

BSO Fire Safety Policy

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1.0 Fire Safety Policy Statement

The Business Services Organisation (BSO)

- Is committed to establishing a fire safety culture in the workplace and prioritises fire protection of its staff, agency workers, customers, contractors, visitors and any other persons affected by its activities to be a managerial priority.
- Will ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately trained on fire safety matters and are aware of the organisation's fire safety arrangements for managing fire safety.
- Will ensure effective management arrangements are in place in accordance with relevant legislation and Fire code guidance.
- Will undertake a programme of fire risk assessment in all premises, and remove or reduce fire risks so far as is reasonably practicable in accordance with The Fire Services Order (Northern Ireland) 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.
- Will identify the principal fire hazards to its staff, agency workers, customers, contractors, visitors and any other persons affected by its activities, and control the associated risks adequately.
- Understands that all members of staff have an important role to play in protecting themselves from the risks of fire.
- Encourages a high concern for fire safety among all employees through joint consultation.
- Expects particular attention to be paid to the provision of effective information, instruction, training, supervision and communication in relation to fire safety at all levels of the organization.

Chief Executive

Date

1.1 BSO Fire Safety - Aims and Objectives.

The Business Services Organisation (BSO) have the following fire safety aims:

- All appropriate fire safety measures must be provided to maintain a safe environment for all staff, clients, staff and visitors.
- All BSO staff will have access to fire safety training, and will accept responsibility for fire safety in their area of work.
- All BSO staff will be aware of the action to take in the event of a fire, suspected fire or evacuation of an area or building.
- All new developments and major refurbishment projects will achieve full compliance so far as is reasonably practicable (SFARP) with fire legislation and approved codes of practice.
- The BSO will minimise the incidence of fire throughout all activities provided by, or on behalf of the organisation.
- Where fire occurs, the BSO will minimise the impact of such occurrence on life safety, the environment and property.

The Business Services Organisation (BSO) have the following fire safety objectives:

- Increase the visibility of fire safety expectations across all BSO sites.
- Ensure all employees are aware of fire safety procedures.
- Ensure all employees with any type of disability are provided with a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP).
- Provide adequate control of the fire safety risks arising from our work activities.
- Consult with our employees on matters related to fire safety.
- Provide and maintain safe fire safety equipment.
- Ensure safe handling and use of substances.
- Provide information, instruction and supervision for employees.
- Ensure all employees are provided with adequate fire safety training.
- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions.
- Review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals or when work activity changes.

2.0 Fire Safety Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive (CEO) has overall accountability for the management of fire safety within the BSO, ensuring that effective policies and procedures are developed and implemented and that the performance of these is formally monitored and evaluated against statutory obligations and BSO objectives, with appropriate action being taken where shortfalls or unacceptable risks are identified.

2.2 The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services

The day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the BSO Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services and the BSO Health and Safety Manager.

2.3 Directors and Assistant Directors within BSO

Each Director within the BSO is responsible for fire safety within their Directorate and must address the Directorate's specific fire safety concerns. He/she must also make adequate arrangements to ensure compliance with Fire Safety legislation. Physical areas within the BSO, which do not fall within a particular Directorate (i.e. common areas), will be the responsibility of the BSO Estates Manager. Directors should encourage feedback from all levels of staff within the Directorate.

Directors must ensure that adequate Nominated Fire Wardens are appointed in each premises to ensure cover at all times, and ongoing effective management of fire safety arrangements within Directorate. Fire Wardens must receive adequate training which can be scheduled with the assistance of the BSO Health and Safety manager. Fire Warden training is valid for a period of 3 years and must be renewed prior to the date of expiration.

Each Assistant Director must ensure that there are detailed fire safety arrangements within their areas of control and that all staff are aware of fire evacuation procedures. All fire safety information must be relevant, accessible and written in a clear unambiguous format. Any staff member (BSO or agency) with a disability may require a written personal emergency evacuations plan (PEEP). This should be risk assessed to determine the appropriate action with the assistance of the BSO Health and Safety manager.

