

FIRE SAFETY

Standard

Healthcare premises meet legislative and mandatory requirements that are designed to ensure an environment in which fire risks are minimised.

Overview

The consequences of a fire in a hospital and other health care premises can be especially serious because of the difficulties and dangers associated with the emergency evacuation of patients, some of who will be highly dependent. The aim therefore should be to ensure that, if possible, outbreaks of fire do not occur and that, if and when outbreaks do occur, they are rapidly detected, effectively contained and quickly extinguished. Furthermore, suitable means of escape should be provided in the event that evacuation is needed.

The overall standard of fire safety depends on physical factors such as:

- Building design and construction
- Equipment and furnishings

However, all the above needs to be seen within the context of an overall fire safety management structure, which will be driven by a senior management commitment to fire safety. This commitment will ensure both compliance with legislation and that the correct guidance is used to determine the standard of fire precautions.

The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety fire safety policy is required to be implemented throughout premises owned, occupied or managed by all HPSS Bodies in Northern Ireland and throughout premises utilised for the treatment or care of HPSS patients.

The Secretary of State has retained powers under a Departmental direction already copied to the HPSS under (PEL 94-65), which requires the HPSS to comply with the provisions of Firecode. This effectively mandates to the HPSS in Northern Ireland to comply with the requirements of Firecode. In addition to this overarching requirement, HPSS premises are also subject to primary legislation controlling fire safety. The main legislation is considered below:

The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

This places a general responsibility on employers for protecting the health, safety and welfare of their own employees and others who may be affected by their activities. In relation to fire safety the general duties of an employer under Sections 2 and 3 are particularly relevant.

The Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 (as amended)

This Order contains provisions “*for protecting persons from fire risk*”. It empowers the Secretary of State to designate particular uses of premises. Hospitals have not been designated, but certain parts of hospitals fall within the scope of other designation orders and may require a fire certificate. The enforcing authority for this Order is the Fire Authority.

Organisations should have procedures for:

- Liaison with the Fire Authority
- Applying for fire certificates
- Auditing and maintaining the fire precautions stipulated on the fire certificate.

The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

The Regulations make local building control authorities responsible for giving approval of plans and ensuring compliance on site.

The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

Under this Order the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) has enforcement responsibilities for houses in multiple occupation i.e. houses which are occupied by persons who do not form a single household. This enforcement is through the Housing (Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993, Houses in Multiple Occupation Standards (NIHE) and The Houses in Multiple Occupation Fire Safety Guide (NIHE) provide relevant guidance.

Secondary legislation

The following secondary legislation is also relevant to fire safety in HPSS premises:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 No 388
- The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 (S.R 1996 No. 119)
- The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

These Regulations require employers to take specific fire precautions into account when undertaking a risk assessment of their premises to ensure that employees are not exposed to undue risks from fire. In particular, every workplace should have appropriate fire fighting equipment, fire detectors and alarms, together with an adequate number of routes and exits that take into account the maximum number of persons that may be present at any one time.

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland 1996 (S.R 1996 No 119))

All signs on HPSS premises should comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996. Escape routes and fire exits should be prominently indicated and it should be possible to see fire exit signs and notices during a period of electrical power failure.

The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

Building Regulations apply to all new building work and certain changes of use (regardless of whether any building work is planned). They also apply where alterations to existing buildings adversely affect:

- Means of escape
- Internal fire spread (structure)
- External fire spread
- Access and facilities for the fire service.

In terms of healthcare premises, this means that for most work involving fire safety, building regulation approval may be required. Trusts should therefore have procedures in place to ensure that all new work and alterations to existing premises are submitted for Building Regulation approval.

Assessment Guidance

HPSS organisations vary significantly in size and in the nature of the services they deliver. It follows that that not all controls assurance standards will apply to each organisation. This is implicit in the current Departmental guidance, eg. *The Reference Table on Applicability and Expected Levels of Compliance* which should be referred to before commencing the self-assessment exercise.

