

ACT Public Service  
Occupational Health & Safety  
Policy No: P-06

**FIRE SAFETY AND  
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

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POLICY STATEMENT:

This policy provides guidance on the establishment of an Emergency Control Organisation (ECO), the preparation of emergency procedures for buildings, the training of wardens and staff, and fire safety precautions.

SIGNED:

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# FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Emergencies in buildings can arise from a number of causes including fire, bomb threat or suspicious item found, structural faults, earthquake, chemical spill, leakage of gas or civil disorder. A prompt and organised response by occupants of the building to such emergencies is essential to the welfare of the building occupants and to the preservation of the Government's assets.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to formalise emergency procedures and fire safety precautions across ACT Public Service agencies, so that those who are required to take actions related to the protection of life and property from the effects of fire and other emergencies, have a reference and a basis for their decisions and actions.
- 1.3 The objective of this policy is to provide principles for the establishment and maintenance of a system which:
  - (a) ensures appropriate preventive measures are taken to minimise the incidence, size and spread of fires;
  - (b) provides a fire-safe environment for all persons on, or in the vicinity of, ACT Government property;
  - (c) establishes proper emergency evacuation procedures and provides appropriate training for building occupants;
  - (d) minimises risk to emergency services personnel;
  - (e) minimises financial loss due to fire damage of property and contents;
  - (f) minimises disruption of services to the public;
  - (g) encourages entry of the ACT Emergency Services into ACTPS occupied buildings for the purpose of familiarisation;
  - (h) provides levels of fire protection at least consistent with Australian Standards;
  - (I) applies Australian Standards relating to fire protection matters to ACTPS workplaces, equipment and procedures; and,
  - (j) minimises the effects of fire, smoke and extinguishing media on the environment.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Emergency**- any event which arises internally or externally which may adversely affect the safety of persons in a building and requires immediate response by the occupants.
- 2.2 **Emergency Control Organisation (ECO)**- a structured organisation of persons to organise and supervise the safe movement of occupants within a building and its surrounds in an emergency.

- 2.3 **Emergency planning committee-** a committee responsible for establishing an emergency plan and setting up an ECO.
- 2.4 **Fire safety-** a generic term covering all matters related to the safety against fire. It includes: protection, prevention and fighting.
- 2.5 **Fire protection-** covers the things incorporated in premises, designed to:
- minimise risk of outbreak of fire
  - control and limit spread of fire and products of combustion
  - ensure the safety of occupants and to facilitate evacuation
  - facilitate the role of fire fighters.
- 2.6 **Fire prevention-** is the action taken and procedures adopted by owners and occupiers to:
- ensure good housekeeping
  - prepare and implement Fire Orders and emergency planning
  - organise occupants for emergencies (including training)
  - ensure that fire fighting equipment is properly maintained
  - arrange for fire safety surveys.
- 2.7 **Fire fighting-** is the action taken by persons (staff or fire brigade) to extinguish fires and to reduce damage by fire, including the rescue of people and the salvage of goods.

### **3 STANDARDS**

- 3.1 There are a number of Australian Standards relating to fire safety and emergency procedures. These are listed at Appendix 1; 'List of Australian Standards relating to Fire Protection'.  
Of special importance and of particular use in the drafting of this policy is AS 3745 'Emergency control organization and procedures for buildings'.
- 3.2 ACT Public Service (ACTPS) aims to provide workplaces and systems of work which meet the provisions contained in the relevant Standards.

### **4 EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 An Emergency Planning Committee should be formed at each building or work location housing ACTPS personnel. Many work locations are in shared accommodation and the major tenant may have already assisted in the formation of a committee. All tenants should be encouraged to be represented.

