

# Corporate Fire Safety Policy and Arrangements

## Introduction

This policy document is in support of the Corporate Health, Safety & Welfare Policy and forms part of the London Borough of Merton's Safety Management System and provides a framework for management and employees to plan, organise, control, monitor and review the protective and preventative measures in relation to Fire Safety in all Merton owned, controlled, managed and maintained premises.

The policy document is divided into two parts:

- **Part 1: Fire Safety Policy.** This sets out the fire safety policy statement and overarching standards for compliance;
- **Part 2: Arrangements for compliance.** This provides information on the arrangements to be standards to be met to achieve compliance with legislation.

## **Part 1: Fire Safety Policy**

### **Fire Safety Policy Statement**

The London Borough of Merton (LBM) actively seeks to create and maintain a working environment safe from the risks of fire, and to comply with legislation with specific relevance to fire safety including the following:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) is the primary legislation for fire safety. The Fire Safety Order applies not only to persons at work, but to all persons lawfully on the premises and those that may be affected by fire on the premises.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect on 01<sup>st</sup> October 2006 and replaced all pre-existing fire safety legislation with a risk-based regime.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to all LBM operational / non-operational buildings and schools.

The responsibility for the safety of the occupants and those who might be affected by fire rests with the defined 'Responsible Person'.

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) will implement the Fire Safety Policy through the Departmental Management Team (DMT) and the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

This policy applies to in all Merton owned, managed or maintained premises including Community, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled and PFI Schools.

### **Definitions within the Legislation**

#### **Responsible Person(s)**

This is the person responsible for ensuring compliance with fire safety legislation and meeting the requirements of this policy and procedure.

In **operational buildings**, the 'Responsible Person' is anyone with control of the premises or anyone who has a degree of control over particular areas; parts; sections; plant, equipment or systems within it.

With respect to **operational buildings** there will be more than one single 'Responsible Person' with the duties being split between those responsible for operational service delivery and those responsible for the facilities management

element of the premises from which the service is delivered.

In **schools**, the 'Responsible Person' is the **Head teacher / Executive Head (not title dependant)**.

Any person undertaking '**landlord**' responsibilities in any building leased, let or tenanted on behalf of the School or Council is deemed to be the 'Responsible Person' and responsible for ensuring compliance in the premises they manage to the extent within their control. Unless specified within a formal lease agreement, control remains with the council for the management and organisation of fire arrangements.

### **Relevant Person**

This is:

- any person (including the Responsible Person(s) who is or may be lawfully on the premises; and:
- any person in the immediate vicinity of the premises who is at risk from a fire on the premises; but does not include a fire fighter carrying out their duties.

This includes visitors or members of the public.

### **Competent Person**

A competent person is someone with enough training; experience; knowledge and other qualities to enable them to carry out and properly implement any of the preventive and protective measures required by fire safety legislation.

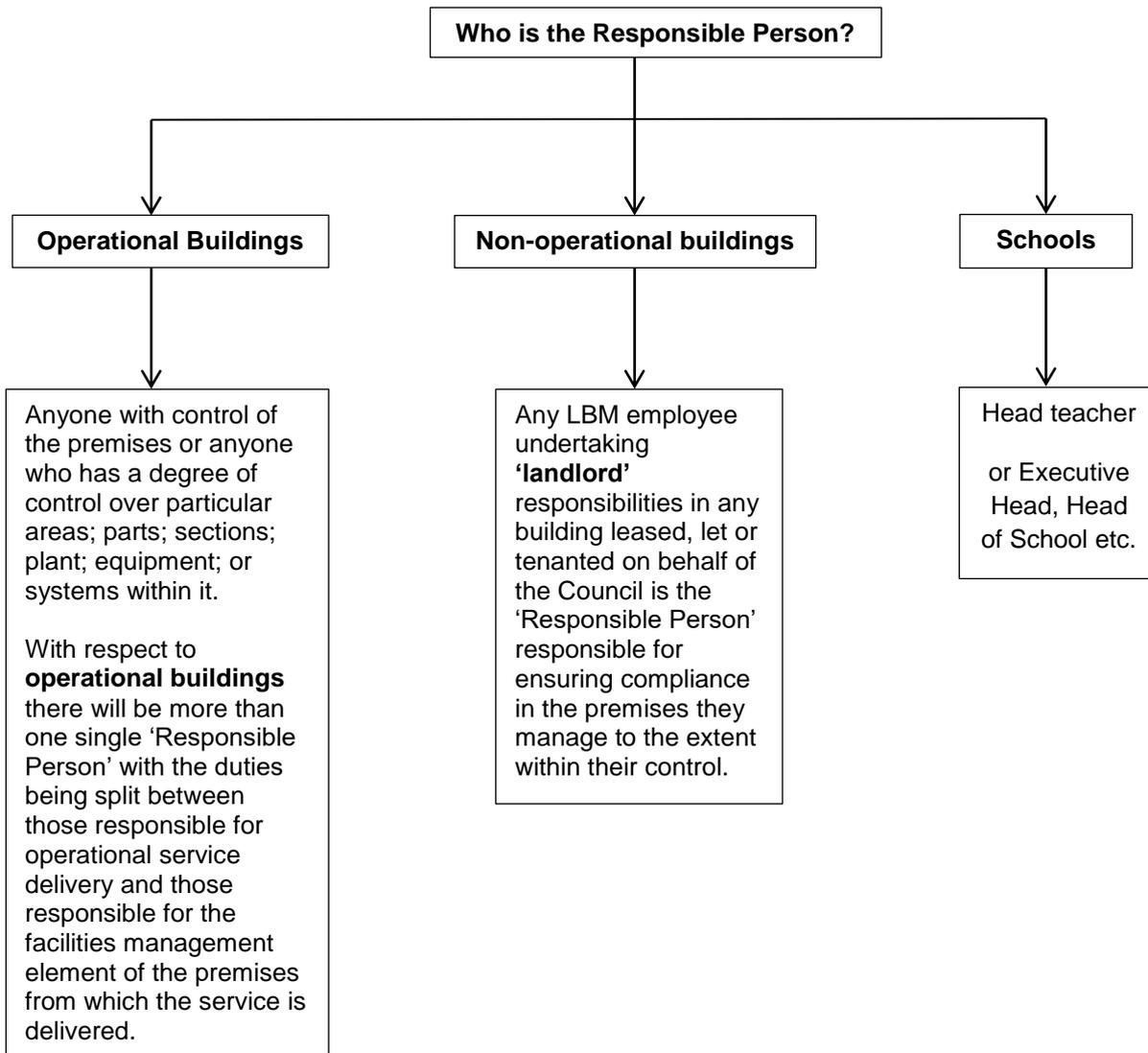
### **Operational Building**

A building from which the service is provided or which supports service provision and can be either occupied or unoccupied but responsibility for the management of the property is part of the council's undertaking.