2.4 Managers within BSO

Each Manager must ensure that fire safety precautions are followed on a day-to-day basis in accordance with the fire safety arrangements and rules for their area. Fire safety hazards identified by individual members of staff must be reported to their manager to ensure appropriate action is taken.

2.5 Chief Fire Evacuation Officer

The chief fire evacuation officer must be of a position to be able to take charge in a fire situation. They should appoint a deputy(s) who can cover for them in their absence. Advice and guidance can be sought from the BSO Health and Safety Manager.

The chief fire evacuation officer at a premises has the following responsibilities:

- To co-ordinate and direct staff in the event of a fire and a fire drill in accordance with the emergency procedures and evacuation plan for that location.
- To be the central point of contact with Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue (NIFRS) staff and all fire wardens in the event of fire.
- To ensure adequate Fire Warden coverage and where this is not the case to contact the BSO Health and Safety manager to schedule training.
- To ensure fire wardens are equipped with communication devices for use in the event of fire and during a fire drill.
- To ensure all fire wardens are aware of the specific assembly point for staff in their building location.
- To organise and record a fire evacuation / drill at least once per year.
- To immediately report any fire safety defects for the location where they are based to the BSO Estates team and BSO Health and Safety Manager.
- To regularly review the Fire Risk Assessment for that location.
- That on handover of responsibility to a deputy or acting person-in-charge, that person is aware of the legal duty to provide supervision of premise fire procedures in the event of a fire or false alarm situation.

2.6 Fire Wardens

All floors within each BSO building must have adequate trained fire warden coverage, the specific number of fire wardens will depend on the size of the floor and take into careful consideration agile working arrangements. Identities of Fire Wardens will be displayed throughout the workplace.

Each fire warden must ensure everyone is safely evacuated from the building in the event of the fire alarm being activated.

2.6 Fire Wardens (continued)

To do so, fire wardens need to be able to:

- a) Raise the alarm, close fire doors to prevent the fire from spreading.
- b) Ensure vulnerable persons are being assisted (this should be clearly explained in a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan or PEEP).
- c) Ensure everyone has exited the premises. This must include restrooms, storage areas etc.
- d) Use firefighting equipment such as extinguishers only if it is safe and adequately trained to do so.
- e) Help with roll call. Every person needs to be accounted for.
- f) Liaise with emergency services.

2.7 BSO Premises and Health and Safety Committee

The committee shall adopt a positive supporting role in the promotion and pursuit of fire safety objectives. In particular the Committee shall represent the interests of employees and provide a forum through which they may report any significant issues they feel should be addressed in regard to fire safety in the workplace.

2.8 Evacuation Chair Operators

If a BSO building fire risk assessment identifies the need for evacuation chairs then trained Evacuation Chair Operators must be present when the building is occupied. Identities of Evacuation Chair Operators will be displayed throughout the workplace.

The main duty of an Evacuation Chair Operator is to provide assisted emergency evacuations for people that have impaired mobility. These individuals will receive appropriate training. They will also assist with developing Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) for anyone with a disability who is unable to use the stairs to evacuate the building in the event of emergency. The names of the trained evacuation chair operators should be identified in the individual Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

2.9 Employees

All BSO staff must be aware of their responsibilities under fire safety legislation, BSO fire safety policy and evacuation procedures. Each employee should be aware that their failure to follow requirements may result in disciplinary action being taken.

