

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

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Directorate Area:	All Directorates
Policy Author / Champion:	Phil Cunningham
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CONTENTS	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Scope	3
3. Policy Summary	3
4. Policy Statement	4
5. Policy Objectives	4
6. Legislative Framework	5
7. Roles and Responsibilities	5
8. Equality	7
9. Emergency Fire Evacuation Procedures	7
10. Training and Practice Evacuation Drills	7
11. Fire Risk Assessments	8
12. Implementation	8
13. Procedures	8
14. Other Policies	9
15. Review	9
16. Sources / Evidence Base	9
17. Consultation	9
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Fire Safety Management Structure	10

1.0 Introduction

Fire is a potential hazard in all premises. The consequences of fire in busy office accommodation can be serious given the risks associated with evacuating staff and visitors. All staff have a right to perform their working role in an environment where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. All organisations which employ more than five people must have a written fire safety policy in place.

Fire safety is primarily about preventing injury to staff or loss of property. This is achieved through the identification and management of risk and the creation of a fire safe working environment.

It is the policy of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (hereafter 'RQIA') to remove, reduce and manage fire risks within the premises in which it conducts its business. Achieving and maintaining good standards for fire safety is fundamental to RQIA. The organisation will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to meet its statutory obligations and common law duty of care.

This policy is supported by a guidance handbook which provides detailed information on a range of health and safety issues and processes including fire safety within RQIA.

The successful implementation of this fire safety policy will require the commitment of employees at all levels within RQIA.

2.0 Scope

The scope of this policy extends to all areas occupied by RQIA. The policy applies to all employees which includes full time, part time, temporary and Board members, as well as those undertaking service provision and activities on behalf of RQIA. It will also be relevant to visitors.

The two primary locations occupied by RQIA are

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1. | 9 th Floor | 2. | Hilltop |
| | Riverside Tower | | Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital |
| | Lanyon Place | | Omagh |
| | Belfast BT1 3BT | | County Tyrone BT79 0NS |

3.0 Policy Summary

In accordance with The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, this policy outlines RQIA's fire safety management arrangements, and commitment to fire safety.

RQIA will ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, that all steps are taken to prevent fire, and minimise its effects in any premises occupied by RQIA.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that arrangements are in place to initiate prompt and effective action in the event of a fire incident, and to ensure staff and visitors can be safely evacuated. This policy details how RQIA meets its obligations in respect of fire safety.

4.0 Policy Statement

RQIA is committed to maintaining a fire safe environment.

RQIA shall ensure that effective management arrangements are in place in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

In accordance with The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, RQIA will undertake fire risk assessments in premises it occupies, and remove or reduce fire risks in as far as is reasonably possible. Business Services Organisation (BSO) will undertake or arrange the fire risk assessments on behalf of RQIA including reviewing same.

RQIA will ensure that all staff attend training on fire safety at regular intervals.

This policy is the underpinning mechanism for managing fire safety within RQIA.

5.0 Policy Objectives

In all premises occupied by RQIA, the responsibility for fire safety will be discharged insofar as is reasonably practical - by ensuring:

- compliance with fire safety legislation and guidance
- fire risks are identified by a process of fire risk assessment
- programme of investment in fire safety infrastructure
- documented site specific emergency evacuation plans/procedures
- means for detecting and raising alarm in case of fire
- provision of fire fighting facilities and equipment
- provision of appropriate fire safety training to staff
- all staff are trained on the use of a fire extinguisher
- persons with fire responsibilities are nominated and trained
- all staff are involved in a fire drill at least annually
- all records related to fire safety are maintained within a fire log book
- monitoring and audit of fire safety arrangements
- inspection and maintenance of fire safety systems
- co-operation and communication with other users of our premises

- monitoring and reporting of fire incidents

6.0 Legislative Framework

This policy is set as the basis by which RQIA fulfils its responsibilities in respect of The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

RQIA Board

The RQIA Board shall ensure that the organisation complies with fire safety legislation and guidance, and in conjunction with Executive Management Team shall ensure that adequate resources are made available to meet fire safety requirements.

RQIA Board's corporate responsibility for ensuring the implementation of fire safety arrangements is devolved through the Chief Executive.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate accountability for ensuring that the organisational arrangements for fire safety are effective in providing a safe working environment.

Executive Director (Fire)

The Head of Business Services Unit has overall responsibility for the implementation of fire safety arrangements to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation and guidance, and that agreed programmes for investment are included in the Annual Business Plan.

Directors

The Executive Management Team is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and for fire safety arrangements within their individual Directorates and for ensuring compliance with legislation and guidance.

The Head of Business Services Unit must ensure that adequate numbers of Floor Wardens are appointed in each premises to ensure cover at all times and ongoing effective management of fire safety arrangements.

RQIA Nominated Officer (Fire)

The Business Manager RQIA (Nominated Officer - Fire) is responsible to assist the Executive Director (Fire) to implement the fire safety policy.

As a member of the Health and Well-Being Committee, the RQIA Business Manager (Nominated Officer (Fire)) is responsible to coordinate RQIA fire safety arrangements at operational level to ensure compliance with legislation and guidance, and provision of a safe working environment within RQIA premises.

