

Fire Safety Policy

Policy Statement

The Diversity Trust is committed to providing a safe and healthy office environment for its employees, visitors and contractors (where applicable). Part of this commitment is protecting all relevant persons from the risks of fire.

Fire is a potential hazard in all non-domestic premises, and offices are no exception. Even though offices are perceived as relatively safe environments, compared to other non-domestic premises, fire is a serious risk that can have a devastating impact on the business. Fire is a threat to life, company assets and the environment and has the potential to affect business operations.

The Diversity Trust takes fire safety extremely seriously and recognises that it has responsibilities to protect all relevant persons from harm, so far as is reasonably practicable. The company will endeavour to control associated risks and will comply with legislation relating to fire safety, such as:

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRFSO) 2005.

Other health and safety legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
UK Government Guidance – fire safety risk assessment: offices and shops.

Employees and others working for the Diversity Trust also have duties under general health and safety legislation, specific fire safety legislation and this policy.

A copy of this policy and associated procedures will be issued to all employees during their induction and to other relevant persons where applicable. The policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains current, and any revisions to it will be communicated.



Berkeley Wilde, Executive Director
14th June 2022

Policy aims and scope

This Fire Safety Policy provides a framework for the Diversity Trust fire safety arrangements. It also underpins the company's approach to fire safety management.

The aim of the Diversity Trust is to ensure that fires are prevented, so far as is reasonably practicable, by ensuring that there are reasonable precautions in place in and around the office. If fires cannot be prevented, the aim is to minimise fire risks and preserve life by having robust fire safety protective measures and ensuring that all relevant persons know what actions to take in line with the emergency procedures.

This policy applies to all Diversity Trust premises, activities, and all relevant persons (employees, including temporary and agency workers, contractors, visitors, and others who may be at risk in the event of a fire).

Definitions

The responsible person – the employer is the responsible person if the workplace is, to any extent, under their control. For other types of premises, the responsible person is:

- The person who has control of the premises (as an occupier or otherwise) in connection with the carrying on by them of a trade, business or other undertaking (for profit or not); or
- The owner where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on by them of a trade, business or other undertaking.

Relevant persons – any person who is or may be lawfully on the premises and any person in the immediate vicinity of the premises at risk from a fire (e.g. employees, visitors, contractors and anyone else who could be at risk). It does not include firefighters who are carrying out their duties in relation to a function of a fire and rescue authority.

Competent persons – any person who assists the responsible person in undertaking fire safety arrangements, e.g. fire preventive & protective measures. They are appointed by the responsible person, as per the requirements of article 18 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The responsible person

The company has appointed a responsible person, as per the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The responsible person has overall responsibility for fire safety within the premises. Their main duties under this legislation are to (this list is not exhaustive):

- Take general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of all employees and other relevant persons.
- Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the fire risks to which relevant persons are exposed.
- Ensure the principles of prevention are applied when implementing any preventive or protective measures to eliminate, reduce or control fire risks.
- Ensure there are appropriate fire safety arrangements in place.

The responsible person for the Diversity Trust is the Executive Director.

The day-to-day responsibilities for managing fire safety in the office have been delegated to the Executive Director.

Fire wardens

The company has appointed fire wardens to assist in the undertaking of fire preventive and protective measures within the office. Fire wardens' duties include:

Preventive (proactive) duties

Assisting the responsible person with fire risk assessments and emergency evacuation plans.

Conducting regular internal inspections and testing (where applicable) of firefighting equipment, fire detection and warning systems, fire doors, emergency lighting, and emergency routes and exits.

Organising the external inspection and servicing of fire safety equipment, fire doors and fire detection systems.

Protective (reactive) duties

- Assisting with emergency evacuations and fire drills.
- Carrying out roll calls or sweeps.
- Tackling small fires with local firefighting equipment (if trained and does not put their safety at risk).
- Liaising with the fire rescue service in the event of a fire.

The fire warden(s) for the Diversity Trust is the Executive Director.

Employees

All employees have general fire safety duties, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, whilst they are at work. To comply with the law, every employee must:

- Take reasonable care for the safety of themselves and of other relevant persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- Cooperate with their employer, so far as is necessary, to enable them to comply with the requirements of the Order.
- Inform their employer, or other employees with specific fire safety responsibilities, of:

- Any work situation that poses a serious and immediate danger to safety; and
- Any shortcomings in their employer's fire safety protection arrangements.

