunteers.

#### **5. Organisational Responsibilities**

##### **5.1 Chief Executive (“*responsible person*”)**

The Chief Executive will ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, adequate resources are made available to enable the Council to fulfil its duties under the FSO.

The Chief Executive has delegated authority for the successful and consistent delivery of the Council’s Fire Safety Policy and associated fire safety procedures to the Corporate Director: People, Policy and Law.

##### **5.2 Corporate Director: People, Policy and Law**

The Corporate Director: People, Policy and Law provides day to day leadership in matters of health and safety by chairing the strategic Health and Safety coordinating group; the Council’s main body for oversight of health and safety matters. In this capacity, the Corporate Director: People, Policy and Law will be responsible for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- property fire risk assessments are undertaken (building fabric and structure and means of escape only) for Council owned, occupied and managed buildings (excluding Schools) and that the significant findings of these assessments are brought to the attention of those responsible for those properties so that they may fulfil their duties under this policy;

- property fire risk assessments are reviewed at suitable intervals to ensure that they remain valid;
- competent fire safety advice is available to enable the Council to comply with its duties under this policy, the FSO and any other relevant legislation and standards;
- the fire safety policy, statutory requirements are monitored and reviewed and an annual report on fire safety performance is submitted to the Council's Strategic Health and Safety Coordinating Group and the Council's Strategic Management Team;
- relevant statutory bodies are consulted on matters of fire safety as and when necessary;
- appropriate guidance and standards are developed to enable the requirements of this policy to be implemented properly;
- appropriate fire safety information, instruction and training is made available to all persons working in, using, or visiting Council properties as required.

### **5.3 Executive Directors / Corporate Directors**

Executive and Corporate Directors will be responsible for ensuring that, in areas falling under their control:

- the significant findings of property fire risk assessments are properly addressed and suitable control measures implemented in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;
- all activities (including maintenance activities) and processes falling under their control are assessed for fire safety and suitable control measures implemented in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;
- all premises features (e.g. structural components, fire doors and partitions) and equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety for which they have a maintenance responsibility are maintained, by a competent person, in a fit and efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;
- sufficient numbers of people are appointed as fire wardens for all areas occupied by their Service / Directorate;
- the needs of workers that are unable to evacuate buildings, or parts of buildings, that they are normally expected to occupy unaided are assessed and that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan identifying adequate arrangements, including where required the purchase of specialist equipment and training for workers delegated to provide assistance, is put in place to ensure that those persons can be evacuated to an ultimate place of safety in the event of a fire, fire alarm or other emergency;
- all new and refurbished areas are designed to ensure compliance with this policy and the requirements of any relevant fire-safety legislation;
- where relevant, construction contractors engaged for, or on their behalf, undertake a fire risk assessment before commencing works on site;

- workers under their control liaise and co-operate, as applicable, with other Council duty holders (e.g. where premises are shared with other Services / Directorates) or other responsible persons (e.g. landlords, tenants and contractors) to ensure that they are aware of the Council's fire safety policy and procedures and to identify any risks arising from their activities which could impact upon the Council or their workers or their visitors and service users.

Where necessary, Executive and Corporate Directors may appoint one or more members of their Service or Directorate to undertake these tasks on their behalf. This could include their Service Health and Safety Coordinator. Where tasks are delegated, Executive and Corporate Directors will be responsible for ensuring that:

- sufficient resource is made available to delegates in order to undertake these activities in accordance with the requirements of this policy; and
- delegated tasks are actively monitored to ensure that they are being carried out.