Even where a standard is generally applicable to the work of an organisation it is quite possible that not all of the criteria will be materially applicable. Before self-assessing against a standard, therefore, an organisation should consider the relevance of each criterion to its own business and conduct its assessment accordingly. Thus, where a criterion is clearly relevant to an organisation, the score should be based on the **totality of the action taken to address the requirement**. Where there is little or no relevance, the criterion should be considered “not applicable” and ignored for scoring purposes as explained in the guidance on *Reporting Compliance* issued by the Department.

This approach will ensure that the assessment has no unfairly detrimental effect on the organisation’s overall score but reflects a proper evaluation of the key areas of risks identified and the actual levels of controls put in place to manage those risks.

Likewise, the *Examples of Verification* set out in the standard are just that – examples, for guidance only. Once again, it is the nature of each organisation's business that determines the type of evidence needed to prove that appropriate controls are in place. In effect, this may mean that only some of the examples listed are relevant to a particular HPSS organisation or, indeed, that there are other more relevant examples which can be adduced as evidence of compliance. It is also the case that some evidence can be deployed to demonstrate compliance with more than one criterion or standard.

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KEY REFERENCES

Department of Health (2001) *Guidance: First Principles* 2001.

Northern Ireland *The Building Regulations 2000*. The Stationery Office, Belfast.

Northern Ireland *The Construction Design and Management Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995*. The Stationery Office, Belfast.

Northern Ireland *The Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 (as amended)* The Stationery Office, Belfast.

Northern Ireland *The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001*.

Northern Ireland *The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978* . The Stationery Office, Belfast.

Northern Ireland *The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996*. The Stationery Office, Belfast.

The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996. The Stationery Office, Belfast

Northern Ireland *The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003*. The Stationery Office, Belfast.

Northern Ireland *The Housing (Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993* The Stationery Office, Belfast

Northern Ireland *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 No 388*
The Stationery Office, Belfast.

Northern Ireland *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) (Northern Ireland) 1997 No455*. The Stationery Office, Belfast.

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1979. The Stationery Office, Belfast

NHS Estates CD Rom *Building Better Healthcare 2*.

NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London.

Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode* The Stationery Office, Belfast

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HSS (PPM) 3/02 Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control

HSS (PPM) 6/02 AS/NZS 4360: 1999 – Risk Management

HSS (PPM) 8/02 Risk Management in the Health and Personal Social Services

HSS (PPM) 10/02 Governance in the HPSS – Clinical and Social Care Governance: Guidelines for Implementation

HSS (PPM) 13/02 Governance in the HPSS: Risk Management

HSS (PPM) 5/03 Governance in the HPSS: Risk Management and Controls Assurance

HSS (PPM) 8/04 Governance in the HPSS: Controls Assurance Standards – Update

Northern Ireland Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control DAO (DFP) 5/2001

Northern Ireland: Statement of Internal Control DAO (DFP) 25/2003

Standards Australia (1999) *Risk Management AS / NZS 4360:1999*. Standards Association of Australia. Strathfield NSW.

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INDEX OF FIRE SAFETY CRITERIA

Criteria 1, 2, 3, & 4 (Accountability)

Board level responsibility for fire safety is clearly defined and there are clear lines of accountability for fire safety throughout the organisation, leading to the Board.

There is a documented fire safety policy that has been approved by the Board and has been communicated across the organisation.

Fire safety roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for all situations where accommodation is shared with other organisations.

An annual "Certificate of Fire Code Compliance" is satisfactorily completed, signed by the Chief Executive, and returned to Health Estates, Estate Policy Directorate.

Criteria 5 to 14 inclusive (Processes)

Staff and safety representatives are properly consulted on fire safety matters.

Fire incidents are dealt with in accordance with the processes contained in the Risk Management standard.

All applications for fire certification for premises designated by Order under the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 (as amended) have been made.