Employees also have general duties under the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Employees should report all fire-related dangers or shortcomings in fire safety arrangements to [enter role and/or name] [add contact details].

Fire risk assessment (FRA)

A fire risk assessment (FRA) will be completed for the office premises, with the assistance of a competent person, as per the requirements of article 9 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The Executive Director is responsible for carrying out the FRA, who will:

- Identify the fire hazards.
- Identify who is at risk.
- Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect relevant persons from the risks.
- Record the findings, prepare an emergency plan and provide training.
- Review the fire risk assessment.

The aim of the FRA is to identify the preventive and protective measures required to eliminate, reduce or control fire safety risks.

Where dangerous substances are present in or around the office premises, the FRA will include the considerations detailed in Schedule 1 (Part 1) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

If young people are employed at any time in the office, the FRA will be reviewed to include the considerations detailed in Schedule 1 (Part 2) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The significant findings of the FRA, and details of any groups of persons identified as being especially at risk, will be recorded and brought to the attention of employees and other affected persons.

The responsible person will ensure that the findings of the risk assessment are acted upon as appropriate.

The FRA will be reviewed annually. Significant changes to the office premises, work processes, staff, equipment, substances, and building layout will also trigger a review. If there is a fire incident in or around the office, the FRA will be reviewed immediately.

A hard copy of the FRA will be kept in a safe place.

Fire safety precautions

Equipment maintenance, inspection and testing

All fire protective measures in and around the office, including fire safety and electrical equipment, shall be selected, installed, modified, maintained, inspected and tested by competent persons in accordance with:

- Relevant standards, e.g. British Standards;
- The fire risk assessment; and
- The manufacturer's instructions.

Fixed and portable electrical equipment

All office electrical equipment will be on a planned preventive maintenance programme, and the frequency will be determined by risk assessment.

All office portable electrical equipment will be subject to a PAT test. It will be inspected and tested weekly by the Executive Director.

The fixed electrical installation and associated systems will be maintained and tested by an external competent contractor annually.

All inspections and tests will be recorded in the fire safety manual.

Firefighting equipment

Firefighting equipment is used to extinguish fires. The types of firefighting equipment in the office includes sprinklers, hoses, fire extinguishers or fire blankets.

Firefighting equipment will be inspected internally weekly by the Executive Director.

Inspections will include the following checks:

- It is in good condition and not damaged.
- It is in the correct location and position.
- It has not been discharged, and the safety pin and plastic tags are in place (fire extinguishers).
- It has been serviced.
- The signage is in place and correct.

Firefighting equipment will be maintained and serviced by an external competent contractor annually.

All inspections and tests will be recorded in the fire safety manual.

Only those who have been trained to use firefighting equipment will be permitted to tackle small manageable fires (i.e. the size of a small waste paper bin). They should

never endanger themselves and others to extinguish a fire. The priority should always be to evacuate the building quickly and safely.

Fire detection systems

Fire detection systems detect fire and warn occupants of the danger. The types of fire detection systems around the office are fire alarms, smoke detectors, call points or a manual system, and locations.

Fire detection systems will be tested internally on a weekly basis.

Fire detection systems will be inspected internally weekly by the Executive Director. Inspections will include the following checks:

- It is clear, visible and unobstructed.
- It is not damaged.
- The signage is in place and correct.
- It has been serviced.

Fire detection systems will be maintained and serviced by an external competent contractor.

All inspections and tests will be recorded in the fire safety manual.

Fire doors

Fire doors prevent the spread of fire and smoke. The types of fire doors around the office are manual or automatic.

Fire doors will be tested internally weekly.

Fire doors will be inspected internally weekly by the Executive Director. Inspections will include the following checks:

- They are clear, visible and unobstructed.
- They have appropriate signage/labelling.
- They close properly.
- They are kept closed at all times (unless they are doors that automatically close when the alarm is sounded).
- There is no damage or defects that could encourage the spread of fire, smoke and toxic fumes.

Fire doors will be maintained and serviced by an external competent contractor.

All inspections and tests will be recorded in the fire safety manual.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting guides relevant persons to their nearest exit. The emergency lighting around the office will be tested internally weekly.

Emergency lighting will be inspected internally weekly by the Executive Director. Inspections will include the following checks:

- It is clear, visible and unobstructed.
- It has appropriate signage/labelling.
- It is not damaged.
- The indicator lights are on.

Emergency lighting will be serviced by an external competent contractor.

All inspections and tests will be recorded in the fire safety manual.