All BSO Staff must:

- Take reasonable care for their own fire safety.
- Consider the safety of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Work in accordance with information and training provided.
- Refrain from intentionally misusing or recklessly interfering with anything that has been provided for fire safety reasons.
- Report any hazardous defects in plant and equipment, or shortcomings in the existing fire safety arrangements, to a responsible person without delay.
- Ensure that faulty equipment is taken out of use immediately and reported to their Line Manager and/or Estates as appropriate.
- Report all incidents in line with the BSO's Incident Reporting Policy, no matter how trivial, and co-operate fully in subsequent investigations.
- Not undertake any task for which authorisation and/or training has not been given.
- Not obstruct evacuation routes and/or wedge open fire doors.
- Not accumulate any type of flammable waste
- Shall attend fire safety training when required to do so.
- Shall familiarise themselves with the fire safety policies and evacuation procedures of their workplace.
- Shall assist their employer by taking a constructive attitude to fire safety matters to promote and sustain a positive fire safety culture.

2.10 Contractors

All contractors who work for the BSO shall do so in accordance with BSO Health and Safety policy, this Fire Safety policy and organisational reporting structures. Their activities shall at no time cause an unacceptable fire safety risk to other building users or the property in which they are working.

2.11 Learning and Development

The Learning and Development department have the responsibility to provide a

fire safety training course of sufficient content to meet BSO fire safety staff training requirements. The BSO Health and Safety manager working with the Learning and Development team will advise as to the requirements and suitability of the course content. Learning and development will maintain all records of training.

Working in agreement with the Learning and Development department, the BSO Health and Safety manager will schedule all relevant fire warden and evacuation chair training.

2.12 Special Planning Performance Group (SPPG) staff

BSO is hosting Special Planning Performance Group (SPPG) staff at Linenhall St, Belfast, Gransha Park, Derry, Tower Hill, Armagh and County Hall, Ballymena. This policy is applicable to these staff members also.

3.0 Fire Safety Arrangements

3.1 Fire Awareness Training

Fire safety training of all staff at all levels of the organisation is critical in enabling them to understand and fulfill their roles. Fire safety awareness training is mandatory for all staff each year as shown below. This is undertaken using eLearning at the link below.

<http://www.hsclearning.com/>.

<http://intranet.bso.hscni.net/pdf/BSO%20Mandatory%20Training%20Sept%202020.pdf>

 			
STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES CORE MANDATORY TRAINING FOR <u>ALL</u> STAFF			
Badge	Course Title	To be completed...	
	Corporate Welcome	Once	✓
	Risk Management	Once	✓
	Fire Safety	Annually	✓
	Manual Handling*	Every 2 Years	✓
	Information Governance	Every 2 Years	✓
	Health & Safety	Every 2 Years	✓
	Fraud Awareness	Every 2 Years	✓
	Equality– Making a Difference	Every 2 Years	✓
	Cyber Security	Every 2 Years	✓
	Display Screen Equipment	Every 3 Years	✓

* if your work involves regular moving and handling you are required to attend an annual face-to-face programme.

Please use the following link to access the e-learning website: <http://www.hsclearning.com/>

3.2 Local Induction Training

This training is carried out by managers and covers local fire arrangements.

It must include the duties and arrangements for fire wardens, raising the alarm, location of manual alarm call points, location of fire safety equipment (extinguishers, evacuation chairs), fire drill arrangements, fire alarm testing arrangements, fire evacuation procedures, fire evacuation routes and final assembly point locations.

3.3 Fire Warden Training

In all locations within BSO properties there must be a sufficient number of trained fire wardens to ensure the safe and prompt evacuation of all occupants in the event of emergency.

Training is scheduled by the BSO Health and Safety manager and it must include the following content.

- Basic principles of fire.
- Classification of fires.
- Basic principles of heat transmission and fire spread.
- Common causes and consequences of fires in the workplace.
- Legislation and fire risk assessments.
- Control measures to minimize the risk of fire.
- Structural measures to prevent spread of fire and smoke.
- Fire detection, fire warning and firefighting equipment.
- Requirements for fire evacuation plans.
- Emergency evacuation procedures.
- Fire assembly locations
- Managing people under pressure
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)
- Practical component on the proper selection and correct technique for using a fire extinguisher.

Fire warden training is valid for a maximum period of 3 years in a low risk office environment and a refresher course should be scheduled well in advance of the expiration date.

