

Fire Safety

Policy

The Occupational Health and Safety Ordinance (Cap 509A, 1997) and the Building Ordinance require that all the means of escape from each workplace is accessible, unobstructed and maintained at all times.

Furthermore, the Fire Services Ordinance places obligations on the University to provide and maintain fire warning, detection and extinguishing systems and to ensure that in event of fire a well drilled evacuation takes place.

Responsibilities

Department Heads must:

- ensure that all escape routes i.e. doors and routes to those doors (corridors, internal passageways) are kept unlocked, unobstructed and free from congestion.
- appoint a sufficient number of fire wardens to ensure, in event of alarm, all personnel in the heads' area of responsibility respond immediately and evacuate.
- ensure that all staff and students know of the fire evacuation procedure and the location of the fire assembly point.

Fire Wardens should:

- assist in the evacuation of premises;
- identify any fire safety hazards & report them to the Head;
- liaise with the Fire Team of the Safety Office on issues of fire safety.
- Remind colleagues at regular intervals of the fire evacuation procedure.

Estates Office will:

- in all new developments, refurbishments and change of use of accommodation ensure that the means of escape requirements are met and that appropriate fire detection, warning and extinguishing systems are installed.
- provide supervision and control of contractors to ensure their practices take account of fire risks
- consult the Safety Office on all matters relating to fire safety or fire service installations

Safety Office will:

- ensure that all Fire Service Installations (FSI's) are in good working order by arranging annual tests and inspections;
- organize fire drills annually for all University Buildings;
- identify the most suitable locations for fire assembly points;

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- provide fire safety and fire extinguisher training for relevant personnel.
- ensure fire action signs and fire safety plans are kept up to date.

Supervisory Staff must:

- in the event of an alarm, immediately stop work and instruct students to evacuate immediately (this includes lecturers teaching at the time for they are responsible for students in their charge).

The Dean of Students will:

- ensure that all caterers on campus fulfill the fire safety requirements of the University and cooperate with the Safety Office and HKU Security during fire evacuation drills.

Wardens and Hall Managers must:

- ensure the hall has a fire evacuation plan and personnel are appointed to assist.
- ensure all students evacuate when the alarm sounds.
- ensure hall staff are trained and aware of their responsibilities in event of fire alarm and fire.

Students and University Staff must:

- stop what they are doing and evacuate the building immediately on hearing the fire alarm and proceed to the assembly point.

Warning: It is a criminal offence for any person who interferes with or damages fire safety provisions e.g. using extinguishers for inappropriate purposes, covering up fire detector heads etc. In such cases the University will take a very serious view of the offenders.

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Guidance

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1. Management

1.1 Organisation

The Safety Office has within its organization a Fire Team whose primary role is to inspect, test & maintain the fire service installations (F.S.I.'s) provided in all University buildings.

F.S.I.'s include fire alarms, fire detection systems, sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, fire extinguishing systems, fire exit signs, fire hydrant systems, etc. Where additional expertise is required registered Fire Contractors are employed to assist.

The members of Fire Team together with Senior Management of the Safety Office also have a significant role in the following areas:

- to examine & review at the design stage proposed fire service installations of both renovation work & new developments.
- to recommend & advise on the selection of F.S.I.'s since by maintaining & testing installations the fire team can recognize potential problems.
- to examine & review renovation & maintenance project proposals to ensure the actual work does not jeopardize the fire safety of remaining occupants and also to ensure the works themselves do not result in the compromisation of existing means of escape.
- to carry out inspections to identify fire hazards and to ensure means of escape are maintained free of obstruction.

The Estates Office is responsible for one of the greatest fire risks of all: contractors. Estates

Office staff are charged with the responsibility to ensure that contractors work with due care and attention, adhere to the fire safety requirements of the University and do not create unacceptable fire risks. Furthermore Estates Office liaise with the Safety Office to ensure that false alarms are kept to a minimum since contractors work can easily initiate alarms.

In new projects Fire Safety is a prime requirement and Estates Office staff provide information, drawings plans and proposals to the Safety Office for its expert comment.

In drawing up proposals Estates Office staff have the responsibility to:

- (a) ensure that new projects, renovations & maintenance works themselves do not increase the risk of fire to the remaining occupants of the building/floor.
- (b) ensure adequate consideration is given in the design of new projects so that for example dead ends with one single route to escape are minimized, travel distances to protected stairwells do not exceed the legal limit, existing means of escape are compromised, etc.

