



NHS in Scotland

**A Model Management Structure
for Fire Safety**



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1. About this document

This document provides guidance to the NHS in Scotland on Fire Safety Management for premises occupied by healthcare bodies constituting the NHS in Scotland.

NHS in Scotland is indebted to Mr K. Isaacs and other staff of the Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh, for their help in providing the original document from which this guidance has been derived.

The following Trusts and Health Boards have also provided help and information in determining this guidance:

East and Midlothian NHS Trust
Grampian Healthcare NHS Trust
Hairmyres & Stonehouse Hospitals NHS Trust
Kirkcaldy Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
Monklands Hospital NHS Trust
Perth & Kinross Healthcare NHS Trust
Raigmore Hospital NHS Trust
The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh NHS Trust
Shetland Health Board
Western Isles Health Board
West Lothian NHS Trust

P & EEx
December, 1999



2. Background and Introduction

- 2.1 The Fire Safety Policy documents from the Scottish Executive, Health Department no longer provide guidance on Nominated Officers (fire), due, in the main, to the separation of Departmental Policy and Operational Guidance. This document bridges the gap and goes further by providing a generic fire safety regime model to assist Trusts, etc. with accountability and responsibility. Trusts should take account of the recent changes in emphasis towards risk based assessments of the workplace. They should have in place a management structure which is cognisant of their duty of care, have realistic auditing criteria and can prove and demonstrate that a training regime is in place.
- 2.2 The management structure must be practical and functional, respecting both professional competency and the duty of care, to comply with the requirements and statutory obligations of Fire Precaution and Health and Safety legislation. It must also lay down basic principles with regard to job descriptions and training strategies based on practical and achievable targets.
- 2.3 Should Trusts decide to contract out to competent Providers, then the link between the Provider and the Trust, with regard to fire-related matters, should be by formal agreement in line with the above principles.
- 2.4 A Trust's Fire Safety Policy should be part of its overall Health and Safety Policy. If the Fire Safety Policy is separate, it should cover the following three areas:
- i. a statement of the principles of fire safety to be observed by the Trust, etc;
 - ii. the organisation required to carry out the policy, identifying those managers with specific responsibilities;
 - iii. the detailed arrangements for implementing the Fire Safety Policy.



3. The Three Levels of Fire Safety Management

Level 1 (see also page 16)

3.1 Chief Executive

The role of the Chief Executive within the fire safety strategy must be one of overall command and responsibility. The Chief Executive should manage the strategy through the Executive Board, in terms of the command structure, and ensure clear guidelines for those tasked with the compliance of legislative guidance and statutory standards.

3.2 Executive Director

The Executive Director (or in some cases a Senior Manager) should be responsible for:

- i. the overall strategy of the Trust in fire related matters;
- ii. the application of *NHS in Scotland Firecode*;
- iii. liaising with the Nominated Officer (fire) and Fire Safety Adviser to ensure the Trust's Fire Safety Policy is being understood and applied across all areas of the Trust, etc;
- iv. formulating, with the Nominated Officer (fire) and Fire Safety Adviser, a fire strategy compliance programme for both passive and active measures, in both existing buildings and new projects;
- v. ensuring that an annual Audit of Fire Precautions is undertaken.

3.3 Nominated Officer (fire)

The Nominated Officer (fire) is the key figure within the organisation, in terms of operational fire related matters, and should have a working knowledge of health and safety matters. It is recommended that the person filling this position will have sufficient responsibility and seniority to carry out a whole range of duties at the highest strategic level. Ideally, he or she should be a senior officer from within either the Estates Department or Facilities Management structure. He or she would be expected to have a global view of the Trust in terms of the engineering of fire fighting equipment, automatic fire detection systems, and planned preventive maintenance. He or she would also have responsibility for future development of both equipment and buildings, as well as being the head of any project team with regard to fire safety planning and development.



The Officer should have a nominated deputy or deputies depending on the Trust's size and number of sites. He or she should also have available, advice on technical matters from a specialised expert Fire Safety Adviser. This advice will also include how to liaise with both Fire Authorities and those with legislative responsibility for new buildings.