3.4 Fire Training Records

All records of fire training should be recorded on the Learning and Development records system.

Names, telephone numbers and training dates of fire wardens should also be posted within all areas of BSO buildings.

3.5 Fire Alarm Testing

Fire Alarm Systems The testing and maintenance of fire warning systems should be conducted by an approved competent person in accordance with the appropriate British Standard Inspection and servicing visits should comply with BS5839-1: 2013 for fire detection and fire systems for buildings, Code of Practice for systems design, installation, commissioning, and maintenance. Additional guidelines should be adhered to set by UKAS and Department of Health's - Health Technical Memorandum (HTM) In particular the following points should be noted: • Each zone and trigger device to be numbered and indicated on plan drawings. • DAILY: Fire alarm panels should be visually inspected by the building manager/occupiers to ensure there are no faults on the system. • WEEKLY: A manual call point or call point operated by a key (in-patient wards/departments) will be operated during normal working hours. This weekly test should be carried out at the same time and day each week. A different call point should be used for each successive test. • This weekly test will be carried out by the Estates Department (or Landlord) via direct labour or PFI Provider. The results of all routine tests, inspections and visits will be entered in the Building Fire Manual kept on the premises in a prominent position for inspection by any visiting fire service officer and Trust Fire Safety Advisor

3.6 Fire Drills

Fire evacuation practice drills must be undertaken every year; this is a legal requirement under the Regulatory Reform Order 2005. The law states that: "The responsible person must establish and, where necessary, give effect to appropriate procedures, including safety drills, to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to relevant persons."

The responsibility for completion and retaining fire drill records is with the person-in-charge of the occupants or building manager. Fire evacuation drill co-operation should be done in conjunction with any landlord or main lease holder arrangement.

3.6 Fire Drills (continued)

Whenever available the BSO Health and Safety manager will observe the fire drill, provide advice and deliver a fire drill evacuation debrief.

All fire evacuation drills must be recorded in a building fire logbook by the manager, fire records are required to be compliant with regulations.

All staff involved with the fire evacuation practice shall be mindful of safe handling techniques and shall avoid manual handling tasks that they have not been trained for during the exercise. Staff have a responsibility to carry out the evacuation drill in a safe manner preventing injury to other individuals e.g. do not carrying hot drinks, do not use excessive speed on stairs, do not use evacuation equipment unless trained to do so.

3.7 Fire Risk Assessments

The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 came into effect on 15 November 2010. All business premises must take responsibility for ensuring the required fire safety standards are being met. This is done by having a fire risk assessment in place, carried out by a competent person.

The purpose of having a fire risk assessment in place is to minimise the incidence of fire throughout all BSO premises. The BSO Health and Safety manager (or a competent external provider) will complete a fire risk assessment at each premises on a realistic periodic basis balanced by their BSO duties and availability.

All identified risks will be included in the written fire risk assessment document and immediately shared with the BSO Estates department for remedial action.

3.8 Fire Detection and Warning Systems

The BSO Estates team will ensure that all fire safety equipment and systems are tested and maintained in accordance with the relevant legislation and standards. Records of this will be made available upon request from the BSO Estates team.

3.9 Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire extinguishers should primarily be used to protect life and facilitate safe escape. They should only be used, by trained staff, if they can be used safely and without risk of trapping the user. Fire extinguishers should normally be located in

conspicuous positions on escape routes, preferably next to exit doors, and should not become a trip hazard. All new fire extinguishers must be red, and subject to national regulations, an area up to five per cent of the body may be colour coded to assist identification of the extinguishing material it contains. Wherever possible, firefighting equipment should be grouped to form fire points. These must be clearly visible and conspicuously indicated so that fire points can be readily identified. The BSO Estates department has responsibility for ensuring that fire extinguisher servicing and maintenance is carried out. Records of this should be held on individual BSO premises in the fire safety log book.