### **Non-Operational Building**

A building owned by LBM but leased / let to a third party occupier. In this case no Council staff work or occupy any part of the premises.

**Who is the Responsible Person(s)?**



## Roles and Responsibilities

### Overall responsibility

The Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that arrangements for managing Fire Safety are in place and regularly monitored.

This ultimate responsibility cannot be delegated. However, the functions related to that responsibility may be delegated.

In summary this includes ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare with regard to fire of all people on council premises or affected by council activities including

- employees, pupils, visitors, service users, volunteers, contractors,
- any others persons in council buildings;
- the protection of council buildings and assets from the threat fire however caused (e.g. arson or accidental outbreak);
- the risk of serious disruption to the council's operational activities
- to ensure that adequate resources are made available to ensure that the duties set out in this policy are fully complied with.

### Duties of the Responsible Person(s)

The Responsible Person for each operational building and school is responsible for overall fire safety management and is to take such '**general fire precautions**' that are necessary to ensure the safety of all staff, service users, client, customers, contractors, volunteers' etc. and other relevant persons within, and in close proximity to operational buildings and schools.

General Fire Precautions are detailed below:

- Reduce the risk of and spread of fire;
- Provide a secure and safe means of escape from the building at all times;
- Provide means for detecting and giving warning of fire;
- Provide means of fighting fires;
- Implement measures and actions to be taken in the event of a fire by providing instruction and training of employees;
- Provide a suitable system of maintenance of all general fire precaution arrangements and fire safety equipment.
- Put in place robust arrangements for emergency evacuation thoroughly test those arrangements.

In addition the Responsible Person for each operational building and school is responsible for ensuring:

- A suitable; sufficient and current (i.e. not older than **12 months**) fire risk assessment is carried out and the findings recorded and made available for inspection;
- Fire risk assessment is used as the primary basis for compliance with fire safety legislation and subsequent arrangements for fire safety in each premises under their control.
- As part of the fire risk assessment process a review of fire safety arrangements including evacuation plans and procedures is carried out and exercised;
- All actions and/or defects and/or recommendations identified through the fire risk assessment process are completed within the timescales determined by the assessor and set out in the assessment documentation;
- All actions and/or defects and/or recommendations identified by contractors engaged to carry out inspection; testing; maintenance and servicing of fire safety systems; equipment and installations, for example; fire alarm and detection systems; fire extinguishers; emergency lighting installations; gas suppression systems etc. are completed within the timescales determined by the contractors and set out in their certificates; reports; and other relevant documentation;
- Appoint one or more competent persons, depending on the size and use of the premises, to carry out any of the preventive and protective measures required by the Order;
- Establish a suitable way of contacting the Emergency Services.

**Directors; Assistant Directors; Heads of Service; Head Teachers / Executive Heads, and line Managers**

Directors; Assistant Directors; Heads of Service; Head Teachers (not title dependant) and Line Managers are responsible within their areas of operation for:

- The implementation of the Fire Safety Policy and Procedures;
- Acting upon the recommendations and requirements of fire risk assessments;
- Fire safety linked to a particular process or procedure under their control;
- Ensuring that all persons are trained and given adequate instruction in the case of fire;
- Appointing suitable responsible persons to undertake all necessary fire arrangements and procedures;
- Ensuring that all actions and/or defects and/or recommendations identified through the fire risk assessment process are completed within the timescales determined by the assessor and set out in the assessment documentation;
- Ensuring that all actions and/or defects and/or recommendations identified by contractors engaged to carry out inspection; testing; maintenance and servicing of fire safety systems; equipment and installations, for example; fire alarm and detection systems; fire extinguishers; emergency lighting installations; gas suppression systems etc. are completed within the timescales determined by the contractors and set out in their certificates; reports; and other relevant documentation;

- Measure, review and audit all the arrangements for fire safety to ensure they remain current and relevant;
- Comply with the requirements of the Council's Insurer.

### **Staff**

All staff must be familiar with the fire safety and evacuation arrangements for every building and school they work from including knowing the actions to be taken in the event of a fire, actuation of the alarm, emergency exit routes and location of assembly points.

All staff must take reasonable steps to ensure they do not place themselves or others at risk of harm. They have responsibility for ensuring they are familiar with and understand the content of any relevant documents relating to fire safety for the building they occupy and they must co-operate fully with the council in complying with all procedures and measures to protect the safety and well-being of all.

In addition Article 23 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places the following responsibilities on every employee:

- Take reasonable care for their safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst at work and not do anything that places themselves or others at risk;
- Co-operate with the employer and /or the responsible person in complying with Fire Safety Legislative requirements and to ensure the workplace is safe from fire and its effects;
- Inform the employer and / or the responsible person of any situation that could represent a serious and immediate danger to the safety of persons from fire;
- Inform the employer and /or the responsible person of any shortcomings in the employer's fire precautions and protection arrangements.

### **Service Users; Visitors & Members of the Public**

Service users; visitors; members of the public etc. must comply with the Fire Safety Policy and Procedure and any local fire safety arrangements.

### **Contractors**

Contractors must comply with all aspects of LBM's Fire Safety Policy and Procedures.

## **Co-operation and Co-ordination**

Where premises or parts of premises are shared with other organisations, the Council will take all reasonable steps to co-ordinate the arrangements for managing fire safety.

Where the council is leasing parts of premise that will be shared occupancy, the lease must contain the requirements and expectations for cooperation with this policy.

## **Fire Risk Assessment**

Due to the nature and complexity of the assessment the Council policy is that **all** Fire Risk Assessments will be conducted at all operational buildings and schools on behalf of the Responsible Person by experienced and qualified fire safety specialists.

Fire Risk Assessments must be carried out for each building. Assessments must be reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently if required, and remedial action plans must be produced where necessary. This process must record and prioritise any management or building improvements necessary to comply with legislation, best practice and council policy.

Throughout the risk assessment process, fire hazards in the workplace will be identified; the risk of fire evaluated and wherever possible the overall risk reduced.

Taking account of any control measures already in operation, the 'Responsible Person' will introduce or maintain all reasonable measures to eliminate or control fire hazards and manage the residual risk.

**All Fire Risk Assessments will be subject to review by the Responsible Person on an annual basis.**

Other than the annual review, Fire Risk Assessments will be subject to review before, during and after any significant changes to the size, layout, use, type and number of occupants or any other reason that may affect the validity of the assessment.

