



Fire Safety Management Protocol

Fire Safety Audits



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Amendment Form

Please record brief details of the changes made alongside the next version number. If the procedural document has been reviewed **without change**, this information will still need to be recorded although the version number will remain the same.

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Changes	Author
Version 1	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This is a new procedural document, please read in full	Howard Timms

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1 INTRODUCTION

This protocol contributes to the fulfilment of developing fire safety protocols as stated in Health Technical Memorandum 05-01: Managing healthcare fire safety (second edition). This protocol addresses 'Fire Safety Audit'.

2 PURPOSE

This protocol will be implemented throughout all services delivered by or on behalf of the Trust, or where the Trust owes a duty of care to the building occupants.

The safety of patients, visitors, staff, and other building users from fire relies upon the implementation of an effective fire safety management system and the physical fire precautions present within the building. Key to ensuring that the management activity and fire precautions in place are effective is a robust audit process. A sufficiently detailed audit provides the Trust Board, with assurance that the fire safety management system and the outcomes delivered by the processes therein satisfies the objectives set in the fire safety policy. A suitable fire safety audit assists the Board to demonstrate due diligence and serves as the means by which the Board holds the management to account for the delivery of an appropriate level of fire safety against the aims stated in the fire safety policy.

The purpose of the fire safety audit is to provide independent assurance to the Board that the Trust is delivering a suitable fire safety regime and is meeting the objectives set in the fire safety policy. More specifically, the fire safety audit seeks to:

- assess compliance with statutory requirements, current best practice, and guidance such as is found in Healthcare Technical Memoranda (HTM's) and appropriate standards, etc. and where applicable the fire strategy for the building /area.
- identify areas of best practice and those requiring attention in procedures and management systems.
- ascertain the validity and reliability of fire safety information.
- advise on programmes of remediation.
- inform the completion of the annual statement of fire safety.

3 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust as an employer and as represented by the Trust Board, see article 5(3) FSO, has overall responsibility.

Whilst it is incumbent upon all staff to assist and make reasonable arrangements to facilitate the undertaking of a fire safety audit, key personnel have particular responsibilities as follows:

3.1 Fire Safety Manager

- Ensure that suitable, periodic fire safety audits are undertaken on an annual basis.
- Ensure that the Authorising Engineer (Fire) is consulted on the need for an extraordinary fire safety audit following:
 - an adverse fire related incident.
 - the issue of a notice by the fire inspecting authority; or

- fire related issues being raised in an internal or third-party report.
- Ensure that the outcomes of any fire safety audit are appropriately recorded, and the outcomes suitably reported.

3.2 Fire Safety Advisor

- Assist the Fire Safety Manager with collating relevant information and documentation to support the fire safety audit as necessary.
- Engage with the Fire Safety Manager and the Authorising Engineer (Fire) to assist their decision making regarding the need for an extraordinary fire safety audit.
- Engage with the Authorising Engineer (Fire) and the fire safety audit process to ensure a comprehensive representation of the fire safety arrangements and outcomes.

3.3 Authorising Engineer (Fire)

- Undertake a suitable audit of fire safety elements following a request to do so by the Fire Safety Manager or Trust board.
- Provide a comprehensive report of the fire safety audit outcomes including, as appropriate:
 - a high-level action plan.
 - an assessment of Fire Safety Advisor competency and performance.
 - an assessment of the Trust's fire related risk exposure.
 - recommendations for the completion of the annual statement of fire safety.
 - any key areas of focus requested by the Fire Safety Manager or Trust Board.

4 AUDITORS

In order to ensure the integrity of the audit process and provide the necessary assurance to the board within a structure of sound governance, the audit should be undertaken by parties independent of the fire safety management structure.

The fire safety auditor must be able to demonstrate sufficient competence in fire safety matters in the healthcare environment and the auditing of fire safety provisions. To this end, the fire safety audit should be undertaken by the Authorising Engineer (Fire), supported as necessary by supplementary subject matter experts.

