FIRE SAFETY

Fire can have devastating consequences and destroy a property in minutes. We have one chance to escape and keep ourselves and the service user/patient safe. It is vital all staff understand how to avoid fires from starting, or be able to escape safely if fires occur.

What is the role and responsibilities of a Health Care Worker in case of fire?

To maintain good housekeeping, keep escape routes clear, floors free of trip hazards, empty waste regularly, report any concerns immediately.

What are the legal requirements of a Health Care Worker in case of fire?

Your employer has a legal duty to keep you protect you and your service user/patient from harm. There will be a fire risk assessment detailing how they plan to do this. There will be fire extinguishers that are regularly maintained.

It is your responsibility to follow the policies and procedures of both Thornbury Nursing Services and the Trust you are assigned to.

What are the main aims of a Health Care Worker in case of fire?

To work in a way that minimises the risk of fire within the workplace. However, In the event of a fire to keep yourself safe, if possible with no risk to your own health assist others to safety.

Be aware of fire procedure

On the first day at any new workplace always find out the fire procedure. If you are in the community visually check where the exits are and that they are clear. Know your Service user/patients limits and be aware of the action you can take to keep yourself and the service user/patient safe. Please note some service user/patients may be unable to leave the building, if this is the case make sure you know exactly where they are in the building. Ask them not to move, unless absolutely necessary, as you will tell the fire brigade exactly where they are, and close the doors to the room they are in.

Some service user’s who are unable to leave the building independently have fire evacuation plans, these have been written by the fire service and will be located in the service user’s care plan, ensure you familiarise yourself with this document at the beginning of each shift.

If you hear the alarm go quickly and safely without running to the nearest exit and meet at the assembly point. Assist those that are able to walk with you at a safe, reasonable pace. NEVER use a lift or stair lift, always use the stairs. Wait for further instruction from the designated fire officer/Marshall.

How do fires start?

Fires need three elements, these are:

- Fuel
- Heat
• Oxygen

**Fuel:** can consist of paper, oil, wood, gases, liquids, plastics, rubber, paint, carpets, bedding, bins etc.

**Heat:** To start fires require heat. Sources of heat could be matches, lighters, free standing heaters, electrical equipment or switches etc.

**Oxygen:** Is in the air that we breathe so readily available.

When the fire is starved of one or more of these elements it will go out.

**How to sound the alarm?**

Throughout the building you will have break glass points. If you suspect a fire locate the nearest one and push it to break the glass and activate the alarm. It is better to activate by mistake than to wait, as fire spreads very quickly and we don’t get any second chances. Let others know when you are on your way by shouting “FIRE”.

Smoke and heat detectors will also be in the building and will be activated and raise the alarm if they detect smoke or heat.

**How can I prevent a fire hazard?**

Good housekeeping is important in fire prevention. Ensure bins are emptied regularly, and items are all stored correctly and areas are free from clutter. Do not wedge open fire doors, and ensure automatically closing fire doors are able to close and there are no obstructions.

Smoking should only take place in designated areas and there should be metal ashtrays that are emptied regularly. Some service user/patients may need to be monitored whilst smoking if their risk assessments have determined they may pose a risk.

**Reporting & Recording**

Every member of staff should be involved in at least 2 fire drills per year. There will be a fire risk assessment folder and details of checks are to be recorded in the folder, along with any false alarms and actual fires.
Fire drills – the most senior person in charge will record what went well and what needs to be improved and feedback to the staff. For example if all staff followed the procedure, how long it took to evacuate the building and any expectations and improvements for future drills.

**Fire Extinguishers**

Never use an extinguisher unless you are:

• Competent and trained to do so
• The fire is small
• The fire is blocking your escape route

Fire extinguishers are all colour coded. Newer ones are all red with a band of colour depending on their contents, older ones are all one colour based on their contents.
### Colour of Extinguisher | Content | Use on
--- | --- | ---
All red or red with a band of red | Water | Wood, paper, textiles
All black or red with a band of black | Carbon Dioxide (co2) | Flammable liquids and live electrical fires
All cream or red with a band of cream | Foam | Wood, paper, textiles
All blue or red with a band of blue | Dry Powder | All fires

**Gas leak**

If you suspect a gas leak, turn off the gas. Ensure there are no naked flames and do not use any electrical switches or appliances. Call the gas supplier and ventilate the room. Do not use your mobile phone in the area of the gas leak. Always record and report the incident.

**Arson**

Arson is the act of starting a fire deliberately. We can reduce the risk of this by ensuring that any waste left outside a property is safely contained and out of site. Good security, lighting, fencing and vigilant staff who report suspicious people and concerns immediately all help to reduce the risk.

**Signage**

Throughout the building that will be signage to show the fire exits. These will be green in colour and show the quickest way to escape the building. The assembly point outside the building will also have a sign that is green.

Signs that display where the equipment should be kept and how to use it are red.

If an item is flammable it will have a sign with a flame on it, regardless of its content e.g. solid, gas etc.

Mandatory information signs will be blue with a white background.

Prohibition signs are red with a white background.

**VIDEOS**

Fire safety at home: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89Uc-8s-jWk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89Uc-8s-jWk)

Risk Assessment for Health & Safety in the Care Home: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yH1lqiJm2hs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yH1lqiJm2hs)

Lifeways Community Care DVD Clip - Fire Prevention: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeX8zP2wnLY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeX8zP2wnLY)

Fire Safety in Healthcare Premises: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2IP-KJRYwk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2IP-KJRYwk)

**USEFUL WEBSITES**

Fire safety advice: [http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety](http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety)

Fire Protection Association: [https://www.thefpa.co.uk/fpa_home/](https://www.thefpa.co.uk/fpa_home/)

London Fire Brigade: [http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/FireSafety.asp](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/FireSafety.asp)


HSE Fire Safety: [http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm)

**REFERENCES**


