

REF ISB2504

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## Failure to follow fire procedure

### What happened?

The fire service did not attend a fire that occurred in a health centre.

The occupants did not call 999 and report the incident.

The alarm signal was transmitted to an alarm receiving centre (ARC). However, the ARC did not inform fire service control that the detection system had multi-sensor detectors and that it should be treated as a confirmed fire.

Fortunately, it was a small fire that was extinguished by staff using portable fire-fighting equipment. However, the consequences could have been much more serious.

### What do we know?

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) control room operators will 'call challenge' reports of fire by asking a 999 caller or ARC operative to verify that there is a fire.

SFRS will only mobilise fire appliances to incidents when a fire has been confirmed.

An alarm activation from a system that has detectors that can distinguish between false alarm triggers and an actual fire is considered a confirmed fire.

Hospitals are exempt from call challenging and will receive an immediate fire service response when an ARC informs them that an automatic fire alarm has actuated.

### How can this be prevented?

1. Healthcare organisations must ensure that staff are trained in fire procedures and the necessity of calling 999 should a fire occur.
2. Health Boards should ensure that alarm receiving centres are notified of all premises that are equipped with automatic detection systems with detectors that can distinguish between false alarm triggers and an actual fire, so that they can relay this information to fire service control.

If you become aware of an adverse incident or near miss, or if you have a safety concern about a piece of equipment, report it to IRIC (details below). Incidents and near misses should also be reported to your local incident reporting and learning system which you might know as InPhase, Datix or Ullyses.

**IRIC** Incident Reporting & Investigation Centre

To find safety alerts:  
scan the QR code or [click this link to visit our website](#)



To report an incident:  
scan the QR code or [click this link to visit our website](#)