Fire safety signage

Fire safety signage provides instructions to relevant persons on preventing fires or the actions to take if there is a fire. The fire safety signage around the office includes fire action notices, fire exit signs, escape route signs and fire equipment signs, and locations.

Fire signage will be inspected weekly by the Executive Director. Inspections will include the following checks:

- It is clear, visible and unobstructed.
- There is no damage or defects.
- It is in the correct location and position.
- It has appropriate symbols and not just writing to account for those with limited language skills.

All inspections will be recorded in the fire safety manual.

Means of escape

If there is a fire in the office, relevant persons need to use their nearest route and exit to escape the building. All escape routes, such as corridors, landings and stairways, and fire exits will be checked daily by the Executive Director to ensure that they are kept clear of any obstructions and combustibles. Checks will also be completed externally to ensure that there is nothing blocking fire exit doors from the other side.

All inspections will be recorded in the fire safety manual.

Emergency procedures

Fire emergency evacuation procedures and escape plans will be established and will be based on the findings of the fire risk assessment. Emergency procedures will be reviewed monthly and if there are any significant changes.

Emergency evacuation procedures will be regularly tested by carrying out fire drills and practice exercises.

Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs)

All employees who would need assistance in an emergency will have a PEEP, which will include:

- Their safest escape route, nearest emergency exits and closest refuges.
- Who would assist the person in evacuating the office.
- The step-by-step method of how they would be evacuated.
- Any additional aids, equipment or support required to alert the person of a fire and assist them in evacuating.

A PEEP will also be completed if there are any visitors or contractors who would need assistance in an emergency.

Reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 will be considered where a disabled person requires a PEEP.

Fire drills

Fire drills will be carried out by the Office Manager at least weekly. The frequency of fire drills will be based on the findings of the fire risk assessment.

The outcome of the fire drill exercise will be recorded in the fire safety manual. If there are any issues, the responsible person will ensure that appropriate action is taken.

Assembly points

Clearly marked assembly points will be established, which will be detailed on the escape plan, along with the locations of fire protective equipment.

Fire action notices, evacuation procedures and escape plans will be displayed so that employees and visitors can familiarise themselves with the office emergency procedures.

Staff training

Article 21 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires the responsible person to provide their employees with adequate fire safety training.

Executive Director s responsible for organising and coordinating training.

All employees will undertake fire safety training as soon as is practicable after the commencement of employment, which will include:

- The fire safety policy and any relevant procedures.
- The significant findings of the fire risk assessment.
- Who the fire wardens are and others with fire safety responsibilities.
- The actions to take on discovering a fire or hearing the alarm.

- The locations of the emergency routes, fire exits and assembly points.
- Where the fire alarm activation points are and how to activate them.
- The locations of fire safety equipment.
- Emergency evacuation procedures.

Refresher training will be carried out on an annual basis. If there are any significant changes to fire safety risks, procedures or systems, refresher training will be provided before the specified frequency.

Fire wardens will undertake additional training relating to their responsibilities and duties.

All fire safety training (including fire drills and practice exercises) will take place during normal office working hours, and a written record of attendance will be kept in the training manual.

Information for visitors and contractors

Visitors and contractors will be notified of any particular fire risks and precautions on their arrival, including what to do if there is a fire in the office building. They will be expected to follow all relevant fire safety procedures.

Contractors carrying out any work in or around the office must include fire safety in their risk assessment and method statement before being permitted to proceed. If any 'hot work' is carried out, additional precautions will be required.

All visitors and contractors will sign in and out in the signing in book, so office staff know who is on the premises.

Records

Records will be kept of:

- Fire risk assessments.
- Fire detection equipment internal inspections and tests.
- Fire detection equipment external services and repairs.
- Firefighting equipment internal inspections and tests.
- Firefighting equipment external services and repairs.
- Fire door internal inspections and tests.
- Fire door external services and repairs.
- Any visits from the fire inspector.
- Fire evacuation procedures.
- Fire drills and practice evacuations.
- Fire safety training and instructions given.

Records will be kept in the fire safety manual.

Monitoring and review

Fire safety performance will be monitored by inspections, audits, logging of fire incidents/near misses.

This fire safety policy will be reviewed annually. A review will also be required if there are any:

- Significant changes within the office premises.
- Fire-related incidents or near misses.
- Changes to fire safety legislation, standards or guidelines.

Any changes to the policy will be communicated to employees and other relevant persons (where appropriate).