All premises controlled by the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 are appropriately managed and have been notified to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Applications made for all new building work, relevant changes of use and material alterations are covered by the Building Regulations 2000.

The risk management process contained within the Risk Management standard is applied to fire safety.

Fire Safety risk assessments have been completed for all occupied premises and are maintained up-to-date.

The organisation's premises meet the minimum physical statutory requirements laid down in the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.

All occupied areas have suitable and up-to-date emergency procedures in case of fire.

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The organisation's physical fire safety infrastructure is maintained and tested in accordance with legislation, Approved Codes of Practice, British Standards, and/or manufacturer's guidelines.

Criteria 15 & 16 (Capability)

The organisation has access to up-to-date fire safety legislation, Approved Codes of Practice, FIRECODE, British Standards, and other guidance relating to fire safety.

All staff receive a level of fire safety training that is appropriate for their individual responsibilities in the event of a fire and a record is made of all training received.

Criterion 17 (Outcomes)

Key indicators capable of showing improvements in fire safety and/or providing early warning of risk are used at all levels of the organisation, including the Board, and the efficacy and usefulness of the indicators is reviewed regularly.

Criterion 18 (Monitoring and Review)

The system in place for managing fire safety, including risk management arrangements, is monitored and reviewed by management and the Board in order to make improvements to the system.

Criterion 19 (Audit)

The Board should seek independent assurance that an appropriate and effective system of managing fire safety is in place and that the necessary level of controls and monitoring are being implemented.

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CRITERION 1

Board level responsibility for fire safety is clearly defined and there are clear lines of accountability for fire safety throughout the organisation, leading to the board.

Source

- Northern Ireland (2001) *The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001*
- Northern Ireland (2000) *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000* The Stationery Office, Belfast
- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode* The Stationery Office Belfast
- Northern Ireland, Governance in the HPSS : Clinical and Social Care Governance – Guidelines on Implementation. HSS (PPM) 10/2002
- Northern Ireland Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control. DAO (DFP) 5/2001
- Northern Ireland: Statement of Internal Control. DAO (DFP) 25/2003
- Northern Ireland, Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control, HSS (PPM) 3/2002
- Standards Australia (1999) *Risk Management AS / NZS 4360:1999*. Standards Association of Australia, Strathfield

Guidance

The Chief Executive is responsible for fire safety. In all health care organisations an Executive Director should be nominated to have special responsibility for fire safety and to ensure that agreed programmes of investment are properly accounted for in the organisation's annual business plan.

HPSS bodies should establish management systems to ensure that the statutory requirements and requirements specific to FIRECODE are effectively managed and controlled throughout their premises.

An effective fire safety management system should be established below Board level in order to satisfy the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.

The extent of responsibility and duties of individual staff should be clearly defined for each individual with appropriate training given where this is necessary. Reporting procedures need to be clear and unambiguous.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) require that the organisation has access to competent fire safety advice, preferably from within the organisation rather than 'contracted-out'.

Additional guidance is available in Northern Ireland 'Policy and Principles' and HTM 83.

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Examples of Verification

- Accountability arrangements chart
- Minutes of Risk Management Committee
- Board minutes

Links with other standards

All standards (generic criterion)

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CRITERION 2

There is a documented fire safety policy that has been approved by the board and has been communicated across the organisation.

Source

- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London.
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

All HPSS bodies are required to have a clearly defined fire safety policy. This should detail the organisation and arrangements to manage fire safety in all of the organisation's premises. To achieve full commitment it will be necessary to gain the confidence of all the stakeholders' interests for the policy to work.

Specific requirements of a policy are:

- Set out the intentions of the policy and the management commitment to it
- The policy should state exactly what the objectives are
- Arrangements for devolving responsibility for fire safety across the organisation
- How policy will be communicated
- Requirement for specific Emergency evacuation plans for all parts of its premises
- How fire safety fits with other organisational functions such as, security and audit
- Where to go for advice
- Business continuity plan

Additional guidance on the contents of a fire safety policy is available in HTM 83 – 'General fire precautions'.