Level 2 (see also page 17)

3.4 Functional Head

At this level it is assumed that each Directorate within Trusts has either a Director or Functional Head with responsibility to control and organise subordinates. If the post is not to be at either Clinical Director or Department Head level, it should be a senior member of their staff.

Generally their duties would be:

- i. to control and manage their areas of responsibility with regard to fire policies;
- ii. to set down a system of work;
- iii. to have an overall view of staff training and Fire Marshal ratio factors;
- iv. to organise team briefing in relation to fire group meetings;
- v. to act as a Duty Officer within a rota-based scheme (see also paragraph 4.4).

Technical advice and guidance should be via the specialised Fire Safety Adviser who would attend fire group meetings on behalf of the Nominated Officer (fire), thereby creating a link between the Functional Heads and the Nominated Officer (fire) on day-to-day matters on fire safety, such as the control of unwanted fire signals, general training matters, fire drills, etc.

Level 3 (see also page 18)

3.5 Line Managers and/or Officers in Charge

Included within this generic group are Ward Sisters and Clinicians at main sites, as well as those in charge of remote sites and departments not within the main building complex. At large sites this would include Community Units for the Elderly (CUE) and Community and Rehabilitation Units for the Elderly (CRUE) operations as well as Health Centres and 'Drop in' Units; it would also encompass those who may work within areas which support core businesses, such as Laundry Managers. Within the main complex those who are responsible for specialist departments such as Intensive Care Units (ICU), Special Care Baby Units (SCBU) or Theatre Service Units (TSU) should be identified and their roles clearly set down.



Their main responsibilities include:

- i. the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy;
- ii. attendance at fire group meetings;
- iii. ensuring a staff training commitment, and organising and implementing fire drills and tests;
- iv. implementation and review of applicable fire safety risk assessments;
- v. accountability for ensuring staff training takes place;
- vi. training in staged evacuation procedures in patient areas and total evacuation in non-patient areas.

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4. Job Descriptions

General

- 4.1 Staff job descriptions should state what is relevant with regard to fire-related matters, the management structure of the Trust, Firecode compliance and competency. Overall duty of care within the Health and Safety Policy of the Trust is an integral part of management responsibility.

The integration of fire safety responsibilities, as described herein, into the existing job descriptions together with the general responsibilities for Health and Safety is important and should be undertaken formally. A training regime to equip management in those areas should be considered prior to the responsibilities being included.

Therefore there needs to be:

- i. a clear statement from the Executive Board on the importance of these duties in relation to fire in hospitals;
- ii. a training regime, which states in realistic terms the supportive training to be undertaken within given timescales;
- iii. cross mapping against a vocational qualification to give depth and meaning to the relevance of the training regime.

4.2 Nominated Officer (fire)

The Nominated Officer (fire) should, in association with the Fire Safety Adviser:

- i. liaise with the Deputy Nominated Officer (fire), and/or deputies, to ensure continuity of application of fire safety matters and to head any project team with regard to fire safety planning and development within their location;
- ii. after liaison with the Executive Director, ensure the application of *NHS in Scotland Firecode* throughout the Trust. This will include the control of a fire-related programme on both upgrading and refurbishment of existing sites, as well as for major alterations and new building projects;
- iii. establish a Fire Safety Policy with professional advice from the Fire Safety Adviser and ensure that it is being applied and being kept current on a day-to-day basis;
- iv. be sufficiently trained to co-ordinate and direct the actions of staff at a major incident;



- v. organise and audit a major incident emergency plan including the organisation of annual training exercises for response teams and other staff who are involved in patient evacuation;
- vi. ensure that all relevant reports and documents for compliance are submitted to the Executive Director to allow him/her to report to the Trust Board on fire safety strategy and policy compliance;
- vii. ensure a positive audit regime is organised and run to consolidate Fire Safety training and compliance;
- viii. ensure collation of the general training register;
- ix. ensure compliance with any relevant Fire Certificate, and the keeping of records connected with Certificates, etc;
- x. ensure the completion of Risk Assessments and Management Audits;
- xi. ensure that fire incidents involving death or serious injury are immediately reported to the Health and Safety Executive and also to Scottish Executive Health Department ME, together with any that cause damage on a large scale.

