

Provision of fire wardens



Guidance

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1. Introduction

Fire wardens, also known as fire marshals or floor wardens, are needed in University buildings to encourage people to leave the building if a fire alarm sounds. This role involves sweeping through allocated areas to check everyone has left and reporting their findings to the chief fire marshal or officer in charge at the front of the building. They are then given another role required during a fire alarm evacuation, see below.

2. Overview

Fire wardens help ensure everyone leaves the building if a fire alarm occurs. They can also be involved with crowd control outside the building or, where necessary, be allocated door guarding duties to prevent people re-entering the building before the 'all clear' is given. Fire wardens are normally the last people to leave a building and may find themselves needing to assist people from the building who are unable to evacuate without assistance.

Like all University employees, fire wardens are also required to report safety or fire safety hazards they discover to managers. (*Regulation 14, The Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations 1999*)

3. How many fire wardens are needed in a building?

There is no easy answer to this question, but ideally there will be a trained fire warden and trained deputy to cover absences for all parts of the building. Small buildings with a simple layout may only need one fire warden and deputy per floor, whereas large, complicated buildings potentially need many trained fire wardens and deputies per floor. Fire wardens must be provided by schools and services occupying the building. The building's facilities manager (FM) decides how many fire wardens are needed and encourages managers within the building to obtain volunteers for training.

4. What if there aren't enough fire warden volunteers?

This situation can occur but, fortunately, is relatively rare. It is more common that there may not be enough fire wardens in the right places in a building. Where this occurs, the FM will work with managers within the building to encourage more people to volunteer. The last resort must be that all staff within the building act as unofficial fire wardens and encourage others they meet during their own evacuation to escape with them. This 'good citizen' approach relies on everyone in the building taking responsibility for their own safety and complying with the fire alarm correctly.

5. What if a fire warden is not on their floor when the fire alarm sounds?

There are three different scenarios:

1. The fire warden is higher up in the building than their normal sweep area. They can either leave along with everyone else and hope a deputy sweeps the area they would normally sweep; they can assist where they are; they may be able to return to their floor to sweep as long as people coming off the floor are not saying there is smoke or fire on the floor and the fire warden can enter the floor and progress to another staircase/exit to continue their escape. Turning around to double back is unacceptable unless a real fire or smoke obstructs onward progress.
2. The fire warden is on a lower floor than their normal sweep area. They can leave along with everyone else and hope a deputy sweeps their normal area; they can assist where they are. Fire wardens must not normally go back upstairs against the flow of escapees as this can cause confusion and trip/fall hazards on the stairs.
3. The fire warden is outside the building when the fire alarm sounds. They do not re-enter the building and must rely on a deputy sweeping the floor area they would normally sweep.

In all the above examples, the fire warden should notify the chief fire marshal or officer in charge about what has happened so this information can be relayed to Security and the fire brigade if needed.

6. What if someone refuses to leave the building when the fire alarm sounds?

The fire warden (or deputy, or good citizen) should not waste time trying to convince the person/persons to leave. If they can, they should obtain a name. At the least, they should note where the person(s) is/are located so the information can be passed to the chief fire marshal or officer in charge. If the fire brigade arrives, they will be notified and send officers to bring the people out of the building. This will reduce their effectiveness at fighting the fire in the short term. The people failing to comply with the fire alarm must be dealt with under the University disciplinary procedure.

7. How do fire wardens get training and refresher training?

Fire warden training occurs towards the beginning of every month at Old Park Hill and refresher training occurs every other month at the same location. Fire warden training takes approximately three hours and refresher training takes one hour. Fire wardens should take refresher training every two years.

Where a group of five or more people in the same building want training, this can be booked directly with the University's Fire Safety Adviser, who can deliver the training at a location chosen by the trainees.

Trained fire wardens have their names added to the Safety and Health Services records and will receive an email three months before their training is due to expire, inviting them to book onto the next available refresher training event.

8. Where can I get more information?

Other fire warden or fire-related information can be obtained from the University's Fire Safety Adviser:

Richard Norris

Safety and Health Services, 1-9 Old Park Hill, Bristol BS2 8BB

Telephone: 01179288784

Mobile: 07786397655

Richard's email: richard.norris@bristol.ac.uk

Safety and Health Services' email: bristol-safety@bristol.ac.uk

9. Other fire safety training provided

Training	Duration	Refresher training	Duration
Fire warden training	3 hours	Refresher 1, 2 or 3, depending on what has already been taken	1 hour
Fire extinguisher training	1 hour	Annual refresher training	30-45 minutes
Evacuation chair training, undertaken at the building using the chair installed there	1 hour	No refresher training unless requested. Instead, individual or group practice is key.	
Evacuation life training, undertaken at the building where the lift is installed	1 hour	No refresher training unless requested	
Fire safety awareness training	1 hour	No refresher training unless requested	

Contact Safety and Health Services for further advice.

Website: bristol.ac.uk/safety/

Email: bristol-safety@bristol.ac.uk