Examples of Verification

- Policy document
- Board minutes indicating adoption
- Evidence of communication to staff at all levels
- Fire procedures

Links with other standards

Health and Safety Management
Emergency Planning

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CRITERION 3

Fire safety roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for all situations where accommodation is shared with other organizations.

Source

- Northern Ireland Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 No 388, the Stationery Office, Belfast.

Guidance

Where the activities of different employers (and self-employed people) interact they may need to co-operate with each other to ensure their respective statutory obligations are met, e.g. by exchanging information, co-operating on implementing evacuation procedures, etc. Examples include University staff sharing hospital premises, situations where contractors share the workplace (e.g. construction contractors or catering companies) or situations where two HPSS organizations share the same accommodation.

Where accommodation is shared with other organisations, it is important that the responsibilities of each organisation in respect of fire safety is clarified and documented. For example:

- Which organisation is responsible for maintaining and testing the fire alarm system?
- Who is responsible for the maintenance of the physical fire precautions?

In addition, management procedures need to set out responsibilities for training, and for the preparation of the emergency evacuation plans.

Examples of Verification

- Documented local fire safety policies/procedures

Links with other standards

Management of Purchasing and Supply

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CRITERION 4

An annual “Certificate of Firecode Compliance” is satisfactorily completed, signed by the Chief Executive, and returned to Health Estates, Estate Policy Directorate.

Source

- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode* The Stationery Office Belfast

Guidance

To demonstrate that HPSS organisations comply with the principles of FIRECODE, Chief Executives are to provide evidence on an annual basis, that their premises have been thoroughly assessed for compliance with both statutory and FIRECODE provisions.

Where premises are not owned by an HPSS organisation, but are procured via the PFI process or are leased, there is a “duty of care” to ensure the premises are provided with adequate fire safety standards. HPSS organisations that place HPSS patients in premises not owned or leased by the HPSS have a “duty of care” to ensure the premises are provided with adequate fire safety standards.

Examples of Verification

- Copy of signed certificate of Fire Safety Management Compliance
- Copies of any notices issued by the Fire Authority
- Copies of any evidence to support an alternative approach to that of FIRECODE
- Fire safety audit undertaken in accordance with HTM 83

Links with other standards

None

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CRITERION 5

Staff and safety representatives are properly consulted on fire safety matters.

Source

- Northern Ireland *The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978*. The Stationery Office, Belfast
- *The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996*. The Stationery Office, Belfast
- *Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1979*. The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

Employers have a specific duty under the Health and Safety at Work Order to consult safety representatives on health and safety matters, including fire safety issues. In particular HPSS organisations should consult safety representatives about:

- The introduction of any measure that will affect the health and safety of the employees represented by the safety representative
- The persons nominated to provide health and safety/fire safety assistance, and assist in emergency procedures
- Any fire safety training or information the employer is required to provide to the employees' safety representatives
- Health and safety consequences of the planning and introduction of new technologies into the workplace. In particular, the drawing up and maintaining of arrangements for the effective promotion, development and monitoring of measures to ensure the health and safety at work of employees

In addition, employers have a duty to consult non-union employees about health and safety matters under Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (Northern Ireland), 1996. Consultation can be in the form of committees, letters, meetings and/or an elected safety representative, but the health and safety issues raised and outcomes should always be documented and posted (e.g. on notice Boards) for good communication to all staff.

Examples of Verification

- There is/are nominated health and safety representative(s) who have been appropriately trained on fire safety issues
- Health and Safety representatives are regularly informed of organisational and legislative updates
- Minutes of relevant meetings

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Links with other standards

Health and Safety Management

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CRITERION 6

Fire incidents are dealt with in accordance with the processes contained in the Risk Management standard.

Source

- Northern Ireland *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) (Northern Ireland) 1997*. The Stationery Office, Belfast
- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office Belfast

Guidance

An effective fire incident reporting system will help organisations identify problem areas where fire incidents are frequently arising and will help organisations to conduct robust risk assessments. It will also help in providing useful evidence when handling a claim for negligence.