#### **5.4 Headteachers (Community and Voluntary-Controlled educational settings)**

Headteachers will be responsible for ensuring that, in areas falling under their control:

- all premises, activities (including maintenance activities) and processes falling under their control are assessed for fire safety and suitable control measures implemented in accordance with the principles of control (*General and Dangerous Substances –see glossary*) defined in the FSO;
- fire safety risk assessments are reviewed at suitable intervals to ensure that they remain relevant;
- the needs of workers and pupils that are unable to evacuate school premises (or parts of school premises that they are expected to access) unaided are assessed and that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan identifying adequate arrangements, including where required the purchase of specialist equipment and training for workers delegated to provide assistance, is put in place to ensure that those persons can be evacuated to an ultimate place of safety in the event of a fire, fire alarm or other emergency;
- all workers falling under their control are given training and instruction in fire safety matters commensurate with their activities;
- all visitors and contractors carrying out works within the school are provided with sufficient information and instruction to enable them to comply with the fire safety arrangements in place at the school;
- where relevant, construction contractors engaged for, or on their behalf, undertake a fire risk assessment before commencing works on site;
- sufficient numbers of people are appointed as fire wardens for all areas of the school;
- all “non-core” use of school facilities (e.g. school plays, use by community groups, PTA functions, private hire to external users) complies with the Licensing Act 2003 and any other relevant legislation and that fire safety matters are

adequately assessed and suitable control measures, as defined by the FSO, are implemented;

- all workers, pupils, visitors and contractors falling under their control comply with the requirements of the fire safety policy.

Where necessary, Headteachers may appoint one or more members of their staff, or a competent external service provider, to undertake these tasks on their behalf.

Where tasks are delegated or outsourced, Headteachers will be responsible for:

- ensuring that sufficient resource is made available to delegates in order to undertake these activities in accordance with the requirements of this policy; and
- delegated tasks are actively monitored to ensure that they are being carried out.

### **5.5 Service Directors, Heads of Service, managers, team leaders and supervisors**

Service Directors, Heads of Service, managers, team leaders and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:

- the significant findings of property fire risk assessments relating to areas occupied or managed by their service or teams are properly addressed and suitable control measures implemented in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;
- all activities and processes falling under their control are assessed for fire safety and suitable control measures implemented in accordance with the principles of control (*General and Dangerous Substances – see glossary*) defined in the FSO;
- all workers and contractors, falling under their control are given appropriate training and instruction in fire safety matters commensurate with their activities;
- all workers, visitors and contractors falling under their control comply with the requirements of the fire safety policy.

### **5.6 Workers**

Workers have a responsibility to comply with the Council's Fire Safety Policy and associated procedures. Specifically, this means that workers are required to:

- observe all instructions, information and training intended to secure fire safety;
- co-operate with the Council on matters of fire safety;
- ensure that any visitors that they receive at Council owned, managed or occupied properties are adequately supervised whilst in our premises so that they can be directed away from the building in the event of a fire, fire alarm or other emergency;
- not to interfere with any building fabric or equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety;
- report any obvious defects or short-comings in the Council's fire safety arrangements or procedures.

NB. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy could result in disciplinary action being taken.

## 5.7 Contractors

Contractors are required to:

- assess the fire safety risks arising from their works / activities and implement control measures in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;
- co-operate with the Council on all matters of fire safety;
- ensure that they and all staff falling under their control have received appropriate information, instruction and training (including induction training provided by the Council) to enable them to comply with this policy and the Council's emergency arrangements;
- obey all instructions relating to fire safety given by their Council contact (e.g. the project manager overseeing their works) or given by members of the Council's Health and Safety Team.

## 5.8 Tenants

Tenants (excluding domestic tenants such as School Caretakers and "County Farm" tenants) occupying Council owned or managed properties will have their own duties under the FSO. This would include the identification and appointment of a responsible person. This responsible person would have a responsibility to:

- co-operate with the Council to ensure that the Council can meet all relevant statutory requirements;
- assess the fire safety risks arising from their works / activities and implement control measures in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;
- ensure that they and all staff falling under their control have received appropriate information, instruction and training to enable them to comply with this policy and the Council's emergency arrangements to the extent that they apply to the tenant.

## 6. Monitoring and Review

### 6.1 Service Health and Safety Coordinating Groups

Service Health and Safety Coordinating Groups will be responsible for monitoring<sup>6</sup> the application and effectiveness of the Council's Fire Safety Policy within their Service areas.

The significant findings of monitoring activity will be reported, at least annually, to Strategic Health and Safety Coordinating Group.

Where there is evidence to suggest that the policy and procedures are not controlling risks adequately the chair of the Service Health and Safety Group will be responsible for ensuring that this is brought to the attention of the Chair of Strategic Health and Safety Coordinating Group.

