

## Module 2 - The Role of the Fire Warden

### Introduction

The role of the Fire Warden is to **promote fire safety in the workplace** and the Fire Warden undertake many duties, including liaising with the Responsible Person to ensure that fire safety is monitored during routine activities and in the event of the fire alarm being raised. The Fire Warden also assists with the development and updating of evacuation and emergency plans, and liaises with the Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire Warden can also be known as the Fire Marshal.

The number of Fire Wardens needed in the workplace depends upon the Workplaces structure and complexity.



### Module Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module you will be able to:

- Explain the role of the fire warden and who they liaise with
- Explain the role of the emergency services
- Identify training required and CPD record to be kept

### Role of the Fire Warden

The Fire Warden has many duties and responsibilities to carry out during normal working hours, with additional responsibilities in the event of the fire alarm being raised. For large organisations and businesses there are likely to be more than one fire warden, with different wardens allocated different departments and smaller areas of responsibility, as it would be too much for one Fire Warden to deal with alone.

### Activity 6 relates to the above

### Safety and Security Checks Carried out by the Fire Warden

The Fire Warden promotes fire safety within the workplace and carries out checks that are recorded in the fire log, reporting any hazards or breaches to the Responsible Person. Some of the duties carried out and recorded include:

- Checking all fire door and fire extinguisher signage is in place and clear.
- Checking fire doors are closed and do not have anything propping them open such as a fire extinguisher or box of paper. The Fire warden checks they are able to shut securely, so that smoke is contained and that the fire doors help to keep fire contained to allow for people to escape safely
- Checking of all escape routes to check that they are clear and do not have any obstructions and can be used effectively and easily. For workplaces with many staff, a lot of people may need to use this route as a means of escape at the same time
- Checking that final exit doors (leading to outside) are free and clear; ensuring that there is nothing blocking them from the outside (cars or plants) and there

is not any maintenance work being done that could inhibit them being used (such as drain maintenance)

- Checking of fire extinguishers that they are in their correct location and are the correct type for the area and processes being carried out. The Fire warden checks that they are not damaged and test dates and maintenance schedules are up to date.
- Checking of fire alarms and that sounders can be heard in the all areas, each time the alarm is tested on a weekly basis they need to make sure that it can be heard in all of the different rooms and locations and can be heard over workplace noise particularly if there is machinery running
- Checking that all corridors and walkways are clear and are free of combustible materials
- Checking that all notice boards with safety information displayed are visible and up to date
- Checking that any temporary storage does not block access or inhibit escape
- Checking other equipment such as evac chairs are in place and in a usable condition and procedures are in place for persons needing assistance
- Checking areas that may be at risk from arson
- Checking all break glass units / manual call points are easy to get to, work and are not blocked by stock or equipment. The break glass units need to be clearly identified
- Checking means of escape and emergency lighting signs are working and lit
- Checking of the outdoor area is safe and there is a clear route to the assembly point
- Checking that assembly point is clear and easily identifiable
- Checking of electrical equipment such as wiring and plugs that wires are not trapped and plugs overloaded. All faulty electrical equipment to be reported and not used and mobile equipment is tested (PAT Tested).

#### **Activity 7 relates to the above**

### **Safety and Security Duties of the Fire Warden in the Event of the Alarm Being Raised**

When the fire alarm is raised the Fire Warden needs to carry out responsibilities identified in the fire risk assessment and evacuation plan which include:

- Assist with evacuation and carry out a sweep (thorough check) of their designated area including checking toilets and stockrooms for persons trapped or who have not yet evacuated. The Fire Warden will usually be the last person to leave for the assembly point.

- Ensure that the emergency services have been called and understand where they are coming to and which entrance to use. For large workplaces they may arrange for personnel in high visibility clothing to go and meet the fire engine and direct them in.
- Check disabled persons' safe refuges in case someone is waiting for assistance in evacuation.
- Fight the fire with an extinguisher only if it is safe to do so, without increasing risk to themselves or others and only if practically trained in extinguisher use
- Ensure doors and windows are closed as the building is evacuated to contain the spread of fire, heat and smoke
- Coordination of roll call with person in charge of the assembly point
- Liaison with Fire and Rescue Service particularly if the fire is within their area of responsibility.