**The Responsible Person must ensure that Fire Risk Assessment is discussed as part of CDM where works are to be undertaken on buildings they are responsible for and included in the handover discussions prior to any future occupation of the building in question.**

All Fire Risk assessment documentation must be available for inspection by Corporate Safety Services and the Enforcing Authorities and will be found within the Fire Safety Management File which is to be kept at each site.

## **Reporting, Measuring and Monitoring Performance**

The Council recognises that for fire safety management to be successful, activities and arrangements must be monitored for effectiveness. All employees are encouraged to be proactive in promoting fire safety in the workplace and that fire and evacuation arrangements within buildings remain current and effective. Employees should report all concerns to their line manager or Head Teacher.

The Council recognises that on one occasion the outcome of a fire or near miss may be insignificant and that on another, the result may be serious. Therefore all fires and near misses must be reported to the Corporate Safety Section.

The data collected will be analysed by the Head of Safety Services to identify trends and make recommendations. As and where appropriate, reports will be provided to the Corporate Management Team (CMT); Departmental Management Teams (DMTs); and the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

The arrangements for fire safety in the council are subject to regular systematic examination and where necessary policy, procedures and practice will be amended to ensure they remain effective in managing fire safety within council operational owned, managed and maintained buildings including community, VA,VC and PFI schools.

The Council actively promotes auditing, which highlights any problem areas, suggests remedial measures and monitors the action taken to control the risks to employees, other persons and property from fire.

Audits on council owned managed and maintained premise are undertaken by Safety Services who are trained in the task and will achieve the following:

- Establish that there is a suitable and current Fire Safety Policy and Procedures;
- Ensure there is a current Fire risk assessment in compliance with Fire Safety legislation;
- Establish whether the responsible person has Identified and has actioned improvements needed to maintain safety standards such as additional lighting or detection;
- Establish whether the responsible person has put in place arrangements to promote fire safety awareness throughout the organisation or pemises;
- Assess performance of fire safety systems;
- Check the monitoring arrangements.

### **Policy Review**

This Policy and associated guidance will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date and effective.

**Date of next review: November 2018**

This Fire Safety Policy supersedes all those previously issued.

**Ged Curran**  
**Chief Executive**  
**London Borough of Merton**

**Caroline Holland**  
**Director of Corporate Services**  
**London Borough of Merton**

**Dated: .01/11/2017**

**Dated: .01/11/2017.....**

## **Part 2: Arrangements for compliance**

### **Responsible Person(s)**

In order to discharge their responsibilities set out in the Fire Safety Policy Statement the Responsible Person(s) must safeguard the well-being of all employees; pupils; visitors; service users; volunteers; contractors; etc. through adherence to sound fire safety management practices.

They must ensure that operational buildings and schools are maintained to a high standard with regard to fire prevention; containment; detection; alarms; means of escape, etc. and in compliance with Legislation; Approved Codes of Practice; British Standards and best practice, etc.

The Responsible Person(s) must ensure that information; instruction; training and supervision be provided to enable all staff to carry out their fire safety duties effectively and safely. As a minimum every member of staff must undertake fire safety awareness training. As well as fire safety awareness staff must receive all necessary additional fire safety training commensurate with their individual roles and responsibilities with respect to fire safety management.

The law recognises that the Responsible Person(s) may not be in a position to carry out all the duties and tasks necessary in order to comply with this policy. It therefore makes it a requirement for the Responsible Person(s) to appoint one or more competent persons, depending on the size and use of the premises, to carry out any of the preventive and protective measures required by the Order.

A competent person is someone with enough training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to be able to implement these measures properly

Employees and others affected by the council's undertaking must be consulted on all aspects of fire safety management and be provided with clear fire risk and fire precautions information. Good relationships and effective communication are maintained with all staff to ensure that any fire safety issue raised is resolved through meaningful discussion.

Contractors and all other visitors must be briefed in the evacuation and fire safety procedures for the operational building or school they are visiting. The activities of contractors' and all other visitors must be controlled to ensure they do not compromise fire safety in any way.

Regular fire safety inspections of buildings; plant; equipment; systems and work practices must be conducted in order to identify and assess any deficiencies in fire safety and ensure that appropriate remedial actions and improvements are implemented.

Flammable substances must be stored and used in accordance with legislation and in particular the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR).

## **Emergency Evacuation Plan(s) & Procedure(s)**

An Emergency Evacuation Plan & Procedure must be prepared for all operational buildings and schools the purpose of which is to ensure all members of staff are made aware of what to do in the event of a fire occurring and to ensure the safe evacuation of all persons from the premises.

The purpose of an emergency plan is to ensure that people in the operational building or school know what to do if there is a fire and that the premises can be safely evacuated.

It should be based on the outcome of the operational building / school's fire risk assessment and any other subsequent assessments and should be appropriate and specific to the particular premises or venue.

In particular it must take into account the physical size and layout of the operational building(s) / school building(s); the number; type and range of occupants and their location and the location and suitability of the assembly point.

If there is the need for more than one assembly point the plan must clearly identify where each one is located and detail which occupants go where.

It must also set out how each assembly point communicates with each other to ensure the timely receipt of information on the progress of the evacuation to the member of staff acting as Incident Controller in order that this can be passed to the Fire Brigade upon their arrival.

In the event of a fire, the Emergency Plan which incorporates the fire Evacuation Procedure is to be put into operation. Members of staff with specific tasks to perform e.g. Fire Warden; must have these tasks detailed within the buildings fire Evacuation Procedure.

The following is an example of the type of information that should be contained in an emergency evacuation plan and procedure:

- How occupants will be warned if there is a fire;
- Action to take on discovering a fire;
- Evacuation procedures:
  - During normal operational / school hours;
  - Outside of normal operational / school hours;
  - For After-School Clubs; Breakfast Clubs and similar uses;
  - All other third party lets.
- Location of the assembly point(s), and procedure for roll call;
- How the fire and rescue service will be called and who will be responsible for doing this;
- Procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated;
- The identity and duties of staff with specific responsibilities in the event of a fire, e.g. Incident Controller; Fire Marshall / Warden; Sweeping areas of the building;

- Arrangements for the safe evacuation of occupants identified as being especially at risk, e.g. those with disabilities; lone workers; young people / children etc.
- Any machines/appliances/processes/power supplies that need to be stopped or isolated in the event of fire;
- Specific arrangements for high fire risk areas, e.g. kitchens, boiler/plant rooms, etc.
- Arrangements for fire safety training

The Emergency Evacuation Plan(s) & Procedure(s) will be subject to review by the Responsible Person on an annual basis.