3.10 Means of Escape

These enable people to move away from a fire via structural parts of a building (corridors / staircases) to reach a place of safety. It is essential that escape routes and the means provided to ensure they are used safely, are managed and maintained to ensure they remain usable and available at all times when the premises are occupied. All corridors and stairways that form part of designated escape routes are to be kept clear and hazard free at times. Items that may be a source of fuel or pose an ignition risk should never be located on any corridor or stairway that will be used as an escape route. In addition all final exit doors must be kept clear at all times and regular checks are required to ensure that these doors open freely without any obstructions.

3.11 Fire Doors

Where practicable it is good practice for all doors in the fire escape route to open in the direction of escape. This is particularly important for doors at the base of stairs or where more than 50 persons are expected to evacuate. All such doors must be able to be opened in the direction of travel without the use of a key or pass card (where security systems are in place, provision must be made for linking to the fire alarms to override locks when alarms are activated).

Smoke/Fire doors must be self-closing, fitted with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals. Fire resistant doors fitted to cupboards and service risers that open onto escape routes must be kept locked, be fitted with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals.

3.12 Final Exit Doors

These doors are designed to be part of the means of escape for use to reach an external place of safety. They must meet the following criteria.

- Open in the direction of travel.
- Be free from obstruction or trip hazard.
- Where steps or slopes are in place these must be minimized and if necessary highlighted.
- Doors that are also used for normal access and egress must be capable of being opened / unlocked or released by a single turn handle or device like a thumb turn.
- Doors that are used only for emergency evacuation must be capable of being opened with a single action device such as a push bar or pad.

3.13 Fire Notices and Signs

Signs must be used, where necessary, to help people identify escape routes and firefighting equipment. For a sign to comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and BS 5499-4 and BS 5499-5 it must be in pictogram form. The pictogram can be supplemented by text if it is considered necessary to make the sign more easily understood. The BSO will ensure that there are sufficient appropriate fire notices and signs within all BSO premises.

The purpose of fire notices is to provide clear, precise instructions on the actions to be taken on discovering a fire and hearing the fire alarm. They must be recognisable, readable and informative, so that essential information is conveyed to regular and infrequent users of the premises and the fire and rescue service.

3.14 Fire Prevention

In order to minimise the risk of a fire occurring BSO places huge emphasis on good housekeeping practices. All staff and visitors must ensure that the following rules are strictly followed.

- All waste materials must be kept in suitable non-combustible containers before it is removed from the premises.
- All combustible material must not be stored against electrical equipment or heaters.
- Excess combustible materials and stock must be appropriately stored in a dedicated storage area, storeroom or cupboard that is fire resistant.

3.14 Fire Prevention (continued)

- Excess stock must not be stored in escape routes or areas where staff or

visitors would normally have access (Under no circumstances are electrical and if present, gas service cupboards to be used as storage areas for combustible materials).

- Skips and waste bins where present should be a minimum of 6m away from any part of BSO buildings.
- No unauthorised electrical equipment is to be used within BSO buildings.
- Electric plug sockets are not to be overloaded and only authorised extension cables are to be used.
- The use of 3 way adaptors is prohibited.
- All mechanical and electrical equipment within BSO property must be maintained, serviced and tested in accordance with relevant legislation, guidance and standards to include fixed wire testing and portable appliance testing (PAT) at frequency levels that are in line with recommended best practice guidance.
- Portable heaters are not to be used within the building without prior authorisation from the BSO Health and Safety manager.

The following types of heater are strictly prohibited in BSO premises due to an increased risk of fire.

Portable Gas Heaters



Halogen Heaters



Fan Heaters



3.14 Fire Prevention (continued)

The use of extension cables and multi socket plugs are discouraged within BSO

premises. These items have the potential to lead to a fire situation.

The use of multi socket plugs are banned within the BSO because they can be easily dislodged (due to their design and weight) which can then result in arcing sparks.