4.3 **Functional Head**

The Functional Head should:

- i. be responsible for the Line Managers and Officers in Charge in relation to fire safety management;
- ii. formally liaise with the Fire Safety Adviser and Nominated Officer (fire) or Deputy;
- iii. assisted by the Nominated Officer (fire) and Fire Safety Adviser, formulate specific fire safety policies for their area of management responsibility;
- iv. formulate documentation and training records for Line Managers and Officers in Charge to enable them to discharge their function at operational level;
- v. design and formulate a systems of work document in line with Health and Safety Policy which is part of, and a collation of, fire-related matters to be available at each workstation;
- vi. liaise with the Fire Safety Adviser on all relevant matters to ensure compliance with *NHS in Scotland Firecode*;
- vii. be trained to act as the Duty Officer (see also paragraph 4.4) in relation to fire emergencies at major sites. This duty is to be undertaken at remote sites by the Officer in Charge or relevant Manager.



4.4 **Duty Officer**

A Duty Officer should be nominated for each working shift throughout every twenty-four hour period.

It will be the responsibility of the Duty Officer to report to the central fire assembly point within the site, organise communications within the immediate fire area, and set up communications and staffing levels, should a full evacuation be required.

The Duty Officer should:

- i. ensure a suitable audit scheme is being implemented for fire safety within each department and ensure compliance with the *NHS in Scotland Firecode*;
- ii. organise and implement policies via fire group meetings;
- iii. ensure compliance with any relevant Fire Certificates including record keeping;
- iv. organise the frequency of fire group meetings and the agenda of these meetings.

4.5 **Line Managers and/or Officers in Charge**

Line Managers and Officers in Charge should:

- i. be responsible to the Functional Head;
- ii. understand and implement the Fire Safety Policy;
- iii. ensure that Fire Safety Policy documentation is available at all workstations and other relevant areas;
- iv. attend fire group meetings, as determined by the Functional Heads;
- v. ensure staff training is organised and recorded;
- vi. liaise with the Functional Head and Fire Safety Adviser to arrange and carry out fire drills;
- vii. ensure a staff commitment to the Fire Safety Policy and fire prevention within their workstation.

4.6 **Fire Marshals**

The Fire Marshals should:

- i. organise and assist in the fire prevention regime within workstations and other relevant areas;



- ii. co-ordinate an evacuation procedure within the immediate vicinity of the fire in the event of a major incident;
- iii. be trained to tackle fire by portable fire fighting media;
- iv. support the Line Managers in fire drills and tests.

4.7 Fire Safety Adviser

The Fire Safety Adviser should:

- i. provide specialist technical support in the interpretation and application of the provisions of statutory and mandatory requirements, *NHS in Scotland Firecode* and other officially sanctioned guidance in respect of fire safety in premises occupied by the Trust;
- ii. advise on the management of the initial and continuing responsibilities in respect of designated premises requiring Fire Certification under the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, and maintain the necessary provisions following certification, on behalf of management;
- iii. be involved in fire safety audits with Estates staff and contribute to periodic authoritative reports to management about the state of fire precautions in premises occupied by the Trust;
- iv. be involved with Estates staff and others in the identification and assessment of fire risks in healthcare premises, using the techniques of *NHS in Scotland Firecode*; assist with reports to management, recommending prioritised actions in respect of fire safety improvements;
- v. liaise with Estates staff and planning teams, and local Building Control Officers and Fire Authorities in the specification of fire precautions in new and existing premises;
- vi. prepare training programmes for all staff employed in premises occupied by the Trust, liaise with the Nominated Officer (fire) in the organisation of annual fire drills and staff training. They should witness the effectiveness, or otherwise, of fire drills and recommend remedial action when necessary, and arrange for accurate records of staff training and fire drills to be kept centrally, and at each workplace;
- vii. manage and supervise adequate provision, siting and effective maintenance of all fire fighting equipment, fire safety signs and notices;
- viii. keep accurate records of all fire incidents and fire investigations occurring in suspicious circumstances in conjunction with local Fire and Police Authorities and ensure that fire reports are forwarded to the Nominated Officer (fire);



- ix. ensure that the presence and activities of contractors working on site are reported to them prior to the commencement of work, check they have a Permit to Work and take effective steps to ensure that their activities do not subvert fire precautions in existing premises;
- x. manage the work of assistant fire advisers and other fire prevention staff where necessary;
- xi. work in co-ordination with Facilities and Estates technical staff.