5 FREQUENCIES

5.1 Periodic fire safety audit

The undertaking of a periodic fire safety audit should be initiated by the Fire Safety Manager and should take place on an annual basis with sufficient time to allow the audit to take place and outcomes to be derived prior to completion of the annual statement of fire safety.

5.2 Extraordinary fire safety audit

The need for additional fire safety audits following an adverse fire related incident, formal notice from the fire inspecting authority, or in response to issues raised in an internal or third-party report should be discussed with the Authorising Engineer (Fire).

6 SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE FIRE SAFETY AUDIT

The scope and content of the fire safety audit should reflect the circumstances of the Trust at the time of that the audit is being undertaken. Whilst the potential scope for a fire safety audit is extensive, the purpose of any audit is to examine sufficient detail to ascertain the status of the processes and systems being audited, without the need for a detailed examination of every part of operation. In the case of a periodic fire safety audit, the scope should include a sufficient examination of the following elements:

- the fire safety management system.
- physical fire precautions.
- fire safety training.
- Fire Safety Advisor [Authorised Person(s)] competency and performance.
- organisational risk relating to fire.

Whilst the above elements should be examined in each periodic fire safety audit, subsequent audits may examine different aspects of each element in order to develop a broader understanding of the Trust's fire safety performance over an extended period.

The scope of any extraordinary fire safety audit should reflect the circumstances giving rise to the need for such an audit and be agreed with the Trust prior to the audit commencing. Generally, the extraordinary fire safety audit should be limited to specific issues that either directly, or indirectly, gave rise to or significantly influenced the adverse fire related incident, the issuing of a formal notice from the fire inspecting authority, or the raising of issues in an internal or third-party report.

6.1 Audit of the fire safety management system

In order to ascertain whether the arrangements for managing fire safety throughout the Trust are sufficiently defined, robust and delivering an appropriate level of fire safety it is necessary to examine the components of the fire safety management system and its effects.

Fire management activity is intended to deliver the outcomes stated in the fire safety policy aims, in the context set by the policy. It is necessary therefore to examine the fire safety policy to ascertain whether the policy aims, and context are clearly defined. Whilst a correctly formed fire safety policy should not change significantly over an extended period, this should be the starting point of every fire safety audit.

The periodic fire safety audit will examine some or all the following aspects of the fire safety management system:

- management structure, responsibilities, and reporting arrangements.
- fire safety protocols.
- coordination of fire safety and fire incident planning with other Trust activities.
- fire risk assessments, validity, and review.
- fire strategy reports and drawings.
- procedures for activities that may present a specific fire risk.
- procedures to mitigate risk associated with non-operational fire precautions.
- arrangements and records for the maintenance of fire precautions and fire related equipment/ systems.
- fire emergency action and response procedures.

- arrangements for resilience and service continuity.
- reports and records relating to fire safety and fire related incidents.
- notices and communications from the fire inspecting authority.

6.2 Audit of physical fire precautions

The physical fire precautions are a fundamental component of the fire safety of building occupants and as such should be audited to ascertain the degree of provision and their condition. The periodic fire safety audit should include a brief inspection of a random sample of the physical fire precautions. It is not intended that the periodic fire safety audit should include a detailed survey of fire compartmentation, fire doors or other fire precautions, but should include an examination of sufficient representative samples to conclude the general status of the fire precautions across the premises owned and/or utilised by the Trust.

6.3 Audit of fire safety training

The periodic fire safety audit should include an assessment of the fire safety training provision. Commencing with an examination of the training needs analysis consideration should be given to the content, frequency, and methods of delivery of training modules, and their relevance to the intended audience.

Where appropriate, the periodic fire safety audit may include an assessment of fire training delivery with the auditor attending a random sample of fire safety training sessions to ascertain training performance including an assessment of the:

- methods of delivery.
- nature in which information is imparted.
- content of presentations and instruction.
- interaction of trainees with the trainer, training aids etc.