## **6.2 Strategic Health and Safety Coordinating Group**

Strategic Coordinating Health and Safety Group will be responsible for ensuring that the application and effectiveness of the Council's Fire Safety Policy and associated procedures are monitored and reviewed.

Where there is evidence to suggest that the policy and procedures are not controlling risks adequately the Chair of Strategic Health and Safety Group will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are revised so that risks are reduced to a tolerable level.

Strategic Health and Safety Coordinating Group will be responsible for ensuring that worker representatives are consulted on the manual handling policy and procedures and any future revisions to that policy and procedures.

## **7. Advice and Guidance**

All policies and procedures form part of Council employees' terms and conditions of employment and therefore care should be taken with their application.

Information on how to apply this policy is available from the Council's Health and Safety Team. Contact the [Health and Safety Team](#) to give feedback on this policy

## **8. Glossary of Terms:**

---

### **1 Responsible Person:**

According to the FSO "responsible person" means—

(a) in relation to a workplace, the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control;

(b) in relation to any premises not falling within paragraph (a)—

(i) the person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business or other undertaking (for profit or not); or

(ii) the owner, where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on by that person of a trade, business or other undertaking.

### **2 Dangerous Substances:**

(a) a substance or preparation which meets the criteria in the approved classification and labelling guide for classification as a substance or preparation which is explosive, oxidising, extremely flammable, highly flammable or flammable, whether or not that substance or preparation is classified under the CHIP Regulations;

(b) a substance or preparation which because of its physico-chemical or chemical properties and the way it is used or is present in or on premises creates a risk; and

(c) any dust, whether in the form of solid particles or fibrous materials or otherwise, which can form an explosive mixture with air or an explosive atmosphere;

### **3 Principles of Control (General):**

The FSO defines the principles of control, in order of preference, as being

(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; and

(h) giving appropriate instructions to employees.

---

#### **4 Principles of Control (Dangerous Substances):**

The FSO states that:

1. The responsible person must, in order of priority—
  - (a) reduce the quantity of dangerous substances to a minimum;
  - (b) avoid or minimise the release of a dangerous substance;
  - (c) control the release of a dangerous substance at source;
  - (d) prevent the formation of an explosive atmosphere, including the application of appropriate ventilation;
  - (e) ensure that any release of a dangerous substance which may give rise to risk is suitably collected, safely contained, removed to a safe place, or otherwise rendered safe, as appropriate;
  - (f) avoid—
    - (i) ignition sources including electrostatic discharges; and
    - (ii) such other adverse conditions as could result in harmful physical effects from a dangerous substance; and
  - (g) segregate incompatible dangerous substances.
2. The responsible person must ensure that mitigation measures include:
  - (a) reducing to a minimum the number of persons exposed;
  - (b) measures to avoid the propagation of fires or explosions;
  - (c) providing explosion pressure relief arrangements;
  - (d) providing explosion suppression equipment;
  - (e) providing plant which is constructed so as to withstand the pressure likely to be produced by an explosion; and
  - (f) providing suitable personal protective equipment.
3. The responsible person must
  - (a) ensure that the premises are designed, constructed and maintained so as to reduce risk;
  - (b) ensure that suitable special, technical and organisational measures are designed, constructed, assembled, installed, provided and used so as to reduce risk;
  - (c) ensure that special, technical and organisational measures are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;

(d) ensure that equipment and protective systems meets the requirements of the FSO

(e) where the work is carried out in hazardous places or involves hazardous activities, ensure that appropriate systems of work are applied including —

(i) the issuing of written instructions for the carrying out of work; and

(ii) a system of permits to work, with such permits being issued by a person with responsibility for this function prior to the commencement of the work concerned.

## **5 Place of Safety:**

In relation to premises, means a safe area beyond the premises.

## **6 Monitoring:**

In the context of this policy, monitoring activities could include, but will not be limited to, review of incident reports (including near misses), receiving reports from managers as to the effectiveness of this policy and the associated procedures, receiving and commenting on workplace inspection and audit reports. For further information on monitoring refer to the Monitoring section of the Council's Safety Management System.