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5. Training Regimes and Modules

Training: General

- 5.1 Some Trusts have experienced difficulties with training over a number of years and in reality the Fire Safety Policy guidance which states that all members of staff should receive annual training is not always achieved.

It is important that training is both meaningful and relevant. The need to ensure that training is clear and cross-mapped against aims and objectives also has a place in the delivery of *NHS in Scotland Firecode*.

As training providers, The Fire Service College feel that those at strategic level require specialist training, which by its very nature, is likely to be outside a healthcare organisation's capability. However, the whole spectrum of the subject when viewed at a lower level can easily be achieved from within the organisation. It is the opinion of The Fire Service College that the need to train all staff in every aspect of fire safety on a yearly basis can be reduced significantly, provided a full risk assessment has been carried out in relation to optimising the number of specifically trained personnel and those tasked with carrying out an evacuation procedure in the event of fire.

Training Modules

The Fire Service College proposes the following training modules.

- 5.2 **Induction Training for Staff**

Induction training specifically aimed at fire-related subjects needs to be carried out at Trust level, and must include workstation fire advice for any part-time or casual staff such as bank nurses. The induction training should include general fire safety advice and methodology for evacuation, particularly at major sites. Trained staff with an understanding of fire prevention standards will reduce the risk of fires in premises occupied by Trusts.

- 5.3 **Module 1
Nominated Officer and Deputy level**

This module is specifically aimed at Nominated Officers (fire) and their Deputies. It should include the technical guidance applicable to healthcare buildings as well as evacuation planning and auditing, together with knowledge of risk assessment. It is possible that this training could be assessable and attract a career development vocational qualification.



**5.4 Module 2
Functional Manager and Deputy level**

At a strategic level, Functional Managers and their deputies may require training in fire safety philosophy and technical guidance in how to prepare fire plans and systems of work, together with the organising and planning of fire drills, in consultation with the Fire Safety Advisor & Nominated Officer (fire).

**5.5 Module 3
Line Managers, Officers in Charge and Deputies**

Line Managers and Officers in Charge together with their deputies are required to underpin the requirements of the Function Heads and should be given special training on taking up their appointment. In-house training could then be given on an on-going basis, in the application of fire strategy, evacuation and Fire Marshal training.

**5.6 Module 4
Fire Marshals**

Fire Marshal training involves fire fighting and evacuation procedures; this training could be carried out by Trusts. Fire Marshals can provide assistance on health and safety matters as well as acting as a contact point for staff with fire prevention concerns.