A fire incident can be defined as any event, which has given, or may give rise to, actual or possible personal injury, or to property loss or damage as a result of fire. This definition covers all areas including patient or client accident and injury (including iatrogenic injuries), fire, theft, assault and staff accident. The use of separate systems to record accidents to patients and staff can lead to failure to identify common causes of accidents and so prevent appropriate remedial action.

The following are the salient requirements of an incident reporting system for fire safety purposes:

- Complies with RIDDOR reporting requirements
- Complies with FIRECODE reporting requirements
- Preferably uses one form for reporting all incidents
- All incidents graded by severity
- Investigations of more serious incidents carried out to determine underlying cause
- All incidents should be analyzed to establish underlying trends
- Regular management reports should be produced which result in management action

Examples of Verification

- Completed incident report forms
- Copies of RIDDOR report forms
- Copies of FIRECODE report forms
- Incident reporting procedure
- Incident software

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Links with other standards

Risk Management
Health and Safety Management

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CRITERION 7

All applications for fire certification for premises designated by Order under the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 (as amended) have been made.

Source

Northern Ireland, The Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 (as amended). The Stationery Office, Belfast. PEL 94-65 Health Estates

- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland, (various) *Firecode* The Stationary Office, Belfast

Guidance

Fire certificates may be required in health and social service premises that are used as offices, shops or factories.

Once a certificate has been issued, changes in layout or use of the premises that may affect fire safety should be notified to the Fire Authority, who may need to re-inspect and amend the original certificate.

Additional guidance is available in Northern Ireland 'Firecode - Policy and Principles' and the following Home Office guidance:

- Guide to fire precautions in existing places of work that require a fire certificate – factories, offices, shops and railway premises
- Code of practice for fire precautions in factories, offices, shops and railway premises not required to have a fire certificate

Examples of Verification

- Documented procedures
- Records of applications for fire certificates
- Letters of Exemption
- Fire Certificate

Links with other standards

None

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CRITERION 8

All premises controlled by the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 are appropriately managed and have been notified to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Source

- Northern Ireland *The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003* The Stationery Office, Belfast
- Northern Ireland *The Housing (Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993* The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

As some HSS Trusts merge and others divest themselves of residential accommodation, it is important to ensure that where organisations retain residential accommodation (which are occupied by persons who do not form a single household) the local environmental health authorities are advised of their presence.

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Fire Safety Guide (NIHE) June 2002 gives guidance on the standard of fire precautions required by The Houses in Multiple Occupation Standards issued by the NIHE in September 2002 and the Order which they consider when exercising the power to license HMOs.

Houses in multiple occupation must be managed in accordance with the “The Housing (Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993 ”

Examples of Verification

- Notification procedures
- Evidence of notification, e.g. correspondence
- Fire safety audit

Links with other standards

None

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CRITERION 9

Applications made for all new building work, relevant changes of use and material alterations are covered by the Building Regulations (NI) 2000.

Source

- Northern Ireland, *The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000*. The Stationery Office, Belfast
- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland, (various) *Firecode* The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

Building Regulations apply to all new building work, relevant changes of use and where alterations to existing buildings adversely affect:

- Means of escape
- Internal fire spread (structure)
- External fire spread
- Access and facilities for the fire service

In practical terms this means that for most new work involving fire safety, building regulations approval may be required.

Additional guidance is provided in:

- Technical Booklet 'E' Fire Safety The Stationery Office Belfast
- HTM 81 – Fire precautions in new hospitals
- HTM 85 – Fire precautions in existing hospitals
- HTM 82 – Alarm and detection systems
- HTM 84 - Fire Safety in Residential Care Premises
- Building Better Healthcare 3 (CD Rom NHS Estates)

Examples of Verification

- Documented procedures
- Examples of Approval Notices issued under the Building Regulations

Links with other standards

None

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CRITERION 10

The risk management process contained within the Risk Management standard is applied to fire safety.

Source

- Northern Ireland *The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) (2001)*
- Standards Australia (1999) *Risk Management AS / NZS 4360:1999*. Standards Association of Australia, Strathfield NSW

Guidance

Fire risks should be systematically identified and recorded on a continuous basis. Risks can be systematically identified using a number of approaches including:

- Review of inspection/audit reports
- Workshops with staff
- Use of compliance checklists
- Risk assessments (e.g. HTM 86 and HTM 86 (Northern Ireland Supplement))
- HTM 84 – Fire Safety in Residential Care Premises

The following risk management elements should be in place:

- All identified risks should be documented as part of a 'risk register' and should be systematically analysed and prioritised for action
- Risk treatment plans should be developed and implemented (in order of priority and alongside other risk treatments which are necessary to deal with wider risks faced by the organisation, where appropriate) in order to minimise risk
- Risks and the effectiveness of implemented risk treatments should be monitored and reviewed on a continuous basis
- Senior management and the Board should be informed of any significant risks and associated risk treatment plans
- All relevant staff, including those on fixed term contracts, and other relevant stakeholders, should receive information on systems in place to minimise fire risks
- Where appropriate, staff training should be undertaken to reduce knowledge gaps

Examples of Verification

- Risk Register
- Risk treatment plans
- Staff training/information log
- Correspondence with stakeholders

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Links with other standards

Risk Management
Health and Safety Management

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CRITERION 11

Fire safety risk assessments have been completed for all occupied premises and are maintained up-to-date.

Source

- Northern Ireland *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000* The Stationery Office, Belfast
- Northern Ireland *The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001*
- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode* The Stationery Office Belfast

Guidance

Various pieces of guidance exist on fire risk assessment including guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.

A fire safety audit re-affirms that the fire risk assessments are maintained up to date.

Examples of Verification

- Documented risk assessments
- Fire safety audit

Links with other standards

None

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CRITERION 12

The organisation's premises meet the minimum physical statutory requirements laid down in the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.

Source

- Northern Ireland *The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001*. The Stationery Office, Belfast
- Northern Ireland *The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996*. The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

The fundamental requirement of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 is that in the event of danger it is possible for employees to evacuate the workplace quickly and as safely as possible. The minimum physical requirements for healthcare and social services premises include, where necessary:

- All areas are, to the extent that is appropriate, equipped with appropriate fire-fighting equipment and with fire detectors and alarms
- All non-automatic fire-fighting equipment is easily accessible, simple to use and indicated by signs
- The number, distribution and dimensions of emergency routes and exits is adequate having regard to the use, equipment and dimensions of the workplace and the maximum number of persons that may be present there at any one time
- Emergency routes and exits lead as directly as possible to a place of safety
- Suitable signs indicate emergency routes and exits
- Emergency routes and exits are kept clear at all times
- Emergency routes and exits requiring illumination are provided with emergency lighting of adequate intensity in the case of failure of their normal lighting
- Emergency doors open in the direction of escape
- No sliding or revolving doors are used for exits specifically intended as emergency exits
- Emergency doors are not so locked or fastened that they cannot be easily and immediately opened by any person who may need to use them in an emergency

Examples of Verification

- Physical inspection
- Risk action plans

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Links with other standards

None

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CRITERION 13

All occupied areas have suitable and up-to-date emergency procedures in case of fire.

Source

- Northern Ireland, *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000* The Stationery Office, Belfast
- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

Suitable emergency procedures are prepared, having regard to the fire risk assessment and set out, amongst other things, details of the action to be taken by persons in the case of fire, the procedure to be followed during evacuation and the arrangements for calling the fire brigade and informing them of any special risks. The plan should also identify an adequate number of persons responsible for supervising and controlling the putting into effect of the plan, and the conduct of fire drills.