### Activity 8 relates to the above

#### **Role of the Fire Warden in Liaising with the Responsible Person**

The role of the Fire Warden includes directly reporting to and working with the Responsible Person, these duties include:

- Assisting the Responsible Person with fire risk assessments when required
- Assisting with the development of evacuation and emergency plans particularly from your own area of responsibility including measures for people needing assistance
- Reporting to the Responsible Person any unsafe practice or issues identified in the Fire Warden checks and observations.
- Participating in Fire Drills and alarm tests and record finding in Fire Log.

#### **Role of the Fire Warden if they are away from their area of responsibility**

From time to time the Fire Warden may need to be away from their designated area to be able to carry out their duties. In this instance another Fire Warden should deputise for them in their absence, for this reason there may be more than one Fire Warden for each workplace or department. If the alarm is raised when the Fire Warden is absent they must report to the assembly point and inform the person in charge that their area has not been swept and checked.

#### **Fire Safety Briefing**

One of the main roles of the Fire Warden is to undertake fire safety briefings for new members of staff, visitors and contractors; information included in the briefing consists of:

- Peoples nominated roles and responsibilities (who Fire Wardens are)
- Procedures for employees
- Procedures for external personnel (visitors and contractors)
- Special arrangements for disabled persons
- Fire prevention measures
- Fire protection measures

- Management of fire doors and how to open and use them
- Completion of checks and checklists and relevant record keeping
- Implementation of good housekeeping
- The risks from any flammable materials
- Special arrangements for high-risk areas or high-risk activities such as welding
- What to do on discovering a fire
- What to do on hearing the alarm
- How to call the fire service
- Means of escape and nearest route
- Emergency evacuation plan
- The findings of the fire risk assessment and implementation of control measures
- How to operate and read the alarm panel (if fitted).

### **Role of the Fire Warden in Liaising with the External Personnel**

Where visitors and other relevant people such as customers and contractors are coming on to the workplace they need to record when they enter and leave the workplace. You need to record where they are going/who they are seeing, so that the Fire Warden can include them in the roll call at the assembly point if the fire alarm sounds, and check for them when sweeping their area. The visitors must be fully inducted and made aware of what to do in the event of discovering a fire or the fire alarm being sounded.

Contractors must have hot works permits if they are bringing sources of ignition into the workplace and have a written procedure in place for the activities they are doing.

### **Activity 9 relates to the above**

### **Role of the Fire Warden in Liaising with the Emergency Services**

The Fire Warden will liaise with the Senior Fire Officer from the Fire and Rescue Service to confirm sweeps have been carried out and report any unaccounted for personnel so that they can be searched for promptly.

### **Role of the Emergency Services**

In the event of a fire breaking out, it may not be just the Fire and Rescue Service that attend, but also the Ambulance Service and Police. During the fire the Senior Fire Officer takes charge and will give the all clear if and when it is safe for people to return to the workplace. The Emergency services deal with injured persons and maintain safety.



## Module 2 – The Fire Warden

### Activity 6

Look at your workplace as a whole and make a list of the different departments and sections and what they do.

- a) Find out the names of the Fire Warden(s) for each department or section.
- b) Write a short statement about how you found this information out and any sources of reference that you used and record your findings below.

a)

Department Title	What does the department do?	Name(s) of the Fire Warden(s)

- b) Write a short statement to explain where and how you found this information out

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### Activity 7

Obtain a copy of the fire safety checklist for your workplace or department from the fire log. Attach the document to your Activities and Assessment Workbook as evidence and record when the checklist was last carried out.

Take a look around your workplace or department and make a list any fire safety issues that you can identify affecting people's means of escape; this may be in the form of obscured lighting and signs or partially blocked corridors. Record your findings in the table below and state what needs to be done to make the route clear or sign visible.

Area	Description of the problem	Action needed to rectify the problem

### Activity 8

The Fire Warden needs to know which members of staff are on site at any given time. In the box below write a statement how staff sign in and out in your workplace to show if they are on the premises or not. Attach a **BLANK** copy of any signing in and out sheets used to your workbook if relevant.

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If you use a signing in/out sheet attach a **blank** copy to your Workbook.

### Activity 9

The Fire Warden needs to know of any visitors or contractors (relevant persons) that are on site, to use the information for a roll call in the event of the fire alarm being raised.

- a) Attach a **blank** copy of the visitor signing in book to your Workbook to show your own workplace procedures.
- b) When visitors or contractors come on to site and sign in they need to be made aware of the workplace procedures affecting them and what to do in the event of the fire alarm being raised. List below what information they are given and the format that the information is provided in e.g. verbally or written handout.

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Describe the format in which the information is provided.

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