As part of an assessment of the fire safety training arrangements, the fire safety audit may include an audit of fire safety training efficacy. This will take the form of a review of the Trust's internal arrangements for assessing training efficacy, and/or a random spot check of several individual staff member's understanding of fire safety issues and preparedness for a potential fire incident.

6.4 Audit of Fire Safety Advisor Competency and Performance

In order to provide the Board with assurance that the Trust is meeting its legal obligations to secure sufficient competent safety assistance, the periodic fire safety audit may include an assessment of the Fire Safety Advisor competency and performance. Such an assessment will consider the qualifications, training and experience mix of the individual(s), and compare this against the Trust's role specification(s) and the National Occupational Standards of the Fire Professional Framework.

- The assessment of the fire safety team competency and performance will include:
- knowledge acquisition (training)
- application (demonstration) of knowledge
- quality assurance (internal assurance and peer review)
- maintenance of competence (reflective learning log book)
- continuous professional development

6.5 Audit of organisational risk relating to fire

In order to facilitate the Board to determine the organisational risk appetite, the periodic fire safety audit should include a high-level assessment of the extent and nature of the fire related risk exposure across the Trust.

In order to derive such an overarching fire risk assessment, the periodic fire safety audit will consider the:

- fire related entries in the Trust's risk register.
- significant findings of fire risk assessments.
- findings of the elements of the fire safety audit described above.

7 REPORTING

The outcome of the fire safety audit will be compiled into a comprehensive report highlighting areas considered represent best practice, areas considered to meet an appropriate level of performance and those areas that are considered to require attention.

Recommendations for remedial actions should be provided for any area of deficiency identified, and those recommendations should form the basis of an action plan to address areas of weakness in the fire safety regime.

7.1 Outcome of the fire safety audit

The fire safety audit report should detail each of the elements examined and the status of each individual element in terms of compliance with statutory requirements, standards, Firecode and other appropriate guidance.

A statement should be included as to the confidence of the auditor in the findings of the fire safety audit, and whether in the auditor's opinion the outcomes of the audit sufficiently represent the status of fire safety arrangements throughout the Trust.

7.2 Action plan

Where the fire safety audit identifies deficiencies in the fire safety arrangements, recommendations to address those shortcomings should be presented. These recommendations should be compiled into a high-level action plan to assist the Trust in making improvements to its fire safety arrangements. The action plan should include, as appropriate:

- a description of the deficiency identified.
- the appropriate actions to be taken.
 - interim measures (short-term measures to improve the deficiency).
 - longer-term measures (intended to fully address the deficiency).
- indicative timescales for action completion with consideration to.
 - priority
 - practicality.
 - Affordability.
- recommendations for progress review.

7.3 Fire Safety Advisor competency and performance

The outcome of the assessment of the Fire Safety Advisor competency and performance will be presented with a visual representation such as a web plot identifying areas of strength and weakness both individually and, where appropriate, collectively.

The report will include areas of individual and team development as appropriate and potential paths to improvement such as using training, structured learning, and mentoring.

7.4 Organisational risk relating to fire

The outcome of the assessment of the Trust's fire related risk exposure should be presented in terms of an overall risk score derived from an evaluation to include:

- the likelihood that a fire may occur.
- the potential for the available fire precautions to limit the impact of a fire occurring.
- the potential consequences of an insufficiently controlled fire occurring including:
 - injury and/or death.
 - loss of service function.
 - legal action.
 - loss of reputation.

7.5 Annual statement of fire safety

The outcome of the fire safety audit report will include a recommendation to the board in respect of the appropriate completion of the annual statement of fire safety.

8 MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE DOCUMENT

The ongoing performance of the fire safety audit provision will be monitored and reported via the fire safety management system through review of the report outcomes, and the progress and completion of recommended actions.

9 DEFINITIONS

Annual Statement of Fire Safety

A statement by the Trust board intended to provide a clear indication in respect of the status of fire safety management within the organisation and a statement of assurance that adequate fire safety measures are in place.

Authorising Engineer (Fire)

A chartered fire engineer, with extensive experience in healthcare fire safety who has been appointed by the Trust board to provide assurance that the Trust is meeting its obligations in respect of its arrangements for fire safety.