Examples of Verification

- Evidence of fire evacuation procedures
- Evidence of specific Emergency evacuation plans for all parts of its premises

Links with other standards

None

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CRITERION 14

The organisation's physical fire safety infrastructure is maintained and tested in accordance with legislation, Approved Codes of Practice, British Standards, and/or manufacturer's guidelines.

Source

- Northern Ireland *The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001*. The Stationery Office, Belfast
- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode: The Stationery Office, Belfast*

Guidance

To function as designed and installed, the following equipment associated with fire safety requires regular maintenance and testing:

- Passive fire precautions
- Active fire precautions e.g.: -
 - Alarm and detection systems
 - Fire extinguishers
 - Sprinklers
 - Fire dampers
 - Smoke extract systems
 - Pressurisation systems

Additional guidance is given in:

- 'Fire Safety an Employer's Guide' issued by The Stationery Office Belfast and HSE Books
- Relevant Standards

Examples of Verification

- Operational policies
- Records and testing and maintenance

Links with other standards

None

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| HPSS | Controls Assurance Standard | Fire Safety |
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CRITERION 15

The organisation has access to up-to-date fire safety legislation, Approved Codes of Practice, FIRECODE, British Standards, and other guidance relating to fire safety.

Source

- Department of Health. *Guidance: First Principles* 2001

Guidance

Access to legislation and guidance is essential for the organisation to carry out the statutory duties imposed upon it by law and mandatory duties imposed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

As a minimum, the organisation should have access to the key references listed in this standard, together with any additional references noted in the guidance associated with the criteria contained in this standard.

There are many sources of information on legislation and fire safety guidance, including books and, through subscriptions to specialist information providers, CD-ROMs containing the full text. You may find some of the following websites helpful: the Department at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk; the Health and Safety Executive at www.hseni.gov.uk; the NHS Controls Assurance Support Unit at www.hcsu.org.uk and the Department's Governance website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hss/governance/index. Full text copies of all legislation issued from 1 January 1997 can be downloaded from www.official-documents.co.uk which contains information on UK official documents.

Examples of Verification

- Library
- CD-ROMs
- Internet access

Links with other standards

All standards (generic criterion)

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| HPSS | Controls Assurance Standard | Fire Safety |
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CRITERION 16

All staff receive a level of fire safety training that is appropriate for their individual responsibilities in the event of a fire and a record is made of all training received.

Source

- Northern Ireland *The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001*. The Stationery Office, Belfast
- NHS Estates (various) *Firecode*. The Stationery Office, London
- Northern Ireland (various) *Firecode* The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

All staff, including part-time and agency staff, should receive training in fire safety appropriate to their workplace. This training should take place on their appointment and should be repeated at least once more in the first year of employment.

Staffs who have additional responsibilities in relation to fire safety should receive additional training to enable them to carry out these additional duties effectively.

Additional guidance is available in:

- HTM 83 – General fire precautions;
- Fire Safety an Employer’s Guide issued by the Stationery Office and HSE Books.
- HTM 84 Fire Safety in Residential Premises
- HTM 86 and 86 Supplement

NB. The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 require that all employees are given comprehensive and relevant information about, and adequate training in, the fire precautions to be taken or observed in the workplace, including the action to be taken by her/him in case of fire. Appropriate information and training is determined on the basis of, amongst other things, the fire risk assessment. Information and training must be given at the start of a person’s employment in the workplace, and whenever there is a change in the work or fire risk, and training must be repeated at appropriate intervals.

Examples of Verification

- Documented training programme(s)
- Training logs/records

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| HPSS | Controls Assurance Standard | Fire Safety |
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Links with other standards

Human Resources

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CRITERION 17

Key indicators capable of showing improvements in fire safety and/or providing early warning of risk are used at all levels of the organisation, including the board, and the efficacy and usefulness of the indicators is reviewed regularly.