Key facts about fires

Fires need three things to start – a source of ignition (heat), a source of fuel (something that burns) and oxygen:

- sources of ignition include heaters, lighting, naked flames, electrical equipment, smokers' materials (cigarettes, matches etc), and anything else that can get very hot or cause sparks
- sources of fuel include wood, paper, plastic, rubber or foam, loose packaging materials, waste rubbish and furniture
- sources of oxygen include the air around us

What do I have to do?

As employers we carry out fire safety risk assessments and keep these up to date. This shares the same approach as health and safety risk assessments and can be carried out either as part of an overall risk assessment or as a separate exercise.

Based on the findings of the risk assessment, we need to ensure that adequate and appropriate fire safety measures are in place to minimise the risk of injury or loss of life, in the event of a fire.

To help prevent fire in the workplace, the risk assessment(s) should identify what could cause a fire to start, i.e. sources of ignition (heat or sparks) and substances that burn, and the people who may be at risk.

Once we have identified the risks, we can take appropriate action to control them. Consider whether we can avoid them altogether or, if this is not possible, how we can reduce the risks and manage them. Also consider how we will protect people if there is a fire.

- Carry out a fire safety risk assessment
- Keep sources of ignition and flammable substances apart
- Avoid accidental fires, e.g. make sure heaters cannot be knocked over

- Ensure good housekeeping at all times, e.g. avoid build-up of rubbish that could burn
- Consider how to detect fires and how to warn people quickly if they start, e.g., installing smoke alarms and fire alarms or bells
- Have the correct fire-fighting equipment for putting a fire out quickly
- Keep fire exits and escape routes clearly marked and unobstructed at all times
- Ensure your workers receive appropriate training on procedures they need to follow, including fire drills
- Review and update your risk assessment regularly

The law

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 covers general fire safety in England and Wales.

In Scotland, requirements on general fire safety are covered in Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, supported by the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. In the majority of premises, local fire and rescue authorities are responsible for enforcing this fire safety legislation. HSE has enforcement responsibility on construction sites and on ships under construction or undergoing repair.

Dangerous substances that cause fire and explosion

Work which involves the storage, use or creation of chemicals, vapours, dusts etc that can readily burn or explode is hazardous. Each year people are injured at work by flammable substances accidentally catching fire or exploding.

This section does not cover explosives – this website has more detailed information on [explosives](#) and similar substances. It also has information on [gas safety](#).

What are the hazards?

Many substances found in the workplace can cause fires or explosions. These range from the obvious, eg flammable chemicals, petrol, cellulose paint thinners and welding gases, to the less obvious – engine oil, grease, packaging materials, dusts from wood, flour and sugar.

It is important to be aware of the risks and to control or get rid of them to prevent accidents.

What do I have to do?

To help prevent accidental fires or explosions, you first need to identify: what substances, materials, processes etc have the potential to cause such an event, ie substances that burn or can explode and what might set them alight the people who may be at risk/harmed.

Once you have identified the risks, you should consider what measures are needed to reduce or remove the risk of people being harmed. This will include measures to prevent these incidents happening in the first place, as well as precautions that will protect people from harm if there is a fire or explosion.

Key points to remember

Think about the risks of fire and explosions from the substances you use or create in your business and consider how you might remove or reduce the risks

- Use supplier safety data sheets as a source of information about which substances might be flammable
- Consider reducing the amount of flammable/explosive substances you store on site
- Keep sources of ignition (e.g. naked flames, sparks) and substances that burn (eg vapour, dusts) apart
- Get rid of flammable/explosive substances safely
- Review your risk assessment regularly
- Maintain good housekeeping, e.g. avoid build-up of rubbish, dust or grease that could start a fire or make one worse

You also need to consider the presence of dangerous substances that can result in fires or explosions as part of your fire safety risk assessment. This is required under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (in England and Wales) and under Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act.

The Fire and Rescue Authorities deal with general fire safety matters in workplaces apart from on construction sites including shipbuilding where these are dealt with by HSE or its agents. Enforcement responsibility for fire safety where dangerous substances are kept and used generally lies with HSE (or local authorities if they inspect the premises).

Find out more

There is separate [guidance on fire safety in the construction industry](#)

GOV.UK has advice on [fire safety in the workplace](#)

The Welsh Government website has [guidance on fire](#) and rescue

The Scottish Government provides information on [non-domestic fire safety](#)

Source: Health and Safety Executive (HSE) <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm>