

# FIRE Awareness and Emergency Action

## Work Manual

# Fire Awareness

**Work through this manual and answer the questions at the end returning to your supervisor as soon as possible discussing any issues arising**

**Under the Health and Safety at Work Act in regard to fire safety the duties of the employer are to: -**

- **Provide a safe environment with adequate facilities and safe conditions-** fire extinguishers, blankets, warning signs, fire doors, telephone, non-flammable materials
- **Safe access and egress** - adequate fire exits etc
- **Information training etc and safe systems** - fire training; action to take in the event of a fire, practice fire drills
- **Control the use of dangerous substances and safe storage** - oxygen cylinders, safe storage, risk assessment on the package and carers fully informed

### Care Standards Act 2000

Virtually all residential Care premises are required to be registered with the appropriate authority, although registration is not required where less than 4 clients are provided for. It is an offence for any person to use premises to which the Care Standards Act 2000 applies without being registered with the appropriate authority. Fire officers have no legal powers under the legislation. However the registration authorities normally request the fire authority to carry out inspections to confirm that the fire precautions provided in any establishment are reasonable in the circumstances and they may refuse or cancel registration as a result of a fire officer's adverse report. The **Home Office** Fire department have issued a guide called the '**Green guide**' which set out basic standards for fire safety in residential care premises. It is intended both for the guidance of fire authorities and for the information of those responsible for the management or the registration of such premises.

### Re-inspection visits - Registered Homes

Operational personnel will normally carry these out twice each year. The programme should include one full inspection and one less formal courtesy visit which might be undertaken when visiting the premises for some other purpose

## **UKQCS Training**

Once every 5 years the nominated specialist Fire Prevention Officer will carry out a full inspection

### **Staff Fire Instruction**

All staff should be made aware of, and instructed and trained to ensure that they understand the fire precautions applicable to the building and the action to be taken in the event of a fire. The aim should be to ensure that all staff received instruction practical demonstration and training appropriate to their responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

### **Working in Community Care**

Client's homes in the community are not subject to inspections and registration but fire training is equally important although the carer's responsibilities in the event of a fire or emergency will be different to carers in a residential setting.

## UKQCS Training

### **Fire Kills!**

**Each year 700 people die from fire in their own home**

**A further 14000 are injured**

**The best way to avoid danger is to prevent fire starting in the first place**

### **What is Fire?**

Fire is a chemical reaction called **COMBUSTION**

What 3 things are needed for an outbreak of fire to occur?

**FUEL**

**OXYGEN**

**HEAT**

Put all 3 together and the result is FIRE

### **Methods of Extinction**

Break the Triangle of Fire - because 3 ingredients are necessary for fire, it follows logically that if one or more of these ingredients is removed the Fire will be extinguished

**Removal of heat - or Cooling**

**Removal of Fuel - or Starving**

**Removal or Limitation of Oxygen - or Blanketing and smothering**

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the type of extinguishing agent applied **must** be suited to the material involved

What would happen if you poured water onto a chip fat or oil fire?

## UKQCS Training

**For all practical purposes there are 4 main classes of Fire: -**

### **Class A**

Free burning fires in ordinary combustible materials such as wood, cloth, paper - cooling by water is the most effective way of extinguishing them.

*Risks are the building structure itself furniture, waste paper baskets, stationary stores*

### **Class B**

Flammable liquids such as oils, spirits, alcohols, greases and fats - here the smothering effect which excludes oxygen are the most effective - foam; CO<sub>2</sub>; and vaporising liquids also fire blankets to smother a fire effectively such as chip pan

*Danger areas are kitchens, boiler houses, garages and spirit stores*

### **Class C**

Fire involving flammable gasses such as propane, Butane, North Sea gas and Town gas. Require CO<sub>2</sub> Dry powder and BCF

*Risk areas are kitchens, workshops etc.*

### **Class D**

Fire involving metals

### **Fires involving electrical risks**

It is imperative to firstly disconnect the power supply the fire can then be dealt with according to the classification of the type of fire indicated above

### **Fire Extinguishers**

It should be remembered that portable fire extinguishers are classified as first aid fire fighting and they are designed for easy operating in an emergency. However it is important to realise that because they are portable they have only a limited duration of discharge. Therefore the siting of extinguishers together with an appreciation of their individual characteristics is fundamental to their success

A fire that flares up instantly can be checked at the point of outbreak by prompt action However if an extinguisher is badly sited and has to be brought some distance to cope with the outbreak even the smallest fire can become beyond the capability of the extinguisher

## UKQCS Training

Portable extinguishers provide the means whereby rapid action can be taken. It is essential that the right unit be sited in the correct position to deal with a particular type of fire hazard it may be useless and even dangerous to use the wrong kind of extinguisher on a fire.

### **Before you Tackle a Fire**

Many people put out small fires safely sadly however some people die or are injured by tackling a fire, which is beyond their capabilities

Here is a simple fire code to help you decide whether to put out or get out

- Only tackle a fire in its early stages.
- Always put your own and other people's safety first. Make sure you can escape if you need to and never let a fire block your exit.
- Never tackle a fire if it is starting to spread or has spread to other items in the room or if the room is filling with smoke. Around 70% of the fire deaths are caused by people being overcome by smoke and fumes.
- If you cannot put out the fire or if the extinguisher becomes empty get out and get everyone else out of the building

Again it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the type of extinguishing agent applied **must** be suited to the material involved

### **Colour Coding**

Fire extinguishers were identified by their colour cylinder but recently there has been a change and all new fire extinguishers will be red and have their identifying colour and name on the side. This will happen gradually as extinguishers are replaced so it will not be unusual for a while to see the old and new side by side.

## UKQCS Training

### Fire

#### **Fire spreads very quickly**

Imagine leaving the living room to make a cup of coffee in the kitchen and a fire starts as you leave the room and shut the door

#### **Within:**

- **1 minute** - the smoke would be building and the temperature at about shoulder height would be about 200 degrees
- **2minutes** - the room would be nearly full of toxic black smoke and the temperature rising dramatically
- **3.5minutes** - the room would be full of thick black toxic smoke and the temperature would have risen to 600 - 800 degrees and at 800 degrees flashover occurs

If you opened the door standing up you would not stand a chance

### Smoke and Toxins

Any fire in a confined space creates a highly dangerous atmosphere that is low in oxygen and may be contaminated by carbon monoxide and toxic fumes. Modern day has filled the average home with a variety of materials (such as videos) that when burnt release deadly toxins into the air/smoke, toxins such as hydrochloric acid; sulphuric acid. One breath of hot toxic smoke could be enough to burn the throat and prevent another breath from being taken. Also the highly dangerous gas carbon monoxide prevents the blood from carrying oxygen. A large amount in the air can very quickly kill you. If you survive the toxic smoke could leave you unconscious and unable to escape the fire or with permanent lung and brain damage etc.

**Smoke Kills !!!** - It claims the most lives!!!

Never enter a burning or fume filled building or open a door leading to a fire.

Leave it to the Emergency Services

### Panic/ Complacency

The attitude it can never happen to me not believing how quickly fire and toxic smoke can spread and kill and the sheep instinct 'Well, they seem to think it will be all right' is what claims so many lives?

## UKQCS Training

### Preparing and prevention

The Do and Don'ts for fire safety

#### **What should you do and not do to prevent a fire in your home?**

This will be the same in any home. Your client may not wish to take such precautions but it is your job to report any danger areas and keep your client informed and encourages them to follow fire safety.

- Think ahead and plan your escape route including alternative routes
- Ask questions - could I be trapped - has each room got a window you could open and climb through
- Practice fire drill/talk through
- Check if anything would hinder the escape
- Fit smoke alarms - checked, maintained and positioned appropriately
- Telephone access- appropriate
- Keep flammable liquids in shed or store only small amounts indoors in a well-ventilated cupboard away from doors or stairs
- Use guards for open fires and spark guard at night
- Sweep chimneys annually
- Maintain and or replace faulty wiring; broken plugs etc.
- Close all doors before going to bed a door can hold back a fire for up to 30 minutes
- Buy fire retardant furniture etc where possible
- Don't use polystyrene tiles in the kitchen and if using elsewhere stick them firmly on a bed of glue and use water based paint
- Don't hang mirrors over the fireplace
- Don't leave electric blanket on
- Don't put clothes horse/clothes too near the fire or papers piled up
- Don't leave the TV plugged in
- Don't leave cigarette burning
- Don't overfill the chip pan
- Avoid flapping curtains near cooker
- Don't overload power points or trail leads under carpet or rug
- Don't block fire exits



## UKQCS Training

What is your role as regards fire safety? And the general procedure to be taken on discovering a fire

- Encourage fire safety awareness and practice
- Report/record any concerns
- Know your work area the fire exits (including reading care plan and discussed risk areas - plan escape/fire drill practice
- Follow safe working practices- unplug TV, close doors don't leave pans on cooker unattended

**What action should you take on discovering a fire?**

- **Raise the Alarm**
- **Inform the fire brigade**
- **Get out -evacuate occupants to a safe distance leave by the nearest exit**
- **Do not put yourself at risk in order to either extinguish a fire or rescue other people in the building**
- **Only tackle the fire if small in its very early stages**
- **Don't stop to pick up personal belongings**
- **Once out stay out and be there to inform the firemen with information such as anyone in building and where? dangers, directions etc**

How to call the Fire Brigade and Emergency Services and the information they require

**Ring 999 or as appropriate if on a mobile**

**Fire /Police /Ambulance - state clearly: -**

- Which service you need
- Address and telephone including information such as whether a house or flat whether people in building
- Any additional information you feel may help e.g. gas involved, person trapped is disabled, house next to petrol station
  
- **Stay calm** - when in a panic, voices can be very high pitched and difficult to understand so take a deep breathe and speak slowly and clearly
- **Listen for confirmation** that the operator has heard what you have said correctly - without the right address no one will be able to come and help and it could be a matter of Life and Death

# UKQCS Training

## Electricity

### **Risks associated with electricity: -**

- Electric shocks - When electricity passes through the body it causes a shock, burns and can kill
- Fires - Approximately 19% of all workplace fires are started by electrical appliances

## Safe use of Electricity

### Cables/Flex

Cables and flex wear with use and age. A frayed damaged cable or flex is a fire hazard they should be replaced. This should always be carried out by an expert

### Turn off the power: -

Always make sure the power has been switched off before inserting a plug in a socket or remove it never put a plug into a socket when the power supply is in the on position you may get an electric shock. Always switch off and unplug electrical appliances before you clean them to avoid an electrical shock if you are changing ribbons or paper rolls on office machines make sure they have been isolated from the electrical supply before doing so. If switches plugs or sockets get hot turn off the power and have them checked they may be a fire hazard.

### Electricity and Water

Never touch light switches or handle electrical appliances with wet hands an appliance - safe in normal usage will become a lethal weapon if your hands are wet.

### Good practices

It is a requirement for tools and electrical equipment to have regular inspection for faults by a qualified person, as should be all repair and maintenance.

# UKQCS Training

## Gas

### Gas Escape Action

If you suspect a Gas leak: -

- Do not smoke
- Don't use a naked flame
- Don't turn electric switches on/off  
(The spark created in the socket can be enough  
to cause an explosion or fire)
- Do open doors and windows to get rid  
off the Gas
- Do call British Gas / 999 Emergency  
services

### Gas Fire Action

- Do turn off the supply
- Don't try to extinguish the fire

## UKQCS Training

### Fire safety Questionnaire

1. Which of these factors claims most lives in a fire situation?

- Panic
- Smoke
- Flames

2. What action should you take on discovering a fire?

3. What is the best way to put out a chip pan fire?

4. Name the 3 things needed to start a fire?

5. Which of these generally causes most fires?

- People
- Smoking
- Smoking materials

6. What are the 4 most common causes of fires involving electricity?

7. Where does the majority of fires start?

- Offices
- Peoples Homes
- Industrial Kitchens

## UKQCS Training

8. CO2 extinguishers may be used on which of the following fires?

Burning liquids

Electrical equipment

Wood paper etc

9. Using lifts in an evacuation is bad practice why?

10 What information should you give the fire brigade when ringing 999?

11 Why do smoke alarms save lives?

12 When leaving a burning building why is it important to stay low?

13. What is your role as regards fire safety?

14. Approximately how many people dies each year from fires in their homes?

400

600

700

## UKQCS Training

15 Why should you not turn electric switches on or off if you suspect a gas leak?

16 Why should you shut doors before you go to bed?

17 Why should you never handle electrical appliances with wet hands?

18 What should you do if the plug on your clients Hoover felt hot?

19 You are visiting an existing client however it is the first time you will be meeting them What action will you take with regard to fire awareness?

## UKQCS Training

### ANSWERS

#### Fire safety Questionnaire

1. Which of these factors claims most lives in a fire situation?

- Panic
- Smoke
- Flames

2. What action should you take on discovering a fire?

- (A) Raise the alarm*
- Ring the fire brigade*
- Evacuate the building*

3. What is the best way to put out a chip pan fire?

- (A) Fire blanket or damp tea towel and turn off the source of power - do not remove as while still hot it can soon ignite once oxygen is allowed in*

4. Name the 3 things needed to start a fire?

- (A) Fuel*
- Oxygen*
- Heat*

5. Which of these generally causes most fires?

- People
- Smoking
- Smoking materials

6. What are the 4 most common causes of fires involving electricity?

- (A) Overloading sockets*
- Faulty wiring*
- Faulty appliances*
- Appliances left on*

7. Where does the majority of fires start?

- Offices
- Peoples Homes
- Industrial Kitchens

8. CO2 extinguishers may be used on which of the following fires?

- Burning liquids - **BUT NOT CHIP PAN OR FAT PAN FIRES**
- Electrical equipment
- Wood paper etc

## UKQCS Training

9. Using lifts in an evacuation is bad practice why?  
*A. In a fire the electricity is generally effected and this could mean the power going off, being stuck in the lift and then unable to escape the fire  
The lift could take you to the fire and you wouldn't know until the lift doors opened. The lift shaft becomes a smoke tunnel and therefore the lift would fill up with smoke very quickly*
- 10 What information should you give the fire brigade when ringing 999?  
*A. Which service you need - Fire, ambulance etc.  
The address of where the fire is and telephone number from where you are calling  
Information including whether flat, house, people in building  
Any relevant information you feel may help e.g. gas involved, person trapped; disabled etc  
Confirm understood - if not repeat*
- 11 Why do smoke alarms save lives?  
*A Fire spreads very quickly and can reach extreme temperatures in minutes so any early warning can give you precious minutes to get out of the building/call the fire brigade and save lives*
- 12 When leaving a burning building why is it important to stay low?  
*A. The temperature in a burning building can be 30 degrees at floor level and 300 degrees at 5 feet above the floor*
- 13 What is your role as regards fire safety?  
*A. Encourage fire safety awareness and practice  
Report and record any concerns  
Know your work area the fire exits (including reading the care plan and discussed risk areas - plan escape/fire drill practice  
Follow safe working practices - unplug TV close doors. Etc.*
- 14 Approximately how many people dies each year from fires in their homes?  
 400  
 600  
 700  
 150



## UKQCS Training

15 Why should you not turn electric switches on or off if you suspect a gas leak?

*A Because the small spark made inside the switch could ignite/explode the gas if there is a leak and cause a fire*

16 Why should you shut doors before you go to bed?

*A Doors could contain a fire and prevent it from spreading for up to 30 minutes*

17 Why should you never handle electrical appliances with wet hands?

*A Water is a very good conductor of electricity and can make the link between you and the electricity and you could then be electrocuted*

18 What should you do if the plug on your clients Hoover felt hot?

*A Turn off straightaway inform your client and of the dangers, report and ensure other colleagues are aware*

19 You are visiting an existing client however it is the first time you will be meeting them What action will you take with regard to fire awareness?

*A Read care plan to familiarise with the clients abilities etc any risk areas recommendations for emergencies etc.*

*Familiarize with the layout, exits (doors windows etc) where smoke alarms have been fitted, position of telephone etc. Talk with the client and discuss and agree fire escape procedure without frightening the client*