- 4.2 Representation should include senior officers from occupant groups, building owners/agents or managers and when appointed, the Chief and Deputy Warden. Persons appointed to draw up the emergency plans for a building should be competent to do so. Normally meetings of the Emergency Planning Committee would be chaired by a senior officer of the major tenant.
- 4.3 **Duties.** The Emergency Planning Committee should -
- (a) establish and implement an emergency plan;
  - (b) ensure that personnel are appointed to all positions on the ECO;
  - (c) arrange for the training of ECO personnel;
  - (d) arrange appropriate fire safety audits;
  - (e) arrange for the conduct of evacuation exercises; and
  - (f) review the effectiveness of evacuation exercises and fire safety audits; and revise the emergency plan.
- 4.4 **Planning Principles.** The emergency plan should -
- (a) state clearly its purpose and scope;
  - (b) identify the building to which it applies;
  - (c) be appropriate to the size and complexity of the building, the number of staff, type of operations, and the assessed threats which are deemed possible (the ACT Fire Brigade should be consulted);
  - (d) through emergency procedures, define control and coordination arrangements for the possible threats and the roles and responsibilities of all persons expected to be involved; and
  - (e) be flexible enough to cover all types of emergencies and to deal with rapidly changing developments, be easy to use and amend.
- 4.5 **Planning Considerations.** It is important that the plan be kept as simple as possible, though a range of aspects must be considered. The plan should provide for contingencies such as unavailability of fire brigade and loss of any critical escape route. The following matters should be considered:
- (a) fire detection and suppression equipment;
  - (b) escape routes and exits, lifts and escalators;
  - (c) mobility impaired staff or clients;
  - (d) bomb threat search procedures;
  - (e) assembly areas; and
  - (f) special duties especially secure shut-down e.g. cash handling, detention procedures, medical or computer operations;

## 5 EMERGENCY CONTROL ORGANISATION

- 5.1 In order to facilitate the orderly evacuation of a floor or floors of a building in the event of fire or other emergency an Emergency Control Organisation (ECO) shall be set up from among occupants of the building.

- 5.2 **Structure.** The ECO should consist of a number of persons at a specified location, preferably at ground floor level in close proximity to the Master Emergency Communication Point. The location of which should conform with AS 2220. The ECO should also comprise of other trained persons at each separate level or location consistent with the layout of the building.
- 5.3 **Organisation.** The ECO should consist of the following :
- (a) Chief Warden;
  - (b) Communication Officer;
  - (c) Floor Wardens (or Area Warden);
  - (d) Wardens; and
  - (e) First Aid Officers.
- 5.4 **Attributes, number and identification of ECO personnel.** Persons appointed to the ECO should -
- (a) have leadership qualities and command authority;
  - (b) have sound decision-making skills and be capable of remaining calm under pressure;
  - (c) generally be present at their normal workstation during work hours;
  - (d) be physically capable of performing the required duties.
- 5.4.1 *Chief Warden.* As well as possessing the general attributes listed above, the Chief Warden should have a good knowledge of the building layout and have undergone appropriate training to perform the role.
- 5.4.2 *Communication Officer.* The Communication Officer should be competent in the use of the communication equipment in the building and have a suitable voice to provide clear directions.
- 5.4.3 *Floor Warden or Area Warden.* Australian Standard AS 3745 recommends that the ECO responsibilities be attached to a position so that its permanent or temporary occupant carries out the necessary ECO functions. The Public Service Commission and the Commonwealth Fire Board do not support this view unless that position is solely concerned with warden duties, or where the duties complement the other duties of the position, e.g. Fire Safety Officer or Security Officer. In any event it is essential that the persons appointed possess the attributes listed above.
- 5.4.4 *Warden.* Wardens should be appointed to assist the floor or area wardens on the basis of one for each twenty persons on the floor or in the area. It is preferable that two Wardens should be selected from each Agency/Section occupying an area or floor.

5.4.5 *First Aid Officer.* The First Aid Officers are appointed on the basis of their qualifications and their availability to perform the required duties. ACTPS OH&S Policy No. P-03 outlines the minimum standards for the provision of workplace first aid.

5.4.6 *Deputies.* To ensure continuity of the wardens' functions whilst wardens are absent, deputies should be appointed. Deputies should possess the personal attributes listed above, be fully trained and prepared to take over the primary roles as required.

5.4.7 *Warden Identification.* The control of emergencies will be greatly assisted if occupants know who is on the ECO, how to contact them and to quickly identify them. Once Wardens have been selected and recruited, a list of names and contact points including telephone numbers should be produced and circulated. Wardens should be identified during an emergency by wearing coloured safety helmets as follows :

- (a) Chief Warden and Deputy Chief Warden - white helmet.
- (b) Floor Warden or Area Warden - yellow helmet.
- (c) Wardens - red helmet.
- (d) First Aid Officer - green helmet.

The Communication Officer would not normally wear a helmet. Helmets should be prominently marked with the wearer's title and floor or area number as appropriate.

## 5.5 **Principal roles and responsibilities.**

It should be clearly understood that the primary role of all ECO members is not to combat the emergency but to ensure the safety of the occupants and where necessary, ensure an effective evacuation. Each officer in the ECO should have clearly defined responsibilities and duties as follows:

5.5.1 *Chief Warden.* The Chief Warden shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to fire, evacuation or other emergency in the building until the arrival of the Fire Brigade.

The Chief Warden shall -

- (a) be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of all Floor Wardens, with telephone numbers and locations within the building; this list shall be prominently displayed on each floor;
- (b) be responsible for ensuring that he/she and the Deputy Warden are not simultaneously absent from the building and that the Deputy Warden possesses the skills required to perform as a replacement;
- (c) in order to be able to effectively perform the role, have a complete knowledge of the building, the position of all fire fighting equipment and be familiar with all special risk areas;
- (d) ensure that all personnel know the evacuation procedure and assembly areas; and

- (e) carry out inspections and report on any defects of fire fighting equipment and fire doors, cluttered exit routes and poor housekeeping, including the careless use/storage of flammable materials and the careless use of heating appliances and other electrical equipment.

On becoming aware of an emergency the Chief Warden shall take the following actions:

- (a) ascertain the nature of the emergency and determine the appropriate course of action;
- (b) ensure that the appropriate emergency service has been notified;
- (c) ensure that the Floor or Area Wardens are kept informed of the situation;
- (d) if the situation warrants it, initiate the evacuation procedures.
- (e) brief the Fire Brigade or other emergency services personnel upon arrival, on the nature, scope and location of the emergency and thereafter act on the brigade's Senior Officer's instructions.

5.5.2 *Deputy Chief Warden.* The Deputy Chief Warden shall be required to assume the responsibilities of the Chief Warden if that officer is unavailable, otherwise assist as required.

5.5.3 *Communication Officer.* The Communication Officer, on becoming aware of the emergency, should be responsible to the Chief Warden for communicating and recording information and instructions to and between the emergency services, the Chief Warden, Floor Wardens and occupants.

5.5.4 *Floor or Area Wardens.* The Floor or Area Wardens should be conversant with all aspects of their respective areas in regard to the location of the fire alarms, emergency warning and intercommunication system (EWIS) and other communication devices, exits and alternate means of egress, the existence of dead-end corridors, blind passages, obscure rooms, etc., and the location and use of fire fighting equipment. The Floor or Area Wardens should report to the Chief Warden any noticed defects in equipment, obstructed exits, misuse of fire doors and poor housekeeping, and arrange for and notify a replacement when not available to carry out their role. The Floor or Area Warden should know at all times the exact number of occupants in their area and any special requirements of those occupants, eg. nature of any disabilities which would require special attention in the event of an emergency.

On hearing an alarm or on becoming aware of an emergency the Floor or Area Wardens should :

- (a) communicate with the Chief Fire Warden by whatever means available and act on his/her instructions;
- (b) direct Wardens to check the area for any abnormal situation;
- (c) attack fire with fire fighting equipment if it is safe to do so;

- (d) commence evacuation if the situation in their area warrants this;
- (e) advise the Chief Warden as soon as possible of the circumstances and of the action taken; and
- (f) implement the emergency procedures for their area, initial assembly, directing occupants to the nearest, safe exit route, and upon arrival at the designated external assembly area call the roll and report result to the Chief Warden.

5.5.5 *Wardens.* Occupants appointed as Wardens may be required to perform a number of different activities in relation to emergencies, including the following :

- (a) act as Floor or Area Warden;
- (b) call appropriate emergency services;
- (c) operate intercommunication system;
- (d) carry out a search of the area to ensure all persons are accounted for, provided it is safe to do so;
- (e) ensure an orderly flow of occupants during evacuation, including the provision of assistance to mobility-impaired occupants (obtaining assistance from fellow staff requires some preplanning);
- (g) act as leaders of groups moving to nominated assembly areas;
- (h) operate fire fighting equipment if safe to do so; and if the need arises
- (j) meet and report to emergency services on their arrival.

5.5.6 *First Aid Officers.* The responsibilities of First Aid Officers are detailed in the ACTPS policy on first aid in the workplace (ACT Occupational Health & Safety Policy No.P-03).

In an emergency evacuation a First Aid Officer shall carry the first aid kit with them so as to be able to render treatment to casualties. If the situation arises that casualties exist in an area to be evacuated and if such casualties are disabled at that time, the First Aid Officer shall remain with them (provided it is safe to do so) until no further treatment or assistance is required, or until ambulance, other medical or emergency services personnel take over. The disabled should be moved to a safe area adjacent to the fire stairs or exits and remain there until the remainder of staff have evacuated, the disabled should then, if possible, be assisted from the building.

## **6 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

6.1 All Emergency Procedures issued should include the following information

- A description of the building and all means of exit, with reference to any special circumstances that may exist at the particular location;
- The types of emergencies that may be anticipated within the building;

- An explanation of the Emergency Control Organisation and a list of the Branches, Agencies or any non-Government tenants serving on the Committee;
- The duties, responsibilities and procedures to be adopted by each of the following -
  - (a) Wardens, Security Officers, Telephone Switchboard Operator and First Aid Officers;
  - (b) Fire Brigade;
  - (c) Police and Emergency Services personnel.
- Clear instructions for all occupants to follow in the event of an alarm, including evacuation procedures (with reference to persons with disabilities or special needs) and the designation of assembly areas outside the building so that after evacuation, staff can be checked by Floor Wardens. It should be stressed to staff that they must report to such areas immediately;
- A summary of Emergency Procedures for ready reference. See Appendix 3 "Action in the Event of Fire".

6.2 Emergency Procedures should be referred to the ACT Fire Brigade for their concurrence.

6.3 Following ACT Fire Brigade concurrence, the procedures should be submitted to the responsible Chief Officer for his/her approval.

6.4 Copies of the Emergency Procedures should be provided to all Wardens and made available to all staff.

6.5 Instructions of action to be taken by the person detecting fire, the name and telephone number of Floor Wardens and a plan showing EXITS should be displayed in key areas such as notice boards and lift lobbies.

## 7 TRAINING

7.1 **Education.** During an emergency the smooth operation of planned procedures can only be achieved if all members of the ECO and other building occupants are thoroughly familiar with what is expected of them. It is therefore necessary to institute a system of education and periodic evacuation exercises.

Training develops patterns of behaviour in staff so that in an emergency valuable time is not lost in unproductive actions.

ECO personnel shall meet regularly and such meetings should also be used as short training sessions to maintain the interest of personnel and to improve their knowledge and skills. In addition to general fire safety, bomb threat, and evacuation procedures, training sessions could include methods of assisting mobility-impaired persons, human behaviour in emergency situations and resuscitation techniques.

Each ECO member shall be sufficiently trained and familiar with aspects of their area to be able to carry out their role. The ACT Fire Brigade is available for the provision of advice on fire safety matters and for the training of Wardens. Training of Wardens should include basic building design safety and safety survival skills in buildings. They should also be educated in the possible toxic constituents of smoke, be made aware of the unpredictable synergistic action of smoke cocktails and of likely health effects. The Commonwealth Fire Board conducts regular training courses, "Planning for Emergencies in Buildings" and "Emergencies Awareness for Senior Management".

Every occupant of the building shall be advised of the action to take in the event of an emergency and each shall be given the name, location and telephone number of the Warden of the floor or area where they work. Occupants should be encouraged to approach their Warden for information, clarification of procedures and to report on perceived problem areas. Floor Wardens shall ensure that all new occupants are advised of the relevant procedures and are shown the location of first-attack fire fighting equipment and the evacuation routes. Arrangements should be made for regular short demonstrations explaining the various types of first-attack fire fighting equipment, their uses and limitations, and the correct methods of operation.

7.2 **Practice Evacuations.** Evacuation exercises form the most important part of staff training.

7.2.1 *General.* After emergency procedures have been written, at least one practice in conjunction with the appropriate emergency service is required to ensure that the procedures are satisfactory. Once the organisation has established that the procedures are satisfactory and workable, a program of evacuation exercises should be established for at least one year ahead.

Multi-occupancy buildings require more detailed planning and greater communication amongst representatives of the various organisations occupying the premises. Non-participation in evacuation exercises is discouraged, though some organisations may have valid reasons not to participate. For this, and other reasons, voice announcements associated with practice evacuations should highlight that it is a practice drill. The ACT Fire Brigade should be notified of the details of practice evacuations in advance and at the time if initiating the practice will result in an alarm being transmitted to the fire station.