The RQIA Nominated Officer (Fire) will keep fire related records and documents and will ensure that these are updated as appropriate.

RQIA Nominated Officer (Fire) is assisted in role by:

- Estates Inspectors (Fire Safety Advisers)
- BSO Health and Safety Manager

Floor Fire Wardens

Floor Wardens are primarily responsible for ensuring the safe evacuation of staff in accordance with the site specific fire emergency plan.

All Staff

Each employee is responsible to conduct their work in accordance with fire safety arrangements for their area, including attendance at fire safety training and participation in fire safety drills.

RQIA Health and Wellbeing Committee

The RQIA Health and Well-Being Committee shall coordinate and monitor health and safety including fire safety arrangements within RQIA - to ensure compliance with legislation and guidance, and provision of a safe working environment.

Estates Inspectors (Fire Safety Advisers)

Estates Inspectors shall provide technical expertise and advice on the application and interpretation of fire safety legislation and guidance to staff at all levels in RQIA.

Business Services Organisation (BSO)

RQIA will work in partnership with BSO in the delivery of Fire Safety functions within our organisation. BSO will provide advice and support to ensure that RQIA's fire safety policy and procedures are in line with HSCNI's and in accordance with best practice guidance and legislation. This will include undertaking and reviewing the fire risk assessments or arranging this.

The BSO Health and Safety Manager will liaise with RQIA Business Manager accordingly.

8.0 Equality

An equality screening of this policy was completed on 11 January 2011 and it was considered to have a low impact implication for equality of opportunity. The policy therefore does not require a full equality impact assessment.

9.0 Emergency Fire Evacuation Procedures

Emergency fire evacuation procedures have been implemented in both premises occupied by RQIA.

These procedures detail the arrangements for:

- actions to be taken when a fire is discovered including raising the alarm
- actions to be taken when the fire alarm systems have been activated contacting the NIFRS
- are contained within the RQIA Staff Health & Safety Handbook

These procedures detail specific personal emergency evacuation plans and procedures (PEEPs) for people with a disability such as limited mobility, visual or hearing impairments etc who might be using the buildings.

10.0 Training and Practice Evacuation Drills

The Executive Director (Fire) will ensure that information, instruction and training as required in relation to this policy is available for all staff. Regular updated fire safety training for staff will also be provided to ensure that this policy is implemented effectively. Training will be provided at the beginning of employment and on an annual basis. All staff will be expected to attend.

Directors will ensure that staff within their respective Directorates attend training as necessary.

Practice fire evacuation drills will be carried out at least annually in both premises occupied by RQIA to validate the fire evacuation procedures.

Records of fire safety training and practice fire evacuation drills will be held in a fire log book for the respective RQIA locations.

Directors will be notified of attendances at training sessions.

Areas to be covered in fire safety training sessions will include:

- Legislative framework
- General fire safety principles
- Significant fire hazards and control measures

- Fire emergency evacuation procedures (FEED)
- Names and responsibilities of the fire warden(s)
- Details of evacuation routes and the fire assembly location(s)
- The use of a fire extinguisher and fire blanket
- Details of this RQIA Fire Safety policy

11.0 Fire risk assessments

Fire risk assessments will be undertaken in premises occupied by RQIA.

These assessments will detail the specific fire hazards in the buildings and the control measures which are in place to reduce the risk to the occupants.

BSO will undertake or arrange this including reviewing the fire risk assessments at appropriate intervals.

The action plans from the risk assessments will be communicated to the RQIA Executive Director (Fire) for information and to ensure commitment to appropriate action at corporate level.

The risk assessments will be reviewed annually, when there has been a relevant change in the circumstances which would affect in any way the fire safety arrangements in the buildings and after a fire incident.

12.0 Implementation

To ensure the effectiveness of this policy, RQIA will seek to gain the confidence of all stakeholders by communicating the policy fully across the organisation.

The Policy will be electronically available on the RQIA Intranet (internal communication).

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored and regularly reviewed by the RQIA Health and Well Being Committee.

13.0 Procedures

The policy will give rise to procedural statements.

This is a set of detailed step-by-step instructions that describe the appropriate method for carrying out tasks or activities to achieve the highest standards possible and to ensure efficiency, consistency and safety.

These will include an emergency fire evacuation strategy.

14.0 Other Policies

Other RQIA policies impact on fire safety arrangements. Examples include:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Accident/Incident Process
- Risk Management
- Whistle Blowing Policy

15.0 Review

This Policy will be reviewed three yearly and as required to take cognisance of changes in legislation and guidance and on an annual basis thereafter.

16.0 Sources / Evidence Base

PRIMARY LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS

The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

Fire Safety Regulations (NI) 2010

The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000

The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007

17.0 Consultation Process

This policy was developed in consultation with RQIA estates staff, Business Services Unit, Vector Facilities Management acting on behalf of British Telecom, and Estates Department of Western Health and Social Care Trust.

It was reviewed in October 2020 in consultation with RQIA Estates staff, RQIA BSU and BSO Health and Safety Manager.

Fire Safety Management Structure Showing Functional Accountability

