

Dawlish Town Council

Fire Safety Policy

1. Statement of Policy

Fire has the capability to cause multiple fatalities and extensive property damage. A serious fire could result in extensive disruption of the work of the Council and would involve losses that would be only partially covered by insurance.

Fire safety involves preventative measures, which attempt to ensure that a fire does not start, and precautions which are aimed at minimising the effects of fire on people and property. Although fire safety legislation tends to concentrate on precautions, prevention should take a high profile. Ensuring safety of electrical appliances is important as overloaded or faulty electrical equipment can overheat and start a fire.

The Council will take steps to ensure that prevention of fire is given a high priority and that fire precautions do at least meet the minimum standards required by the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997. Steps taken in relation to fire precautions will include the provision and maintenance of adequate means of escape from buildings, means of fighting fire, fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, and where appropriate automatic fire detection.

Fire risk assessments are required under the Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations 1999. These regulations also require emergency plans to be drawn up and people nominated to implement them (reg. 8).

The provision of information and training and the holding of fire drills are also recognised as being important.

2. Organisation and Arrangements

2.1 The Caretaker

- for Manor House only, will act as Fire Warden for the whole building

2.2 Administration Officer

- will ensure that new staff recruited or transferred to their areas are aware of local fire action and emergency evacuation procedures;
- will arrange that new staff under their control attend health and safety induction training;
- will ensure that quantities of flammable solvents used in areas under their control are kept to minimum, that flammable solvent cupboards are provided where quantities in any work room exceed 5 litres and that larger quantities are stored in flammable solvent stores.

2.3 The Caretaker

will liaise with the Health Safety and Welfare Officer to ensure that:-

- fire risk assessments are carried out for the buildings under their control;
- adequate emergency plans are prepared for the Manor House site and the Leonard Lamb Community Centre site;
- fire drills are held at the Manor House site and at the Leonard Lamb Community Centre at least once per year and that such fire drills are effective in evacuating persons from the buildings. The active involvement of senior managers is seen as important in order to ensure that fire drills are given a high profile and to ensure cooperation of staff at all levels;
- fire fighting equipment, fire detection and alarm systems and fire action notices are suitable and sufficient for the buildings;
- fire safety signs, including fire equipment signs and signs indicating exit routes and doors, are provided in each building. Such signs will comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996;
- waste material of a flammable nature is consigned to rubbish bins or skips. These bins and skips will, so far as possible, be kept in designated areas away from buildings in order to minimise the effects of arson. Emptying of bins and skips will be arranged at sufficiently frequent intervals to ensure that the need for overflow storage is minimised.

2.4 The Administration Officer

- will ensure that fire extinguishers installed in Council workplaces are inspected and maintained by a competent person at regular intervals. This will be carried out at least twice a year. Records of the

inspections and any reports provided by the competent person will be kept for at least five years;

- will ensure that, when defects in fire fighting equipment are notified (e.g. a discharged extinguisher), action is taken to rectify the defect.
- will ensure that fire alarm systems, detection systems, automatic fire doors and emergency lighting systems are inspected and tested by a competent person at regular intervals and repaired as necessary. Intervals are not to exceed one year. Records of the inspection and test, and also of any repairs made, will be kept for at least five years;
- will ensure that maintenance involving “hot work” i.e. welding, cutting, brazing, etc. is not undertaken without a permit to work signed by a competent person.
- will ensure that portable electrical equipment (but not the fixed installation) is inspected for safety by a competent person at regular intervals. Records of the inspections and any inspection reports provided by the competent person will be kept for at least five years;
- will ensure that the fixed electrical installation is inspected for safety by a competent person at regular intervals. Records of the inspections and any inspection reports provided by the competent person will be kept for at least five years.
- will ensure, so far as is practicable, all new building work and alterations to existing premises that are carried out under his control are carried out in accordance with the fire safety requirements of the Building Regulations 1991.

The Caretaker has a key role to play in fire prevention and in checking that fire precautions are in good working order. They will :-

- ensure that flammable waste materials are not permitted to accumulate within the workplace, that waste paper bins are emptied at least once a day, and that rubbish bins and skips are kept in a safe location and are emptied at sufficiently frequent intervals to prevent overflow of rubbish;
- ensure that escape routes are kept clear at all times, that fire doors are kept closed and that fire exit doors are kept unlocked while the building is occupied;
- carry out regular visual inspections of fire fighting equipment provided in their buildings and ensure that the Senior Admin Officer, Property

is notified of any defective equipment.

2.5 Health Safety and Welfare Officer

The Health Safety and Welfare Officer will :-

- carry out assessments of the risk to health and safety of staff and members of the public who may be affected by fire. Review these assessments periodically and in the light of significant changes;
- work with other members of staff to ensure suitable emergency plans are prepared for each location;
- administer a budget to provide funds for the provision of fire safety training and information;
- develop and present suitable staff induction training for health and safety which will include training on fire safety and in particular the measures to take on discovering a fire and on hearing the fire alarm;
- in conjunction with Training Officers, organise practical fire safety training for employees.

2.6 All staff

All staff will :-

- respect the no-smoking rule within Council buildings;
- refrain from bringing privately owned portable electric heaters into the Council buildings. Other high fire risk equipment such as gas, paraffin or solid fuel heaters should not be brought into the workplace. In situations where it is necessary to do this permission should be sought from the relevant line manager;
- ensure that sufficient clear space is maintained in rooms where they have control either on a temporary (e.g. for a meeting) or permanent basis to allow persons in the room to move freely to the exits of the room;
- in the event of discovering a fire or hearing the fire alarm, take appropriate action in accordance with fire action notices or other instructions and training that they have received;

- where appropriate, will assist members of the public to leave the buildings in an orderly manner and proceed to the appropriate assembly point.

2.7 The Caretaker as designated fire warden

The task of the fire warden is primarily to assist with emergency evacuation of the building and to check that their designated areas are clear of people. The prime function of a fire warden is not to fight fire. In certain cases and where a fire is small, prompt action by a person properly trained to use extinguishers can help to prevent more extensive damage. Fire wardens will:-

- in the event of the fire alarm sounding, assist and encourage others including members of the public to leave the buildings in an orderly manner and proceed to the appropriate assembly point (see fire action notices for the building);
- report the state of their designated area (e.g. clear, someone trapped, etc) to the person taking the role call at the assembly point;
- providing they have received appropriate training, use extinguishers to tackle fires, but only where the fire is small and they are confident that it can be tackled safely. The question of whether to tackle a fire or not has to be left to the judgement of the individual. It must always be remembered that it is vitally important to raise the alarm first before tackling any fire.

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