7.2.2 *The first evacuation exercise.* All occupants must be briefed by the Wardens prior to the first evacuation. This briefing should cover:

- (a) the identity of the Wardens;
- (b) the alarm system and emergency warning and intercommunication system (EWIS) details;

- (c) actions that occupants are required to take in response to alarms;
- (d) marshalling area for their floor or area;
- (e) the evacuation route(s) they are to take;
- (f) assembly or designated alternative areas which provide safe refuge internally or externally; and
- (g) what is required at the completion of the exercise.

This briefing should be undertaken through the Warden system thus enabling the occupants to identify their Warden(s) and become aware of their duties. If the premises are large or a multi-storey building a partial evacuation should be undertaken in the first instance, to test the procedures. Once these procedures have been shown to be workable then the first large-scale evacuation can be held.

7.2.3 *Subsequent evacuation exercises.* With the experience gained from the first evacuation, subsequent evacuations can become more realistic and with limited notice.

7.2.4 *Frequency of evacuation exercises.* There are a number of factors which influence the frequency of practising for emergency situations. These include the size and configuration of the premises and the type of occupancy. The period between full evacuations can vary between one and three years. The period between partial evacuations can vary between quarterly and yearly.

7.2.5 *Debriefing.* Once a practice evacuation has been completed, it is necessary for members of the ECO to meet and discuss any problems that may have been identified and to amend the plan where necessary.

## **8 PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

8.1 Prevention of fires is as important as the development of efficient means of fighting them. Wardens and all other occupants should be fully aware of the need to avoid dangerous practices, of the precautions to be taken to minimise the chance of fire occurring and the danger to life in the event of a fire getting out of control.

8.2 Wardens should be encouraged to take note of, and to bring to the attention of the House Warden and/or Heads of their respective Sections-

- any accumulation of litter which might increase the risk of fire;
- incorrect use or storage of flammable materials;
- the placement of furniture which might impair free egress; and
- other similar hazards.

- 8.3 Wardens should also check that-
- fire doors and smoke doors are kept shut except during use or are only held open by approved automatic release devices and that these doors are not wedged or fixed in an open position;
  - passages are kept free of obstructions; and
  - fire extinguishers are correctly mounted, signposted, and maintained and that any accidental discharges or damage is immediately reported.
- 8.4 The keeping of flammable liquids in office areas should be permitted only in special circumstances and then only in minimal quantities. In buildings where the parking of cars is permitted, notices should be posted prohibiting car owners from carrying out repairs or handling fuel on the premises.
- 8.5 All occupants should be encouraged to observe the greatest care in the use of matches, portable heaters, electrical appliances and other possible sources of ignition and to keep their immediate surroundings neat and tidy.
- 8.6 A more comprehensive fire prevention checklist is detailed at Appendix 2, 'Fire Housekeeping Checklist'.

## **9 INDEMNIFICATION**

- 9.1 ACT Treasury Directions, Section 18, Insurance and Litigation, deals with Territory policy in relation to insurance matters and arrangements for processing claims made involving the Territory in litigation and certain claims not involving litigation. The Territory's general policy is to support officers in the event of court cases arising out of the performance of official duties. (Section 18.25).
- 9.2 The payment of costs and damages is covered in Treasury Directions, Section 18.30 to 18.32. Section 18.31 states: " ..... where an officer was involved in an emergency evacuation ..... the Territory will pay any sum including costs awarded by a Court or negotiated in a settlement without recourse to the officer unless it is found that the officer acted with criminal intent."

## **10 INFORMATION SHEETS**

In order to provide a more detailed coverage of some fire safety and emergency issues and to make regular updates on specific information covered in this policy, information sheets will be drafted, discussed at the relevant ACTPS OH&S Committee meetings and issued to the appropriate officers.

APPENDIX 1  
LIST OF AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS RELATING TO  
FIRE PROTECTION

A sectional listing of Australian Standards relating to fire protection is available from any office of Standards Australia. In the ACT this office is located at :  
2a Mugga Way Red Hill, Ph. 273 2349.

The list of Standards outlined below provides the AS numbers for fire related standards which were available at time of drafting this policy.

**Emergency Procedures :** A major reference utilised in drafting this policy specifically relates to emergency procedures : AS 3745 (Emergency control organization and procedures for buildings).

**Building Design :** The following Standards relate to specific building design aspects including combustibility, flammability and fire-resistance of building materials, fire doors and dampers, and airconditioning and ventilation requirements in relation to fire safety:

AS 1530, AS 1668, AS 1682, AS 1890, AS 1905, AS 2665 and AS 3600.