Source

- DFP: Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control, DAO (DFP) 5/2001
- Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control, HSS (PPM) 3/2002
- DFP: Statement of Internal Control, DAO (DFP) 25/2003

Guidance

The organisation should develop indicators that demonstrate the risks associated with fire safety management as part of the overall risk management process. One indicator is the compliance with this standard. Ideally the indicators should be designed to demonstrate improvement in the risks associated with fire safety over time and the minimisation of unwanted fire signals. The number of indicators devised should be sufficient to monitor fire safety. It is not necessarily the case that the Board will use all the indicators. The Board should select those that are useful for ensuring that the internal controls are working satisfactorily.

Ideally, an annual report on fire safety that includes the key indicators should be produced for the Board/risk management committee.

Examples of Verification

- Indicators
- Evidence of usage at all levels
- Incident reporting records
- Written Fire Risk assessments

Links with other standards

All standards (generic criterion)

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| HPSS | Controls Assurance Standard | Fire Safety |
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CRITERION 18

The system in place for managing fire safety, including risk management arrangements, is monitored and reviewed by management and the board in order to make improvements to the system.

Source

- DFP: Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control, DAO (DFP) 5/2001
- Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control, HSS (PPM) 3/2002
- DFP: Statement of Internal Control, DAO (DFP) 25/2003
- Northern Ireland *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000* The Stationery Office, Belfast

Guidance

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and the Board to monitor and review all aspects of the system for fire safety management, including:

- Accountability arrangements
- Processes, including risk management arrangements
- Capability
- Outcomes
- Internal audit findings

In some organizations, a specialist fire safety committee or group, perhaps part of the estates function, may review the detailed issues surrounding management of fire safety risks. The Risk Management Committee will play a significant role in monitoring and reviewing all aspects of the system as a basis for establishing significant information that should be presented to, and dealt with by the Board. The Health and Safety Committee may also play a significant role in reviewing fire safety information. The Audit Committee should review internal audit findings.

Examples of Verification

- Internal audit report(s)
- Specialist fire safety committee/group minutes
- Estates management minutes
- Audit Committee minutes
- Risk Management Committee minutes
- Health and Safety Committee minutes

Links with other standards

All standards (generic criterion)

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| HPSS | Controls Assurance Standard | Fire Safety |
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CRITERION 19

The board should seek independent assurance that an appropriate and effective system of managing fire safety is in place and that the necessary level of controls and monitoring are being implemented.

Source

- NHS Executive (1999) *Guidelines for Implementing Controls Assurance in the NHS: Guidance for Directors*. NHS Executive, London
- HSS (PPM) 8/2002 – Risk Management in the Health and Personal Social Services.
- HSS (PPM) 13/2002 – Governance in the HPSS: Risk Management.
- HSS (PPM) 5/2003 – Governance in the HPSS: Risk Management and Controls Assurance. Northern Ireland

Guidance

Management should consider the range of independent internal and external assurance available, and avoid duplication and omission.

The adequacy of the independent assurance will depend upon the scope and depth of the work performed; bearing in mind its timeliness and the competency of the staff performing it. The level of reliance that can be placed upon such assurances should consider, among other things, the professional standing of the assessor, their level of independence, and whether they could reasonably expect to provide an objective opinion. It is important that any review that takes place results in a report, recommendations for action where necessary, and the retention of sufficient evidence to enable other potential reviewers to rely upon the work already undertaken. The reports should be made to the appropriate sub-committee of the Board.

Management arrangements will include an internal audit function, as well as other quality control and assurance functions such as clinical audit. The internal audit function is required to give an opinion to the Board on the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall system of internal control. In doing so, they will seek to work with, and rely on the work of, other review bodies as far as is practical.

External assurance for this standard may be gained from visits by:

- Health & Safety Executive
- Health Estates
- Local Fire Service
- R & I Units

Examples of Verification

- Schedule of planned reviews

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- Copy of reports
- Committee minutes
- Action plans
- Notes of follow up of actions
- Evidence file
- Details of staff involved in the review.

Links with other standards

All standards (generic criterion)