Other than the annual review, all Emergency Evacuation Plan(s) & Procedure(s) will be subject to review before, during and, after any significant changes to the size, layout, use, type and number of occupants or any other reason that may affect the validity of the Plan or Procedure.

## **Roles in an Evacuation**

### **Incident Controller**

- **Civic Centre**

Incident Controller for the Civic Centre is primarily the **Contracts and Security Manager**. In their absence incident, the most senior member of the Security Team on duty at the time or a member of the Corporate Facilities management Team will take the role of Incident controller.

The Incident Controller will supervise any fire evacuation until the London Fire Brigade arrive to take control.

In the event of a serious situation, the Incident Controller will establish a Fire Management Team, in accordance with the Major Incident Plan and the Civic Centre Disaster Recovery Plan.

- **All other Operational buildings**

Incident control in all other operational buildings is the responsibility of the building manager and / or service manager as appropriate.

In the event of a serious situation, the Incident Controller will establish a Fire Management Team, in accordance with the Council's Major Incident Plan and the individual buildings Business Continuity Plan.

- **Schools**

The Incident controller in schools is the responsibility of the Head teacher / Executive Head Etc. who must implement and manage arrangements for incident control.

In the event of a serious situation, the Incident Controller will establish a Fire Management Team, in accordance with the Council's Major Incident Plan and the individual schools Critical Incident Management Plan and Procedures.

## **Fire Marshals**

Fire Marshals must be appointed and trained to assist in the safe evacuation of occupants from pre-designated areas of the premises. Their duties will include the following:

- Report to the Fire Liaison Officer at the Fire Assembly point:
  - As to the progress of evacuation of the building
  - If any areas were unable to be checked
  - The location of any disabled persons in the building
  - Any deficiencies on the fire system
- Stay at the assembly point to be available to assist the Incident Controller until instructed to return to the building by the incident controller or fire brigade.

- **Operational Buildings**

Fire Marshals in operational buildings will be appointed by the building manager or service manager.

- **Civic Centre**

Fire Marshals for the Civic Centre are called 'Floor Fire Officers' and will be appointed by Corporate Facilities Management in line with the Civic Centre Evacuation Procedures.

- **Schools**

Fire Marshals in schools will be appointed by the Head teacher.

Teaching staff are responsible for the safety of the pupils in their charge.

In the event of a fire teaching staff will:

- Cease all classroom activities
- Direct pupils to the quickest escape route and to their assembly point

- If it is safe to do so, ensure all power and gas supplies directly involved in activities are turned off before closing the door as they leave the room
- Once outside, teaching staff should assemble the class at the assembly point
- Report any missing pupils(s) to the Incident Controller immediately
- Stay with pupils at the assembly point until instructed to return to the building.

## **Disabled Persons**

People with disabilities (temporary or permanent) which may affect their evacuation in an emergency must have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) in place. PEEP forms can be found on the Safety Services internet / intranet pages and it is the responsibility of the Building manager / responsible person to ensure that Personal Emergency Evacuation plans are completed and regularly reviewed and tested to ensure the PEEP's are still effective and relevant.

Visiting persons with disabilities are required to inform a member of staff if they require help evacuating a building.

## **Fire Drills**

Fire drills must be organised by the 'Responsible Person' for each operational building or school and must be carried out at least twice a year for operational buildings and once a term for schools; children's centres; youth centres and any other building where children and young persons are the primary service user.

In order for staff to be capable of dealing with a full evacuation of the premises, the Responsible Person should ensure regular training is provided. This training will involve talking with the staff about the detail of the Fire Evacuation Procedures, to ensure they are clearly aware of their individual role during a Fire Incident. This training will be required for all full and part-time staff and volunteers.

A record of all fire drills must be kept in the Fire Log Book of each individual operational/non-operational building or school and must contain the following information:

- Location of the drill / emergency evacuation
- Date and time of the drill / emergency evacuation
- Duration of the drill / emergency evacuation
- Whether it was a drill or an evacuation
- Comments / Observations / Further Actions
- The record must also include a list of staff that participated in the fire drill. This is to identify the staff members who were not present during the drill, and allow management to organise the next drill when these staff are present.

## **Fire Safety Management File**

A Fire Safety Management File must be kept and maintained in each operational building and school.

The Fire Safety Management File should include the following:

- Floor plans of the building with the actuation points (break glass), extinguishers, smoke/heat detectors, emergency lighting units and emergency exit routes clearly marked on the floor plan;
- Fire risk assessment checklist, with risk rating and action plan;
- Records of weekly fire alarm call point checks;
- Records of fire drills and emergency evacuations:

These must include the following information:

- Location of the drill / emergency evacuation;
  - Date and time of the drill / emergency evacuation;
  - Duration of the drill / emergency evacuation;
  - Whether it was a drill or an evacuation;
  - Comments / Observations / Further Actions;
  - The record must also include a list of staff that participated in the fire drill. This is to identify the staff members who were not present during the drill, and allow management to organise the next drill when these staff are present.
- Records of monthly user functionality checks of the emergency lighting units;
  - Emergency evacuation procedures in the event of fire;

This should include details of the roles and responsibilities of staff with respect to emergency evacuation, i.e. who does what, when and how and who deputises for them in their absence, e.g. if a Manager / Head teacher is appointed as 'Fire / Incident Controller' a deputy must also be appointed, if a specific member of staff is responsible for calling the fire brigade there must be someone else appointed to act in their absence, etc.;

- Example of pictorial evacuation route where these are displayed in individual rooms within operational/non-operational buildings or classrooms in schools;
- Records of staff training in managing the buildings fire precautions (fire risk assessment, fire wardens, extinguisher use, etc.);
- Fire equipment maintenance (alarm panels, emergency lighting, smoke detectors, extinguishers etc.) records and schedules;

- Fire Door Inspection – Record Sheet.

All the above when incorporated within one file/folder would constitute the supporting documentation for a Fire Risk Assessment as required by the 'The Regulatory Reform' (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

## **Fire Safety Training**

To comply with fire legislation, fire safety training must be arranged and conducted for all staff. Such training is to be repeated on a periodic basis as required under legislation.

All staff with specific fire safety responsibilities e.g. fire marshal, fire warden, incident controller, security staff etc. will receive specific training commensurate to their particular role.