Fire Safety Advisor

The person(s) appointed by, or contracted to, the Trust to provide day-to-day, competent fire safety advice.

Fire Safety Audit

A systematic and independent examination of the Trust's fire safety arrangements.

Fire Safety Manager

The person within the Trust tasked with coordinating fire safety issues throughout the organisation's activities.

Fire Safety Policy

A high-level statement of intent, as expressed by the Trust board, setting out clear fire safety objectives for the organisation.

Organisational Risk Appetite

The amount and type of risk that the Trust is willing to take in order to meet its strategic objectives.

Physical fire precautions

The structures, including walls, floors, doors, and other elements intended to resist the passage of fire and/or smoke, and fire safety provisions including fire detection and alarm systems, evacuation aids, fire extinguishers and other material provisions intended to facilitate and enhance an appropriate fire response.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, population, and workforce, ensuring that none are disadvantaged over others. Our objectives and responsibilities relating to equality and diversity are outlined within our equality schemes. When considering the needs and assessing the impact of a procedural document any discriminatory factors must be identified.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on this procedural document in line with the principles of the Equality Analysis Policy (CORP/EMP 27) and the Fair Treatment For All Policy (CORP/EMP 4).

The purpose of the EIA is to minimise and if possible, remove any disproportionate impact on employees on the grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religious belief. No detriment was identified. ([See Appendix 1](#))

11 ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

Fire Safety Policy – CORP/HSFS 14

Fire Safety Protocols.

Fire Safety, fire safety training & fire incident related procedures and records.

Fire Related Maintenance Records.

12 DATA PROTECTION

Any personal data processing associated with this policy will be carried out under 'Current data protection legislation' as in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2021.

For further information on data processing carried out by the trust, please refer to our Privacy Notices and other information which you can find on the trust website:

<https://www.dbth.nhs.uk/about-us/our-publications/information-governance/>

13 REFERENCES

Health Technical Memorandum 05-01: Managing healthcare fire safety (Second Edition). The Stationery Office, 2013.

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. SI 2005 No 1541.

APPENDIX 1 – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING

Service/Function/Policy/Project/Strategy	Division	Assessor (s)	New or Existing Service or Policy?	Date of Assessment
Fire Safety Audits Protocol 7	Estates and Facilities	Howard Timms	New	14 June 2023
1) Who is responsible for this policy? - Name of Care Group/Directorate: Estates and Facilities				
2) Describe the purpose of the service / function / policy / project/ strategy? Who is it intended to benefit? What are the intended outcomes? - All Trust Staff. This protocol contributes to the fulfilment of developing fire safety protocols as stated in Health Technical Memorandum 05-01: Managing healthcare fire safety (second edition). This protocol addresses 'Fire Safety Audit'.				
3) Are there any associated objectives? Legislation, targets national expectation, standards. - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the DOH Firecode HTM 05 Series				
4) What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes? Trust staff awareness				
5) Does the policy have an impact in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy and religion/belief? - No				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, please describe current or planned activities to address the impact [e.g., Monitoring, consultation] - N/A 				
6) Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality? [any actions to be taken] - N/A				
7) Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy? - No				
Protected Characteristics	Affected?	Impact		
a) Age	No			
b) Disability	No			
c) Gender	No			
d) Gender Reassignment	No			
e) Marriage/Civil Partnership	No			
f) Maternity/Pregnancy	No			
g) Race	No			
h) Religion/Belief	No			
i) Sexual Orientation	No			
8) Provide the Equality Rating of the service / function / policy / project / strategy – tick (✓) outcome box.				
Outcome 1 ✓	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	
<i>*If you have rated the policy as having an outcome of 2, 3 or 4, it is necessary to carry out a detailed assessment and complete a Detailed Equality Analysis form in Appendix 4</i>				
Date for next review: June 2026				
Checked by: Sean Tyler - Head of Compliance/Neil Colton - Fire Safety Advisor				Date: 14 June 2023