**Detection and Suppression :** Australian Standards providing guidance on thermal detectors, alarm, emergency warning and intercommunication systems, and fire sprinkler systems are as follows :

AS 1603, AS 1670, AS2036, AS 2118, AS 2220 and AS 3689.

**Extinguishing Equipment :** Guidance on the specific properties of a range of portable fire extinguishers and hose reels, together with identification colour coding can be found in the following Standards:

AS 1221, AS 1687, AS 1841, AS 1842, AS 1844, AS 1845, AS 1846, AS 1847, AS 1848, AS 1849, AS 1850, AS 2419, AS 2441, AS 2444, AS 2792 and AS 3676. SAA MP26 is a portable fire extinguisher selection chart.

**Maintenance :** The maintenance of fire protection equipment, including hose reels, extinguishers, precaution features of airconditioning systems, fire detection and alarm systems are to be found in :

AS 1851, parts 1 to 9.

**Other fire related Standards :** A variety of Standards exist which provide guidance on a range of specific fire related issues, the more applicable Standards for ACTPS work environments include:

AS 1596 (liquid petroleum storage and handling), AS 1678 (Emergency procedure guides- Transport), AS 2293 (Emergency evacuation lighting), AS 2508 (Safe storage and handling information cards for hazardous materials), AS 3000 (SAA Wiring Rules), AS 3504 (Fire blankets) and SAA MP24 (Use of lifts in emergencies)

## APPENDIX 2 FIRE HOUSEKEEPING CHECKLIST

Buildings and property should be checked to ensure that the following housekeeping requirements are met and remedial action taken where necessary so that fire hazards are kept to a minimum.

Most fires can be traced to human carelessness or negligence in the handling of sources of ignition or hazardous substances.

### **General Housekeeping**

It is important to ensure that:

- excessive stores, unused equipment, waste material and rubbish are removed;
- adequate storage facilities are provided and utilised for loose paper records;
- there is no storage of any goods or equipment under stairways;
- quantities of flammable liquids are kept to a minimum and held in proper flammable liquids cabinets or removed to separate storage areas;
- receptacles for cigarette butts and smokers' waste are provided in public areas and are cleared daily, and are not used as general rubbish bins;
- metal rubbish bins, not plastic ones, are provided for normal waste material;
- metal rubbish bins for waste rags or materials impregnated with flammable liquids are provided with lids or covers, and rubbish is removed regularly;
- furniture, curtains, towels, paper products and the like are kept clear of cooking and heating appliances;
- exhaust fans and air conditioning equipment are operating correctly and kept clean;
- hoods, filters and ducts over cooking equipment are kept clean and free of any build-up of grease and oils. Accumulation of these can represent a real fire hazard;
- holding areas for waste materials are closely supervised to ensure any excess waste material is not held and is regularly disposed of to safe areas;
- "NO SMOKING" signs are prominently displayed in lifts, office and other
- non-smoking areas, and areas where flammable materials are used or stored;
- any spillage or accumulation of flammable liquids, oils, grease, etc., is removed;
- chimneys, flues and heaters are checked for soundness and any build-up of deposits removed;
- no internal combustion engines ( e.g., lawn mowers, motor cycles ) are parked inside residential buildings or accommodation blocks; and
- any reserve water storages are kept as full as practicable.

### **Means of Egress**

In emergency situations, clear and safe exit routes and the fire compartmentalisation of buildings are crucial for the welfare of the building's occupants and assets, and the safety of emergency services personnel.

Ensure that :

- escape ways are kept clear of furniture, stores and machines;

- fire doors and smoke control doors are capable of opening and closing correctly and all hinges, latches, magnetic door holders, etc., are operating satisfactorily;
- fire doors and smoke doors are not held open by wedges or other unauthorised means;
- EXIT doors on escape routes are readily openable during occupied hours; and
- EXIT signs and other direction guides are clearly visible and properly maintained.

### **Emergency Procedures**

For an effective response to emergencies it is necessary to ensure that:

- evacuation procedures are adequate and regularly practised; and
- new members of staff are made fully aware of emergency procedures, including names of their Wardens, basic fire safety practices and location of installed fire equipment.

