**FIRE & LIFE SYSTEMS – FIRE ALARM INVESTIGATION**

False alarms are disruptive and place a burden on Fire and Rescue Service resources. They can:

* put firefighters, emergency crews, the public and other road users at risk through unnecessary journeys under blue light conditions
* increase the likelihood of fire appliances not being available for genuine emergency responses
* increase response times if an appliance from your local fire station is attending to a false alarm
* affect the quality of service the Council provides
* lead to complacency among employees and building users

As Premises Manager you will make sure there are arrangements in place to investigate each fire alarm activation before the Fire and Rescue Service are called; unless your premises has sleeping accommodation in which case the Fire and Rescue Service should be called immediately.

**During Normal Working Hours**

When your fire alarm is activated evacuate the premises according to your Emergency Fire Action Plan.

If your fire alarm is connected to the Digital Alarms Hub they will try to contact your premises to confirm if there is a fire or if it is a false alarm. Make sure the Digital Alarms Hub have up to date contact details for your premises by e-mailing them at [emergency.control@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:emergency.control@falkirk.gov.uk).

Your Emergency Fire Action Plan will identify who will:

* monitor the fire alarm control panel (Monitor)
* investigate the source of the fire (Investigator)
* call 999 to report a fire (Reporter)

Remember:

* any individual can carry out more than one role during an evacuation
* when identifying people for these roles the plan should also account for absences and annual leave.

If the fire alarm is activated:

* the Monitor should check the fire alarm panel to find where the alarm has activated. a full zone/detector plan should be easily visible from the panel. If more than one sensor or a heat/combination sensor have been activated:
  + stop the investigation
  + evacuate and report to the Fire Marshall
  + the Reporter will call 999 to report a fire
* if only one smoke sensor has been activated, the Investigator will make their way to where the alarm was activated:
  + looking for signs of fire
  + using protected routes where possible
  + always aware of where the fire exits are

The Investigator should be in contact with the Monitor at all times; short range radios or mobile phones are ideal for this. If a second detector is activated:

* + the Monitor will notify the Investigator, evacuate and report to the Fire Marshall
  + the Investigator will stop the investigation, evacuate and report to the Fire Marshall
  + the Reporter will call 999 to report a fire
* the Investigator will look, listen and smell for any signs there could be a fire. It may be smoke, unusual noise or heat. It could be any one, some or all of these signs. Before opening a door the Investigator should feel it with the back of the hand for signs of heat; as high up the door as it can reach. If it’s hot or unusually warm don’t open the door

Remember, the Investigator is only looking for the first indication there could be a fire. If any signs of fire are reported at any point of the investigation everyone should leave by the nearest suitable fire exit and report to their appropriate assembly point. the Reporter will call 999 to report a fire, stating:

* an investigation has taken place and signs of fire have been reported
* the name and full postal address of the premises

If the Investigator is able to confirm there are no signs of fire , the Fire Marshall can have the alarm silenced and reset and allow people to re-enter the building. There is no need to notify the Fire and Rescue Service.

If the fire alarm reactivates:

* everyone should immediately evacuate the building with no need for further investigation:
* the Reporter will call 999 to report a fire

**Outside Normal Working Hours**

If your fire alarm is connected to the Digital Alarms Hub, they will contact the premises Keyholder to notify them that the alarm has been activated. Make sure the Digital Alarms Hub have up to date contact details for Keyholders by e-mailing them at [emergency.control@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:emergency.control@falkirk.gov.uk).

Anyone in the building outside of normal hours will evacuate when the alarm sounds and wait at the assembly point until the Keyholder arrives and is able to provide further instruction.

On arrival at the Premises the Keyholder will carry out an external check of the premises, looking for any signs there could be a fire. They should wait around 20 minutes and carry out a second external check.

If there are no signs of fire, they can enter the building and check the fire panel. If more than one sensor or a heat/combination sensor have been activated, they should:

* stop the investigation
* evacuate and call 999 to report a fire

If only one smoke sensor has been activated, the Keyholder will make their way to where the alarm was activated:

* looking for signs of fire
* using protected routes where possible
* always aware of where the fire exits are

The Keyholder will look, listen and smell for any signs there could be a fire. It may be smoke, unusual noise or heat. It could be any one, some or all of these signs. Before opening a door the Investigator should feel it with the back of the hand for signs of heat; as high up the door as it can reach. If it’s hot or unusually warm don’t open the door.

If the Keyholder identifies signs of fire they should:

* stop the investigation
* evacuate using the nearest suitable fire exit
* call 999 to report a fire

If the Keyholder is able to confirm there are no signs of fire they can silence and reset the alarm and allow anyone still present to re-enter the building. There is no need to notify the Fire and Rescue Service.

If the fire alarm reactivates:

* Anyone in the building should evacuate
* the Caretaker will call 999 to report a fire with no need for further investigation

All employees will remain at the assembly point until they are told it is safe to re-enter by the Keyholder