The Office of Student Affairs has responsibilities for the catering outlets on campus. Whilst the Safety Office often has direct contact with the catering management the Office of Student Affairs, being the direct managing unit, have an obligation to ensure caterers meet their fire safety obligations and co-operate fully with the Safety Office and HKU Security when evacuation drills take place.

Fire Wardens are appointed by Departments to assist the Department Heads in meeting their

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legal duties and the requirements of the Fire Safety Policy. Their most significant role is during fire evacuations where their timely support of the evacuation signal can make a great difference in otherwise often disinterested response to the fire alarm.

1.2 Fire Safety Systems

The University is provided with a high level of fire protection and the systems in place are continually being up-graded and replaced in line with developments.

All buildings are provided with fire alarms, the sound of which is common across campus. Furthermore hose reels are standard fitting.

The majority of buildings are also fitted with sprinkler systems and those few that are not, are gradually being retrofitted with these systems.

Smoke & heat detector systems are also present in some buildings but these are being removed as sprinkler systems are being installed.

In event of any of the automatic or manual fire systems operating the alarm bells will ring and an electrical signal will be instantly sent both to HKU Security Centre and the HK Government's Fire Services Department.

2. Action in Event of Fire (Fire Alarm)

- The basic instructions on what to do in event of fire are listed on the "Action in case of fire" notices which are printed in both Chinese & English and are located at all fire points and other locations where this advice is considered useful ([Appendix I](#)). (Scaled down versions are shown.)



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In all cases the appropriate assembly point is entered into the appropriate blank space (for list of current assembly points please see [Appendix II](#)).

2. The evacuation signal is a continuous ringing alarm, which in some buildings is supported by red flashing lights.
3. To encourage occupants to evacuate buildings in event of an alarm, Fire Wardens are appointed to assist in the evacuation. The reinforcement of an "official" for occupants to leave has been shown to be very effective and their intervention significantly reduces evacuation times which could save lives. The Fire Wardens have other duties too to assist in prevention of fire. ([Appendix III](#))
4. Certain groups of individuals who have a higher probability of exposure to fire (synthetic chemists) and freshmen in halls are given a brief introduction on the use of fire extinguishers. The fire team make it explicitly clear that only in cases where the individual feels confident and has ease of escape should any attempt be made to use an extinguisher to extinguish a fire. If results are not immediately successful individuals are told to withdraw.
5. Whilst alarms can be activated automatically anyone discovering a fire should immediately rush to the closest fire point and break the front glass of the manual call point. This action will release the mechanisms and cause the bell to ring, the fire pumps to start and alert HKU Security and HKFSD.

6. On discovering of a fire it is also highly recommended that the finder calls 999 to give more details/information to the HKFSD.
7. On receipt of an alarm, HKU Security will inform the Safety Office which will dispatch staff primarily to assist the HKFSD to find the source of alarm and seat of fire. (HKU Fire Team do NOT act as a fire brigade).
8. On arrival of the HKFSD the fire officer takes charge of the situation but will seek help from those with 'local' knowledge (the Fire Team, Estates Office and staff of the department concerned).
9. The bells will continue to ring during the HKFSD investigations and will only stop on the instruction of the officer-in-charge.
10. Staff can re-enter the building once instructed by HKFSD, Safety Office or HK Security, depending on who is present at the time.
11. After a fire alarm or fire incident Fire Wardens are required to complete the Report on Evacuation Form ([Appendix IV](#)) to assist Safety Office in the assessment of the evacuation and fire alarm system.

3. Evacuation of Disabled People

In event of alarm, assistance should be offered to those who are not able to use the escape stairs easily or who would hinder the escape of the other occupants of the building. Fire Wardens should make plans in advance to cater for such a situation.

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In such a situation HKFSD have advised:

- (1) The disabled individual be escorted to a place of fire safety (lift lobby, fire stair well, etc.) where the protection offered by fire resisting doors etc. can offer a safe temporary refuge.
- (2) That one person stay with the individual for support and reassurance.
- (3) That another person informs the fire office responding to the scene that assistance is required to assist in the evacuation.
- (4) On receipt of this message HKFSD advise that their priority on arrival would be to rescue the disabled individual.



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Appendix I:

Fire Action Signs ([English](#) version and [Chinese](#) version)

Appendix II

[HKU Fire Assembly Points](#)

Appendix III

The Role of Fire Wardens ([English](#) version and [Chinese](#) version)

Appendix IV

Report on Fire/Emergency Evacuation/Drill ([English](#) version and [Chinese](#) version)

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