### **Electrical Equipment**

The dangers of substandard, poorly maintained or wrongly utilised electrical equipment creates the need to ensure that:

- intercommunication equipment is checked regularly and is operated correctly;
- electrical appliances are switched off and disconnected at power outlets when not in use;
- emergency lighting is operational and checked regularly;
- double adaptors are limited to one for each power outlet and are not used on light outlets;
- only one heating appliance is permitted from each power outlet;
- faulty power outlets, switches, plugs and sockets (including any with scorch marks) are replaced;
- faulty or worn electrical flex or leads are replaced;
- failed light bulbs or tubes are replaced; and
- portable power outlet banks are not used unless fitted with circuit breaking capacity to overcome overload potential.

### **Fire Equipment**

It is important to ensure that :

- fire equipment is maintained regularly - check dates on service tags;
- fire extinguishers are in place and are properly mounted on brackets;
- detection and sprinkler systems are maintained regularly - check log book; and goods are not stacked to ceiling level,
  - for sprinkler systems a clear space of 0.5 metres is required to be maintained below the plane of the sprinkler head deflectors,
  - for detector systems a clear space to permit the passage of heat or smoke to the detector head is essential.

## **Outdoors**

The building's surrounds can often be overlooked when checking for fire hazards. It is vital to address those external factors which present a risk to the building by ensuring that :

- incinerators, including spark arrestors and lids, are in good order, and surrounds are kept free of combustible material;
- roof guttering is empty of debris;
- long grass is cut, shrubs and trees are timmed back if dangerously close to buildings, and the cut material is removed;
- ash from incinerators is disposed of seperately and regularly by use of metal containers with lids or covers; and
- any fire restrictions are observed.

APPENDIX 3  
ACTION IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

1. **Person Detecting Fire.**

In the event of any outbreak of fire, however small, it will be the duty of the person detecting it to-

- alert persons nearby and request assistance;
- call fire brigade by pressing nearest fire alarm or by telephone (The emergency number should be prominently displayed);
- inform switchboard attendant of the location of the fire;
- summon the Floor Warden; and
- operate first-attack fire fighting equipment, if -
  - it appears capable of extinguishing the fire;
  - the size of the fire is not a hazard to their safety;
  - the level of the smoke is not an obvious health hazard; and
  - a secure escape route is available as fire extinguishing operations will result in a considerable increase in smoke production and loss of visibility.

2. If the number of persons available will allow, initiate these actions simultaneously.

3. **Telephone Switchboard Operator.**

When notification of a fire is received, the operator should immediately -

- telephone the fire brigade and confirm that the alarm has been received there or, if not, advise the brigade of the location of the fire; and
- summon the Chief Warden or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Warden.

4. **Chief Warden.**

The Chief Warden or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Warden will-

- assess the emergency and determine whether or not a general alarm within the building should be given;
- contact Floor Wardens as appropriate and arrange for evacuation to the extent judged to be necessary; and
- move to ground floor (Master Emergency Control Panel) to oversee and superintend any evacuation until arrival of emergency service personnel, the ACT Fire Brigade or ACT Police.

5. **Floor Warden.**

The Floor Warden should-

- advise the Chief Warden of any emergency on the floor and any action taken or proposed;
- check fire doors which give access to stairways and smoke doors to ensure that they are closed;
- post a watch to ensure that these doors remain closed except to facilitate the escape of occupants;
- ensure that access to stairways is not impaired;

- ensure that all occupants of the floor are aware that evacuation of the floor is necessary and direct the occupants to the nearest accessible escape stairs or to an appropriate assembly location;
- ensure that evacuation from the floor is orderly and by means of stairs.  
DO NOT USE LIFTS;
- make a thorough search of the whole floor to ensure that no persons remain;
- ensure that the necessary assistance is given to disabled and other persons in need of special care; and
- advise Chief Warden when evacuation has been completed.

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## REFERENCES

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- Commowearth Fire Board, *Fire Safety Circulars*, (Various Circulars, various publication dates),  
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## INFORMATION SHEET BOMB THREAT PROCEDURE GUIDE

### 1. **Introduction.**

The bomb threat is a serious public nuisance of modern times. The problem can be minimised by proper planning and nomination of appropriate decision making authorities.

This guide provides only a basic coverage of the topic, more in depth information and advice can be obtained from the Australian Federal Police, Australian Bomb Data Centre, Canberra.  
'Bombs, Defusing the Threat' is a valuable reference handbook for managers, security officers and others who may have responsibility for ensuring the security and safety of personnel and premises.