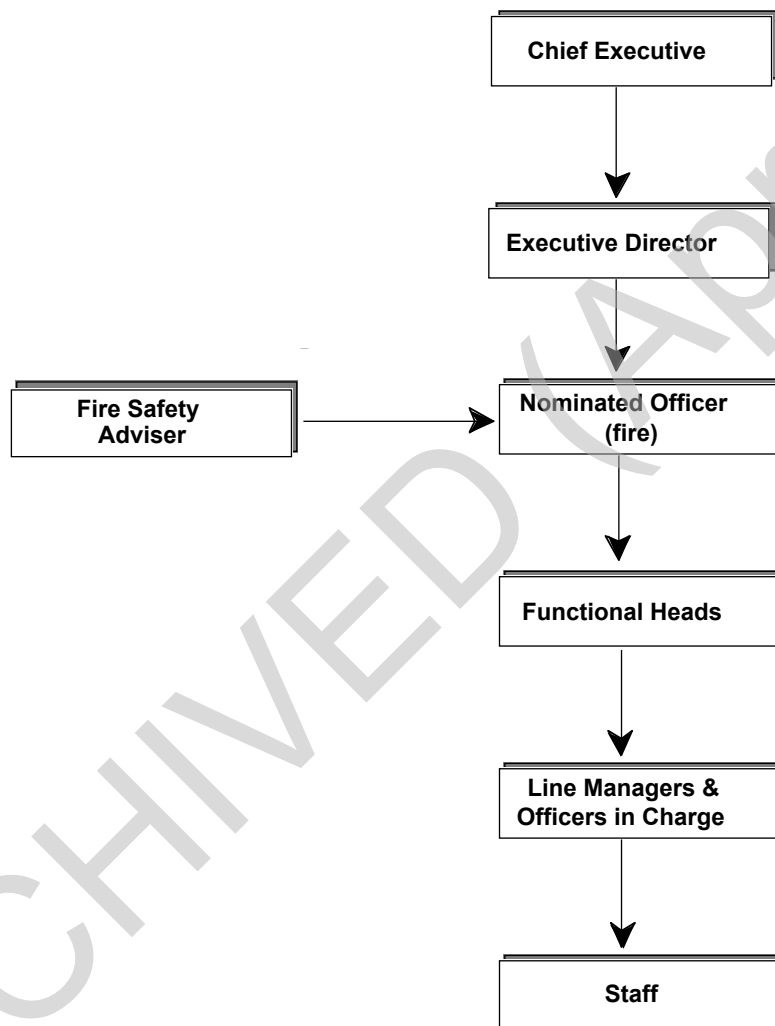
5.7 Specialist training

Specific relevant training should be given to those within specialist areas of the Trust (i.e. Intensive Care Units and Special Care Baby Units), who have a clear defined responsibility above that which is expected at, for example, ward level. Given the specialist nature of some of the support departments within large hospital complexes, the need to identify these sites and ensure that training is appropriate will be within the remit of the Fire Safety Adviser.



Appendix 1

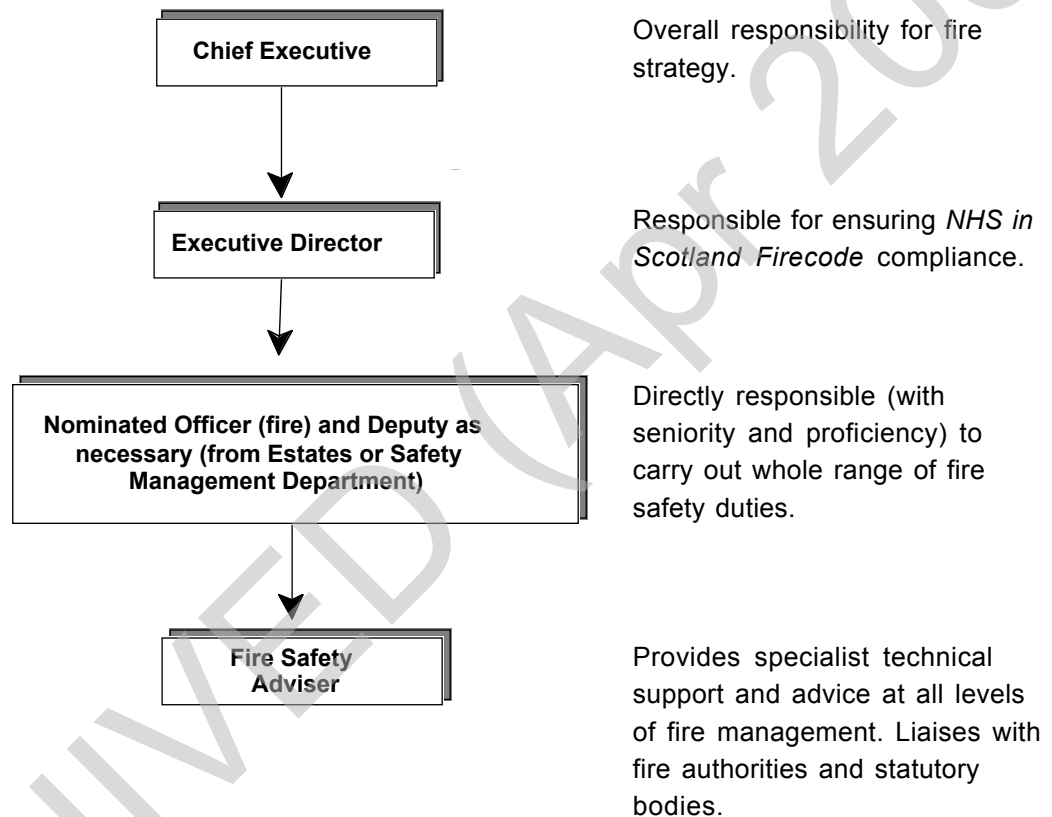
Management Staff Structure for Fire Safety Management





