Guidance for Fire Marshals

The following duties only apply during normal working hours and with the proviso “if safe to do so”. Nobody is expected to put themselves at any risk of harm.

1. When the alarm sounds, switch off equipment, close windows/doors and evacuate by the nearest available exit – in other words, do everything which you normally should do. **Lecturers should act as fire warden for the lecture theatre they are teaching in should the fire alarm sound.**

2. Fire Marshals should work together to encourage occupants from the building and move them promptly to the identified Assembly Point. It may be necessary for one Fire Marshal to act as the Building Representative at the main entrance and be the point of liaison with the Fire Service. (Building Representative is defined in the ‘Re-entry Procedure’ document).

3. Anyone known not to have evacuated must be reported to the Building Representative or directly to the Fire Service.

4. If available for Fire Marshal duties, pick up your high-visibility vest on the way out if possible and put it on. As you sweep your area, close doors-windows in passing but not delaying you own escape unduly. Encouraging others to leave the building via the nearest safe exit, paying particular attention to unsupervised areas. The Fire Marshal would normally be the last person off their floor.

5. With regards to people with disabilities, there should already be a PEEP in place to evacuate them safely, however if not reassure them that they are safe in the refuge areas (check where these are for your building) and ensure the building representative is made aware of their location.

6. While evacuating it may be necessary to reassure people on staircases that they ARE protected from the fire whilst queuing to get out.

7. Once outside, direct people away from the building and towards the identified Assembly Point.

8. When everyone has been cleared away from the immediate vicinity ensure that there are sufficient Door Guards in place. If not required as a Door Guard then, continue on to the Assembly Point encouraging others as you go.

9. When re-entry is permitted by the Fire Service, a message should be conveyed by the Building Representative to the Door Guards and the Fire Marshals and to those at the Assembly Point. It would be useful if Fire Marshals could try to manage returning evacuees to avoid them completely blocking the entrance.

10. If you have difficulty with any individuals, try to get names or other details, pass these on to the Porters or Safety Services, who will then pursue disciplinary action against individuals who deliberately disregard safety procedures.
REMEMBER:
- No one expects you to do anything which will put you at risk
- Your priority is ALWAYS to get out of the building safely
- It would be greatly appreciated if you could continue to act as Fire Marshal once safely out of the building encouraging people to the Assembly Point.

Further Information

What extra responsibilities does a Fire Marshal have?
Apart from the actions listed above, a fire warden will not take on any additional responsibility for fire safety. That remains with the Departmental Manager / Head of Department.

Who is responsible for providing Fire Marshals?
The Head of Department is responsible for fire safety. Day-to-day activities and the practical actions of fire safety may be delegated to the Departmental Safety Officer (DSO) or other nominated person. In practice it is likely to be the DSO or similar who makes sure there are enough Fire Marshals for the building. Where buildings are jointly used the respective DSOs must co-ordinate this to ensure adequate coverage. If a fire warden permanently leaves the building a replacement should be found.

How many Fire Marshals are needed in a building?
Ideally there should be sufficient wardens to cover all areas of a building. However, this is complicated by the size of a building and the complexity of its layout, plus the nature of peoples’ work as it often takes them out of their own building. Add to this scheduled holidays and other absences and it becomes apparent quite a few wardens could be needed!

Here are two examples:
- A small building with a single staircase and offices etc. off it may only need one fire warden if that warden is stationed on the top floor and rarely leaves the building. A deputy is needed to cover for absences. Ensuring all staff in that building, know their role and responsibilities in a fire alarm will make the warden’s role less onerous.
- A large building with lots of rooms and complicated escape routes may need to have each floor divided into sweep areas and a Fire Marshal, plus deputy provided for each sweep area. This can only work where there is sufficient staffing in the building so again, all occupants need to know their roles and responsibilities with respect to fire alarm procedures.

Important things to remember:
Before an emergency evacuation
- Work out the area for which you will be responsible for;
- Get to know your area, fire exits, evacuation routes etc.;
- Discuss with other colleagues exactly where you will cover between you;
- Know the area you will ‘sweep’ during the evacuation; and
- BE VIGILANT – look out for fire related risks e.g. blocked fire exits, build-up of combustibles (paper, boxes etc.) in evacuation routes, fire doors not shutting properly etc. during an evacuation

During an evacuation
- When the alarm sounds encourage all staff/students and visitors within your area to evacuate the building.
- Be visible (hi-vis). Be confident and assured when asking people to leave
- Check your area, including toilets
- Never open doors when you suspect there may be a fire behind it.
- Move everyone to the Assembly Point
- Find out from those present if anyone is missing, report your findings to the Building Representative
- Wait for the ‘stand-down’

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