Fire Safety Training will be given to all new members of staff at the commencement of their employment and is to include:

- Location of all Fire Exit doors and Emergency Routes
- Location of the Assembly Point
- Actions to be taken in the event of the Fire Alarm sounding
- Action to be taken on discovering a fire
- The importance of keeping fire doors shut
- The importance of maintaining clear exit routes

Fire Safety Training will be provided for all members of staff on an annual basis. The subject matter is to include the following:

- Actions to be taken in the event of the Fire Alarm sounding
- Action to be taken on discovering a fire
- The importance of keeping fire doors shut
- The importance of maintaining clear Exit Routes
- Location of Extinguishers and their use – **see Note (1) below.**
- General fire awareness on how fires can start and develop
- The significant findings of the Fire Risk Assessment
- An understanding of the Fire Alarm and Detection System to avoid false alarms

All training activities should be recorded in the Fire Safety Management File. Names of all persons receiving training and the name of the person and organisation providing the training must be recorded along with the date, duration and type of training given.

**Note (1):** Although training all staff in the use of fire extinguisher is not within the policy requirements for the council such training will be provided where the fire risk assessment identifies it as a requirement.

## **Providing a Safe Means of Escape**

A safe and secure means of escape from all Merton Council premises will be maintained at all times. The relevant Service Manager and staff will ensure that Fire Exit Doors are unlocked and available for use at all times the premises is occupied.

These doors and the routes to them must be free from obstruction at all times. The doors must be easily opened without the use of a key, regularly inspected and maintained in a good state of repair. All defects must be reported to the 'Responsible Person' for action to be taken.

All operational buildings and schools must be visually inspected at the start of each working day by the 'Responsible Person'. The inspection should include that:

- All exit doors and gates are unlocked and readily available for use, or they are capable of being opened quickly and easily in the event of a fire;
- Any emergency fastenings are working efficiently;
- All escape routes, including corridors; stairways; landings; and exit doors are clear of any obstructions, or anything else likely to cause a fire, accident or impede an emergency evacuation;
- Fire doors are not held open except with approved devices;
- There are no obvious fire hazards in escape routes, such as accumulated waste;
- Any evacuation lifts for disabled persons are working;
- All defects reported, logged and programmed for remedy;
- Hazardous materials are not stored on the escape route;
- Extinguishers are kept free from obstruction and readily available for use.

### **Means of Escapes routes are to be provided with the following:**

- **Emergency Lighting**

Emergency lighting will be provided where it is found necessary to provide sufficient illumination for persons to see their way out of the building in an emergency. The systems must be tested in accordance with the schedules set out in BS5266-8: 2004 + BS EN 50172: 2004. The results of the tests must be recorded in the building's Fire Safety Management Folder.

- **Fire Safety Signs**

Fire safety signs must be provided in all buildings to indicate the Emergency Routes and Exits. The signs must comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and the applicable parts of BS 5499 and/or BS EN ISO 7010 as appropriate and with the requirements for fire safety signage outlined below.

## **Fire Safety Signage**

The ongoing monitoring of fire safety signage forms an important part of fire safety management and it is therefore recommended that schools include fire signage as an integral part of their regular safety inspection procedure.

In order to ensure that evacuation routes continue to be provided with the correct type, size and number of signs please find below information on the requirements for fire safety signage and evacuation route signage.

- Signs should provide clear, unambiguous information to enable people to safely leave a building in an emergency.
- Signage including directional arrows and exit signs on final exit doors from each class and areas of the school must be clear, unambiguous and unobstructed.
- Signs should be of the pictogram type. Text only signage must not be used.
- Every escape route sign should, where necessary, incorporate, or be accompanied by, a directional arrow. Arrows should not be used on their own.
- If the escape route to the nearest exit is not obvious it should be indicated by a sign(s)
- Signs should be positioned so that a person escaping will always have the next escape route sign in sight.
- Escape signs should be fixed above the door in the direction of escape and not be fixed to doors, as they will not be visible if the door is open.
- Signs mounted above doors should be at a height of between 2.0m and 2.5m above the floor.
- Signs on walls should be mounted between 1.7m and 2.0m above the floor.
- Mounting heights greater than 2.5m may be used for hanging signs, e.g. in large open spaces or for operational reasons, but care should be taken to ensure that such signs are both conspicuous and legible. In such case larger signs may be necessary.
- Signs should be sited at the same height throughout the escape route, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that fire signs are not obscured or hidden by hanging displays or by wall displays.
- All fire signage must be highly visible at all times.

- Signs should not be fixed to doors or positioned where opened doors or overhanging curtains might obscure them.
- Where a sign cannot be clearly displayed on a wall / by a fire exit then you should consider putting up a suspended directional sign that can be clearly seen.
- Only essential fire signs should be displayed on fire doors, non-essential posters etc. should be kept to a minimum as they could make it hard to see fire signage.
- Occupants should be able to follow one clearly signposted route out to the final assembly point.
- Fire action notices must be displayed adjacent to each call point and must be filled out with all the required information including the location of the assembly point.

**NB!** Due to the availability of a variety of fire action notices each with variations on wording care must be taken to ensure you select the most appropriate type. The wording must reflect the actual action intended to be taken in the event of fire and also what is detailed in the evacuation plan and procedure for the premises.

- By each fire alarm call point a call point sign should be displayed.
- Information signs must be placed by each fire extinguisher advising on the type of extinguisher and type of fire it can be used on.
- Paper displays hanging down in means of escape routes e.g. corridors and staircases should be removed as these are protected fire routes and flammable materials within them should be kept to a minimum.

## **Fire Action Notices**

Fire Action notices must be posted throughout all operational buildings and schools and in particular must be displayed on exit routes and adjacent to fire alarm call points; final escape doors; and portable fire equipment.

The notices must provide sufficient information to the occupants of the building on the action to take in the event of a fire and must include the location of the Assembly Point.

Due to the availability of a variety of fire action notices each with variations on wording care must be taken to ensure you select the most appropriate type. The wording must reflect the actual action intended to be taken in the event of fire and also what is detailed in the evacuation plan and procedure for the premises.

Fire Action Notices must comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and the applicable parts of BS 5499 and/or BS EN ISO 7010 as appropriate.

## **Portable Fire Appliances**

Portable Fire Appliances will be provided and strategically sited throughout the buildings. The type, numbers and locations will be selected for the appropriate type of risk.

All extinguishers must be hung on wall brackets or placed on suitable stands. In addition, all equipment must be provided with appropriate signs displaying the type of extinguisher and the category of fire they can be used on.

Staff must make themselves aware of the location of extinguishers and the information on the signs above them.

Fire Extinguishers must be subject to routine inspection and servicing by a competent maintenance contractor. The maintenance contractor must place a label on each extinguisher containing their contact details; inspection dates and any defects identified. In addition, all inspections, defects and replacements are to be recorded in the building's Fire Safety Management Folder.