Reel type extension cables are also banned because they are known to self-heat within the reel. The joining together of any extension cables by plugging one into another is also banned within BSO premises for fire prevention reasons.

3.15 Smoking

Smoking is prohibited inside all BSO premises and within the grounds for all staff and visitors.

Electronic/Vapour cigarettes are also considered a form of smoking material therefore as above the same zero tolerance protocol is in effect. E-cigarettes must not be used or charged in work premises.

3.16 Hot Work

The BSO requires that where any hot works are scheduled to be carried out that a permit to work must be in place. The permit to work is to be controlled by the BSO Estates manager with the assistance of the BSO Health and Safety manager. Hot work is defined as burning, welding, brazing, soldering, grinding or cutting work producing sparks, during activities such as plumbing and flat roof work. Such works are usually carried out by contractors.

3.17 Arson

Recent fire statistics show that fires are regularly and deliberately started resulting in injuries and fatalities. All BSO premises could potentially be targeted. The following steps are therefore recommended to minimize the risk as much as possible.

- Staff should report any anti-social behaviour near a BSO premises to the police as this can often lead to arson.
- No outside doors should be left open encouraging intruders.
- Security lighting & CCTV where installed should be in good working order.

3.17 Arson (continued)

- Rubbish should not be allowed to accumulate to large quantities. If rubbish has become accumulated, it should be reported to the BSO Estates team.
- Substances that could be used as an accelerant (petrol) in a fire should never be left unsecured.
- Additional vigilance is encouraged when reports of an arson attack in the local area has been reported.
- The use of external letterboxes mounted to the wall are recommended to eliminate the risk of someone posting flammable materials through the front door.
- Disgruntled employees, have been known to start fires therefore any signs that are indicative of this should be reported to the BSO Estates team.

3.18 Help for People with Disabilities/ Mobility Problems

When planning evacuation procedures and assessing the adequacy of fire precautions, consideration must be given to the requirements of people with special needs. Some common forms of disability that may require additional arrangements include.

- Mobility impairment, which can limit speed of evacuation.
- Hearing impairment, which can limit the response to an alarm.
- Visual impairment, which can limit the ability to escape.
- Learning difficulties, which can affect the response to an alarm.

Where people with special needs (employees and visitors) work in or use the premises, their needs should be discussed with them in detail. In most cases only minor changes or modifications will be required to existing procedures. However, in some cases, more individual arrangements involving the development of personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) may need to be considered. Where this is required an appropriate template can be provided by the BSO Health and Safety manager. It will be the responsibility of the manager in discussion with the individual to complete the PEEP with guidance provided by the BSO Health and Safety manager.

3.19 BSO Employees Sharing Premises with another Organisation.

Where BSO employees share the workplace with employees of another organisation, BSO staff must co-operate with the other employers to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation. This may include co-operation on matters such as implementing fire evacuation procedures, fire alarm testing, fire evacuation equipment, fire warden coverage and fire risk assessments. A joint Risk Assessment should be completed and documented, as appropriate. This requirement is also applicable when premises are shared with other BSO directorates.

4.0 Review of Health & Safety Policy

The BSO will review this Policy every three years or more often if legislation dictates and will amend its arrangements with regard to fire safety in view of new Legislation, Regulation, Approved Codes of Practice or on the advice of the Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland.

5.0 References

- The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006
- The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, Technical Booklet E, Fire Safety, October 2012
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 (PUWER)
- Control of Substance Hazardous to Health (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 (COSHH Northern Ireland)
- Electricity at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991

6.0 Equality and Human Rights Considerations

The Policy has been screened for equality implications as expected by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Equality Commission guidance declares that the aim of screening is to recognise those policies which are likely to have a significant influence on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be dedicated to these.

Using the Equality Commission's screening standards; no significant equality implications have been recognised. The policy will therefore not be subject to an equality impact assessment.

Similarly, this policy has been considered under the terms of the Human Rights Act 1998, and was deemed compatible with the European Convention Rights contained in the Act.