### 2. **Security.**

The first line of defence against bomb attack is the fitting of appropriate locks and security devices, including alarms, to entry/exit points so the premises are secure out of business hours. Restricting public access past reception areas and/or searching customers or clients are higher order levels of security which may be enforced should the level of risk warrant it. Controlling access to carparks can also be instituted. Good housekeeping both inside and outside the premises will further reduce the opportunity for an explosive device to be planted undetected.

### 3. **Threats.**

Threats can take the form of a written message, telephone advice, word-of-mouth or suspect object found.

#### (a) *Written Threats:*

It is important that every possible effort be made to avoid unnecessary handling of written messages so as to retain evidence such as possible fingerprints, handwriting, etc.

#### (b) *Telephone Threats:*

An accurate analysis of the telephone threat can provide valuable information on which to base recommendations, action and subsequent investigation.

#### (c) *Word-of-Mouth:*

An accurate description of the person, including any distinguishing features, should be made.

#### (d) *Suspect Object:*

A suspect object is any object found on the premises and deemed a possible threat by virtue of its characteristics, location and circumstances.

4. **Co-ordination.**

In the event of a threat being received, the responsibility for all action taken should be in the hands of one person. The Co-ordinator should be the Chief Warden or in his/her absence the deputy Chief Warden, the Chief Security Officer or someone in senior management.

The responsibilities of the Co-ordinator include:

1. Devising and maintaining a search plan.
2. Devising and maintaining (or input into this process) the evacuation plan.
3. Assessing the long term and short term threat.
4. Making the decision to evacuate.
5. Making the decision to re-occupy.
6. Liaison with police.
7. Arranging staff training and security drills.

5. **Evaluation.**

Threats can be classified as *Specific* or *Non-specific*.

The Co-ordinator should categorise the bomb threats as follows :

- (a) *Specific threat.* This occurs when there is detailed information provided which may include statements describing the device, why it was placed, its location, time of activation, etc..
- (b) *Non-specific threat.* Generally very little, if any additional information is provided other than that a device has been placed on the premises.

The non-specific threat is the more common, but neither can be immediately discredited without investigation.

Evaluation involves assessing one of four possible alternatives -

- (a) take no further action;
- (b) search without evacuation;
- (c) evacuate and search; or
- (d) evacuate (without search).

6. **Search.**

It is vital that a plan exists which enables the premises to be searched as quickly and as effectively as possible. Those best qualified to carry out a search of any given area are the occupants. Precedence should be given to searching the evacuation routes and assembly areas, building entrances and exits, public areas within buildings or other areas thought of as vulnerable to attack.

The aim of the search is to identify any object which:

- (a) should not be there;
- (b) cannot be accounted for;
- (c) is out of place; or
- (d) becomes suspect for any other reason e.g. suspiciously labelled, similar to that described in the threat, etc..

**On locating a suspect object, search personnel should not touch or move it.**

7. **Evacuation Options.**

The decision to not evacuate, partially evacuate or commence a full evacuation will be determined by considering a number of factors, including perceived level of risk from information gained from the threat, the long term risk associated with the nature of the premises, and any current circumstances which may add to the risk factor.

8. **Notification.**

Upon receipt of a bomb threat or discovery of a suspect object, the police should be immediately advised, but it should not be assumed that the police will conduct bomb searches.

INFORMATION SHEET  
CIVIL DISORDER AND ILLEGAL OCCUPANCY PROCEDURE GUIDE

1. **General.**

There have been numerous examples where a highly emotive international situation, industrial unrest or an unpopular political decision have led to public demonstrations. Planning for emergencies should include the development of procedures and guidelines aimed at minimising the risk to staff and property. The Emergency Control Organisation together with management and security staff should be responsible for co-ordinating a response to such incidents, until the arrival of police.

2. **Response.**

As soon as the Chief Warden is aware of civil disorder occurring in, or in the vicinity of, the premises, or that such an event is imminent, or there is illegal entry by a disaffected person or group, the Chief Warden or Security Officer should take the following action :

- (a) Notify the police and request assistance.
- (b) Alert the other members of the ECO.
- (c) Initiate action to restrict -
  - (1) entrance to the building; or
  - (2) confine presence to the ground floor; and
  - (3) contact between the demonstrators and the building occupants.
- (d) Notify nominated managers.

Managers can contribute in a practical way to the satisfactory resolution of these emergencies by ensuring withdrawal of their staff where necessary, supervising the locking up of offices, securing records, valuables and files, whilst at the same time promoting an atmosphere of calm and confidence.

Planning for these emergencies should be done in conjunction with the police.