Fire Extinguishers are only to be used by persons who have received specific training in their use. The main purpose of this equipment is to assist in the means of escape of a person(s) from the building. If a fire is discovered the main focus should be on the operation of the Fire Alarm, calling the Emergency Services and initiating the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

## **Acetylene and Hot Works**

Acetylene cylinders must not be stored in operational buildings or schools.

All hot works in operational buildings and schools must be carried out using the Corporate Facilities Management Permit to Work Procedure.

### **Testing and Maintenance**

#### **(i) Fire Alarm Systems**

This information is provided for the general guidance of fire detection and fire alarm system users. As it is a summary, it omits much of the information included in BS5839-1. It is therefore not intended to be a replacement for the detailed recommendations included within British Standard.

#### **Routine testing by the user**

It is vital for a regular test to be undertaken to ensure that there has not been a major failure of the entire fire detection and fire alarm system that may otherwise go unnoticed.

#### **Weekly tests**

- Test a manual call point during working hours to check that the control panel and alarm sounders operate satisfactorily
- Each week, a different manual call point should be tested
- Voice alarm systems should be tested weekly in accordance with BS5839 Part 8. If the system is connected to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) for calling the fire brigade, it is very important that the ARC is notified before testing commences and when it is complete

#### **Monthly tests**

- Any automatically started generator used for the fire detection and fire alarm system should be tested
- Any vented batteries used as a standby power supply for the fire detection and fire alarm system inspected

#### **Inspection and Servicing by a competent person**

The inspection and servicing should be undertaken by organisations with the appropriate competence. This can be assured by the use of organisations that are third party certificated, by a UKAS accredited certification body, specifically to carry out inspection and servicing of fire detection and fire alarm systems.

## **Periodic inspection and testing**

- The period between visits to undertake inspection and service should be based upon a risk assessment but the maximum period between visits should not exceed six months
- The log book should be inspected
- A visual inspection should be made to check whether structural or occupancy changes have been made that require changes to the fire detection and fire alarm system.
- False alarm records should be checked and relevant action taken if necessary
- Batteries should be checked and tested
- Control panel functions should be checked and tested
- Fire alarm devices should be tested
- Facilities for automatic transmission of alarm signals to an alarm receiving centre (ARC) should be checked after advising the ARC of the proposed actions
- All fault indicators and circuits should be tested and checked
- Printers should be tested
- Other checks and tests recommended by the manufacturer should be carried out
- Outstanding defects should be reported and the logbook completed and servicing certificate issued.
- The recommended period between successive inspection and servicing visits should not exceed six months.

## **Quarterly inspection of vented batteries**

- Vented batteries should be examined by a person with relevant competence and should be topped up if necessary

## **Inspection and test of a system over a 12 month period**

- The switch mechanism of every manual call point should be tested
- Every automatic fire detector should be examined and functionally tested. This includes, but is not limited to; smoke detectors, resettable heat detectors, optical beam smoke detectors, aspirating fire detection systems, carbon monoxide fire detectors and flame detectors
- All fire alarm devices (both visual and audible) should be tested
- Certain filament lamps should be replaced
- Radio fire detection and fire alarm system signal strengths should be checked
- Visual inspection of readily accessible cable fixings should be undertaken
- The cause and effect programme should be checked
- The standby power supply capacity should be checked
- Other annual checks and tests recommended by the system component manufacturers should be undertaken
- Outstanding defects should be reported and the servicing certificate issued.

- As this is labour-intensive servicing, it is recommended that the work can be spread over two or more service visits during each twelve-month period

### **Non-routine attention**

The arrangements in the above section, inspection and servicing are intended to maintain the system in operation under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, the fire alarm system is likely to require non-routine attention, including special maintenance. Non-routine maintenance includes:

- special inspection of an existing fire alarm system when a new servicing organization takes over servicing the system;
- repair of faults or damage;
- modification to take account of extensions, alterations, changes in occupancy or false alarms;
- action to address an unacceptable rate of false alarms;
- inspection and test of the system following a fire.

Any false alarm investigation and subsequent modifications to the system must take into the guidance provided in BS5839. Any organisation undertaking false alarm investigations and related remedial work should be able to demonstrate their competence to undertake such work. As a guide the measures to limit false alarms are divided into eight groups:

- Siting and selection of manual call points
- Selection and siting of automatic fire detectors
- Selection of system type
- Protection against electromagnetic interference
- Performance monitoring of newly commissioned systems
- Filtering measures
- System management
- Regular servicing and maintenance

### **(ii) Emergency Lighting**

To test an emergency lighting system, a mains power failure on the normal lighting circuit / circuits or individual luminaries must be simulated. This will force the emergency lighting system to operate via the battery supply. This test can be carried out manually or automatically.

## **Manual testing**

A simulated mains failure can be achieved by providing a switch to isolate all lighting circuits / individual circuits / individual luminaires. If manual testing is utilised, the following points should be considered:

In a system with a single switch for the whole building or a large circuit, after simulating the mains failure it is necessary for the tester to walk the whole building or circuit, to check all emergency luminaire are operating correctly. After restoring the mains supply, the whole building or circuit must be walked again, to check that the emergency lights are recharging.

If the emergency luminaires are individually switched, only a single walk around the building will be needed. However, the test switches could spoil the decor of the building and they must be of a type that is tamper proof. After the tests, it is recommended that the performance of the system is logged in the fire safety logbook.

## **Automatic testing**

If the costs of an engineer's time and the disruption caused by manual testing are excessive, self-testing emergency lighting should be considered. These units automatically replicate a power cut, checking their own circuitry and functionality and should a fault be found create both a visual and audible warning. Different formats are available to match particular site requirements. However, the results of the monthly and annual tests must still be recorded.

## **General information about emergency lighting testing**

BS EN 50172:2004 / BS 5266-8:2004 (Emergency escape lighting systems) specifies the minimum provision and testing of emergency lighting for different premises. Additional information on servicing can be found in BS 5266-1: 2011 (Code of practice for the emergency lighting of premises).

The system should include adequate facilities for testing the system condition. These need to be appropriate for the specific site and should be considered as part of the system design. Discussions with the user or system designer should identify the calibre and reliability of staff available to do the testing and the level of difficulty in performing the test

Discharge tests need to be undertaken outside normal working hours. In buildings that are permanently occupied, the test should be phased so only alternate luminaires are tested.

When automatic testing devices (self-testing emergency lights) are used, the information shall be recorded monthly and annually. For all other systems, the tests shall be carried out as described below and the results recorded.

Regular servicing is essential. The occupier / owner of the premises shall appoint a competent person to supervise servicing of the system. This person shall be given sufficient authority to ensure the carrying out of any work necessary to maintain the system in correct operational mode.