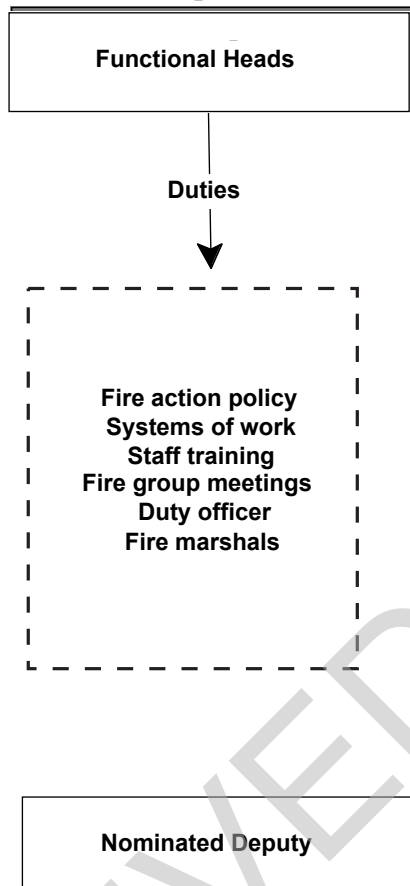
Appendix 2

Staff Levels for Fire Safety Management Level 1 of 3





Appendix 2 cont:
Staff Levels for Fire Safety Management
Level 2 of 3



Liaise with Nominated Officer (fire) with directions of Fire Safety Policy, systems of work and training regimes, also liaise with Fire Safety Adviser via fire group meetings for training delivery.

Officers in charge of satellite buildings and specialist sites.



Appendix 2 cont:
Staff Levels for Fire Safety Management
Level 3 of 3

**Line Managers and/or
Officers in Charge**

Responsible to Functional Heads.

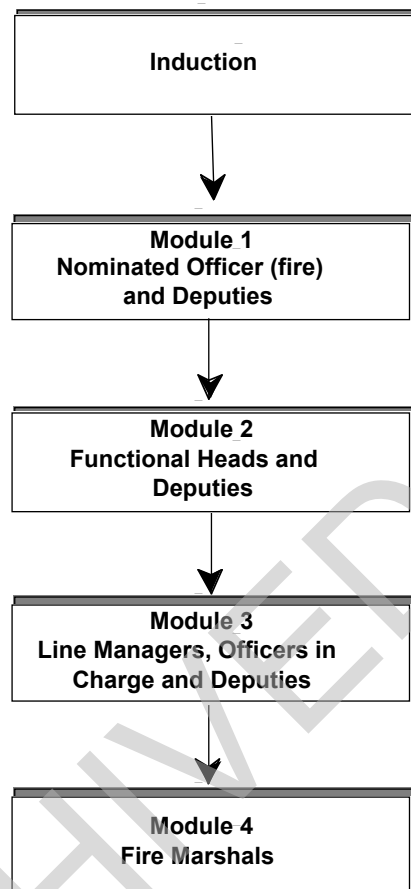
Duties include

Implementation of Fire
Safety Policy
Attend fire group meetings
Staff training commitment
Liaison of fire drills and
tests
Staff commitment to Fire
Safety Policy



Appendix 3

Management of Fire Strategy NHS in Scotland Fire Training Modules



Fire Safety Principle and Practices in the NHS in relation to Fire Safety Policy and practical application.

Specialist training in fire safety philosophy and technical guidance. Application to evacuation planning and auditing.

Specialist training in fire safety philosophy and technical guidance to prepare fire plans and systems of work. Organisation of fire drills and fire safety training within a structured environment.

Specialist training in fire safety organisation and application of fire strategy, evacuation and Fire Marshal training.

Structured training on fire safety matters relating to their workstations. Training to play a role within evacuation teams and to act as a focal point for staff.