### **Routine inspections and tests**

Where national regulations do not apply, the following shall be met:

Due to the possibility of a failure of the normal lighting supply occurring shortly after a period of testing of the emergency lighting system or during the subsequent recharge period, all full duration tests shall, wherever possible, be undertaken just before a time of low risk to allow for battery recharge. Alternatively, suitable temporary arrangements shall be made until the batteries have been recharged.

The following minimum inspections and tests shall be carried out at the intervals recommended below. The regulating authority may require specific tests.

### **Daily emergency lighting inspection (only for central back-up systems)**

This check only applies to emergency lighting systems with one central back-up battery system. In this case, there is a daily visual inspection of indicators on the central power supply to identify that the system is operational. No test of operation is required. This test does not apply to emergency lighting with self-contained back-up batteries in each unit (standard emergency lighting).

### **Monthly emergency lighting tests**

All emergency lighting systems must be tested monthly. The test is a short functional test in accordance with BS EN 50172:2004 / BS 5266-8:2004.

The period of simulated failure should be sufficient for the purpose of this test while minimising damage to the system components, e.g. lamps. During this period, all luminaires and signs shall be checked to ensure that they are present, clean and functioning correctly. Note any defects and get repaired immediately. Record your results in your fire safety logbook.

### **Annually**

A test for the full rated duration of the emergency lights (e.g. 3 hours) must be carried out. The emergency lights must still be working at the end of this test.

The result must be recorded and, if failures are detected, these must be remedied as soon as possible.

### **(iii) Fire Extinguishers**

Extinguishers in commercial or public buildings should be visually inspected monthly for damage and must be serviced to BS 5306-3:2009 once a year. Water, foam and powder extinguishers have to be discharged and refilled every five years. Co2 extinguishers must be refurbished after ten years.

One exception, however, are the kite-marked P50 maintenance-free extinguishers which only need refurbishment after ten years and do not require maintenance within the first ten year period (other than the monthly visual inspection and a recorded yearly visual inspection by the owners).

In general, the manufacturer's instructions will tell you what you need to do to keep your extinguisher in good working order.

Extinguishers must be recharged according to the manufacturer's instructions following any level of discharge, even if only partial.

For inspection and maintenance of fire extinguishers you should use a company registered by the British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE)

BAFE is an independent third party registration body for the fire protection industry. For more than 25 years they have been developing schemes for UKAS accredited certification bodies to assess and approve companies to recognised standards.

BAFE's objective is to bring to the marketplace a registration scheme for products or services within the fire protection industry, for which third party certification has been considered appropriate.

BAFE by adopting this principle helps the end user, whether this is a member of the public, industry, specifier or regulator to find their way through the maze of different schemes which proliferate within the industry.

All BAFE schemes have one underlying factor, that is ISO9001 or an equivalent Quality Management system and a published technical prescription to which organisations, products and services can be independently assessed.

All of the certification bodies BAFE works with are United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) approved with a scope and experience to work within the fire protection industry.

Contact details:

British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE)

The Fire Service College, London Road, Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 0RH

Tel: 0844 335 0897

Fax: 01608 653359

Email: [info@bafe.org.uk](mailto:info@bafe.org.uk)

## How Fire Extinguishers should be serviced

Fire extinguishers should be regularly serviced to ensure they remain in good working order and function correctly should they be needed.

It is the responsibility of a business owner or responsible person for a building to ensure that extinguishers are serviced in accordance to the BS 5306-3:2009. This does not apply to maintenance-free P50 fire extinguishers.

### Stored Pressure Fire Extinguishers

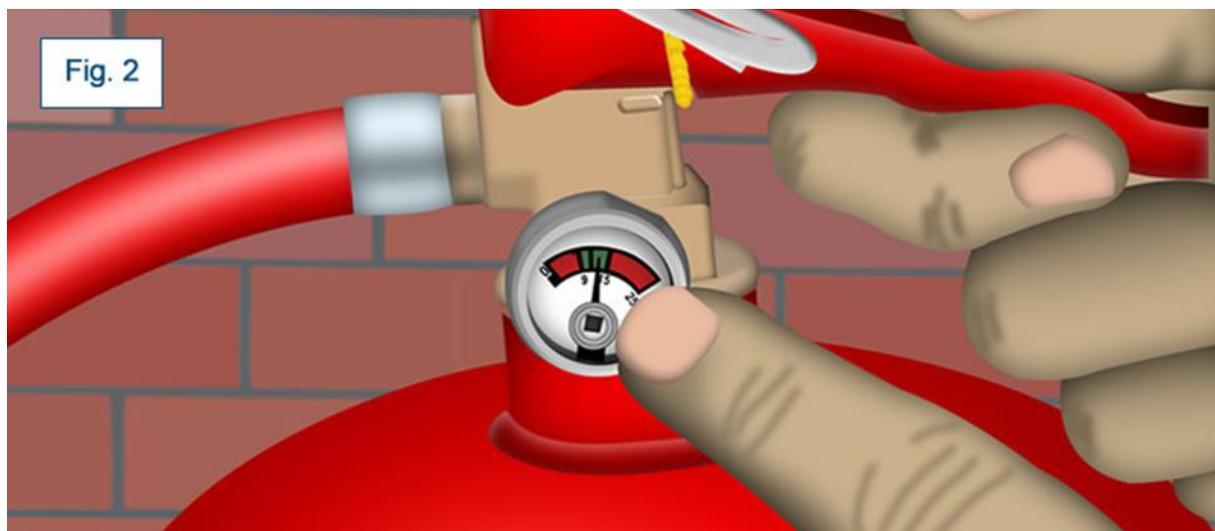
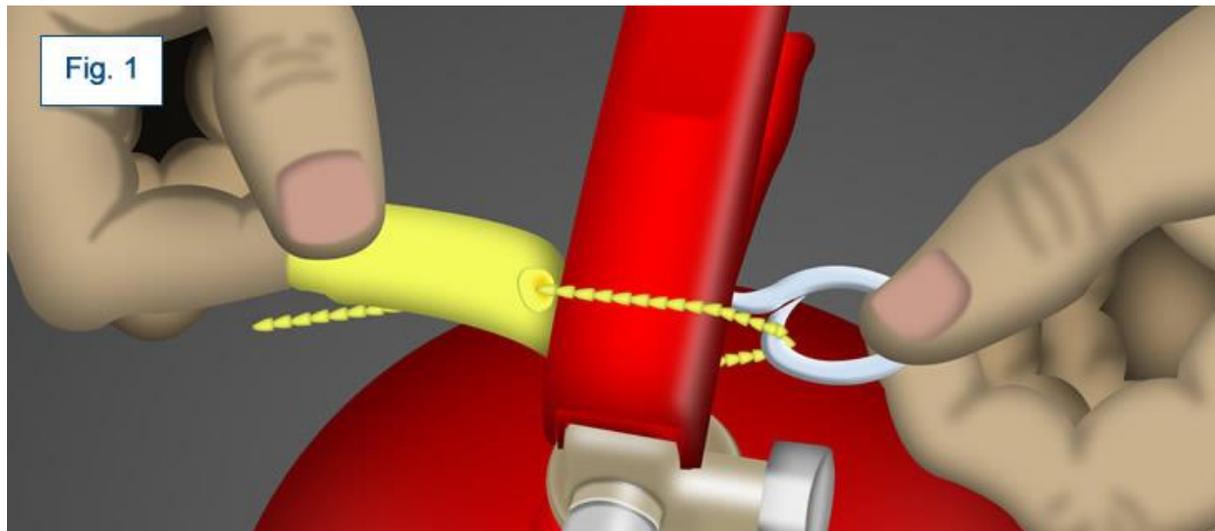
Stored pressure fire extinguishers contain the extinguisher agent (water, powder, foam, CO<sub>2</sub>, etc.) and the pressurising gas (dry air or oxygen-free nitrogen) in the same cylinder.

- (1)** Before moving the extinguisher, check that the safety pin/clip and tamper seal are in place (**Fig. 1**) and that the extinguisher has not been operated (if this is not the case, then make the fire extinguisher safe before going any further by fitting a safety pin and tamper seal)
- (2)** Check the extinguisher service label, if the extended service is not due then proceed.
- (3)** Visually inspect the fire extinguisher body for external corrosion or damage that could impair the safe operation of the extinguisher, in particular check the head cap. If this is made from plastic, check for UV degradation.
- (4)** Ensure that the manufacturer's extinguisher labelling is in good condition, legible and correctly filled out.
- (5)** Weigh the extinguisher ensuring that it meets the weight recorded on the service label (Investigation and recharge is required if a weight loss exceeds 10%).
- (6)** Verify the pressure gauge indicator is in the green zone of the gauge (**Fig. 2**). Verify that the gauge is in working order by carrying out a gauge test with a pump gauge tester or pin test. **(This step is not applicable for CO<sub>2</sub> fire extinguishers)**
- (7)** Remove the discharge hose from the extinguisher head cap, check the hose and nozzle for damage and ensure that the hose is clear from obstruction (**Fig. 3**). Remove the hose 'O' ring and replace if applicable.
- (8)** Break the tamper seal by withdrawing the safety pin/clip. In the case of a metal pin; check that it is in good condition. Refit/replace the safety pin/clip and then secure in place with a tamper seal.
- (9)** Any 'O' rings where components have been disassembled must be replaced.
- (10)** Wipe down the extinguisher exterior with a cloth.

**(11)** Fill in the details required on the service label (date, weight, engineer initials and next service date).

**(12)** If applicable, ensure that the wall mountings are secure before mounting the extinguisher back in position

**(13)** If there is a sign above the extinguisher check that it is appropriate and is in good condition





### **Cartridge operated Extinguishers**

Cartridge operated extinguishers contain the extinguisher agent (water, foam, powder, CO<sub>2</sub> etc.) in the main cylinder (this is not pressurised) and a separate gas cartridge containing highly pressurised CO<sub>2</sub>. Once the handle is squeezed the CO<sub>2</sub> cartridge is pierced releasing the pressure into the main cylinder.

- (1)** Before moving the extinguisher, check that the safety pin/clip and tamper seal are in place and that the extinguisher has not been operated (if this is not the case, then make the fire extinguisher safe before going any further by fitting a safety pin and tamper seal).
- (2)** Check the extinguisher service label, if the extended service is not due then proceed.
- (3)** Visually inspect the fire extinguisher body for external corrosion or damage that could impair the safe operation of the extinguisher, in particular check the head cap. If this is made from plastic, check for UV degradation.
- (4)** Ensure that the manufacturer's extinguisher labelling is in good condition, legible and correctly filled out.
- (5)** Weigh the extinguisher ensuring that it meets the weight recorded on the service label (Investigation and recharge is required if a weight loss exceeds 10%).
- (6)** Unscrew the head cap assembly to not more than one third of extent necessary for full disengagement – this allows any pressure remaining in the extinguisher to escape through the automatic means of venting. Then continue to open the extinguisher slowly.
- (7)** Remove the extinguisher head cap away from the extinguisher body.
- (8)** Examine the head cap and operating mechanism for damage.

**(9)** Examine the gas cartridge and if safe to do so, remove the cartridge from the head cap. Visually inspect the gas cartridge for corrosion or damage – in either case replace the cartridge in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

**(10)** Check if the gas cartridge is more than 10 years old – otherwise replace it.

**(11)** Check weigh the mass of the gas cartridge against that marked on the gas cartridge body. Although a tolerance of -10% (15% for cartridges with contents less than 30 grams) is allowed it is good practice to replace it if it has lost weight.

**(12)** Remove the safety pin/clip and tamper seal from the head cap. Check for free movement of the safety pin/clip and replace if necessary. Check that the operating lever freely operates and is not damaged.

**(13)** Check that the firing pin is in place and operates correctly.

**(14)** Check that the discharge hose, hose nozzle, dip tube and strainer are free from obstructions and damage. Pass air through the discharge hose, dip tube and strainer, checking for blockages and correct operation.

**(15)** Examine the pressure release slots in the head cap threads – clean as necessary.

**(16)** Fit a new head cap 'O' ring.

**(17)** Fit a new discharge hose 'O' ring.

**(18)** Assemble the head cap, discharge hose, dip tube and gas cartridge together and put to one side so that the extinguisher body and contents can be dealt with.

**(19)** Empty the contents of the extinguisher into a clean container. Inspect the extinguisher medium to make sure that it is fit for re-use. If the medium is not fit for re-use then dispose of accordingly. All medium should be kept clean and free from debris at all times. Powder medium should be kept clean and dry and away from moisture.

**(20)** Examine the extinguisher body internally using a torch to check for corrosion and damage to the internal lining (powder extinguishers do not have lining).

**(21)** Return the original medium or fresh medium to the extinguisher – always adhere to manufacturer's specifications.

**(22)** Refit the head cap and tighten down firmly.

**(23)** Weigh the extinguisher total mass.

**(24)** Wipe down the extinguisher exterior with a cloth.

**(25)** Fill in the details required on the service label (date, weight, engineer initials and next service date).

**(26)** If applicable, ensure that the wall mountings are secure before mounting the extinguisher back in position.

**(27)** If there is a sign above the extinguisher check that it is appropriate and is in good condition.