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FIRE SAFETY FOR SECURITY STAFF (2.2) V6 2022

FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS FOR SECURITY STAFF

Aim

To introduce the learners to the importance of fire safety awareness

Outcomes

By the end of the session you will be able to:

- Explain the nature of fire
- List the three elements that must be present for fire to exist or start
- State the different classifications of fire
- Describe the different types of fire extinguishers and firefighting equipment
- Explain the actions to be taken upon discovering a fire in your place of work

Nature of Fire

Fire does not respect anything or anyone, it kills, destroys, maims, scars and it can leave people jobless, if their place of work is destroyed by fire. For these reasons, the security officer must have a clear understanding of the causes of fire and methods of prevention, some of which are governed by law and enforced by a local Fire Authority.

The security officer must be aware of how to prevent fires from starting and how to deal with a fire that has started. Fire requires three elements to exist; remove one or more of the three elements and it will cease to exist. By ensuring the three elements do not come together in an uncontrolled way, unwanted fire cannot start.

Three Elements of Fire

The three elements are:

Source of Heat

- Such as the sun, electrical faults, sparks or discarded cigarettes.
- Solution - Cooled using water or a fire blanket (depending on nature of the fire).
- Oxygen 21 % of the air you breathe is oxygen.

Solution - Shut doors and windows.

Fuel

Anything that will burn:

- Textiles - wood, paper, cloth
- Liquids - petrol, flammable liquids
- Gases - oxygen, propane, butane
- Metals - aluminium, magnesium
- Fats - cooking oil, lard, butter



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OXYGEN FUEL

SOURCE OF HEAT

- Solution - cut off the source of the fuel – but only if safe to do so!
- Remember, remove any one element and the fire will go out.

Fire Progression

It is important for the security officer to understand that fire does progress and that it can do so rapidly. No one should “stay too long”; as once the fire starts to grow, it can quickly get out of control and become life threatening.

Classification of Fire

Fire falls into five classes. The material that is burning within it identifies each class. The following are the classes as defined by the Home Office:

A Textiles (Wood, Paper, Cloth, etc.)

B Liquids (Petrol, Flammable Liquids B1 = soluble, B2 =non-soluble)

C Gases (Oxygen, Propane, Butane)

D Metals (Aluminium, Magnesium)

F Fats (Cooking oil, lard, butter)

NB An electrical fire does not fall into any of the above classes nor does it have a classification of its own.

Extinguishers

They all serve the same purpose: to eliminate one or more of the elements that permit fire to exist. It is therefore essential to understand which extinguisher is used on which class of fire.

All extinguishers manufactured since January 1st 1997 should be coloured RED to conform to EN3. Each extinguisher may have a coloured panel on it up to 5% of the external area, showing the contents using the old colour coding (see below).

Some old extinguishers, painted entirely in the code colour, may still be found. However, these are being phased out.

There are typically six types of extinguishers to be found:

1. Water filled - colour code panel - RED
2. Powder filled - colour code panel - BLUE
3. Foam filled - colour code panel - CREAM
4. CO2 filled - colour code panel - BLACK
5. AFFF filled - colour code panel - CREAM
6. Wet Chemical - colour code panel - YELLOW



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Types of Extinguishers

The chart depicted in Figure 1 indicates which type of extinguisher should be used on which type of fire. Each type of fire has been classified as being either A, B, C, D or F depending on the fuel source as detailed.

Figure 1

	WATER	FOAM	AFFF	WET CHEMICAL	CO2 (Carbon Dioxide)	DRY POWDER
A (Textiles)						
B (Liquids)						
C (Gas)	*	*	*	*	*	*
D (Metals)	*	*	*	*	*	*
F (Fat)						

Not to be dealt with by the security officer *

Wet chemical extinguishers first cool and then react to form a solution that seals the surface and prevents re-ignition of the fire. They are ideal for use on fires involving cooking oils and fats and can also be used on Class A fires.

Key Points

Water based extinguishers, including foam, will conduct electricity. They should never be used on live electrical circuits, such as cookers, computers, sockets and other live electrical equipment.

- Aim the water at the base of the fire
- Foam extinguishers lay a blanket of foam over the burning liquid.
- Aim the foam at the far side of the fire and encourage the foam to spread across the fire.
- Powder extinguishers contaminate the atmosphere. In enclosed spaces this can become a serious problem.
- The dry powder extinguisher can also cause vision to become impaired.
- Aim at the seat of the fire
- Carbon Dioxide (CO2) extinguishers when activated produce freezing cold CO2.
- Care should be taken when using a CO2 extinguisher on a Class A fire, as there is the possibility that the force from the pressurized gas may cause the fire to spread.
- Never touch the horn of the extinguisher during discharge.
- Be aware of the noise when discharging



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Key Points (Continued)

If the extinguisher used does not contain a coolant, such as water, even though the fire may be out, heat will still persist. The chances of re-ignition are very high. That is why the Fire Brigade should be called; they can then ensure that the fire is damped down appropriately.

Remember: it can be hazardous and dangerous to use the wrong extinguisher on a fire.

Key Points for Using Fire Extinguishers

Security officers should:

- Always read the label on the fire extinguisher
- Always leave him/herself an exit and ensure it is clear
- Ensure he/she knows where fire extinguishers are located
- Know how they operate
- Know the colour coding
- Never attempt to fight any fire unless it is safe to do so

Extinguisher Checks

Whilst carrying out patrols, security officers must:

- Familiarise him/herself with the location of the extinguishers
- Periodically check that extinguishers are in the correct location
- Ensure that they have not been discharged, damaged and the pins are in the correct position
- Report any defects to the client asap then record it in your incident log

Fire Fighting Equipment

The Law requires that commercial premises should provide adequate and appropriate firefighting equipment. The Fire Authority will decide what equipment is required and in what quantity and they will conduct periodic inspections to ensure compliance with the approved requirements.

Security officers must be familiar with:

- The location of all fire points
- The equipment stowed or designated to fire points
- The types of portable fire extinguishers, their correct use and method of operation



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Other Equipment

Security officers should understand and have a working knowledge of all fire-fighting equipment on their assignment. A risk assessment should have been done and the appropriate equipment designed into the site.

Fire Blankets

Fire blankets may be effective when used on small fires involving solids or liquids, provided that the blanket completely covers the fire.

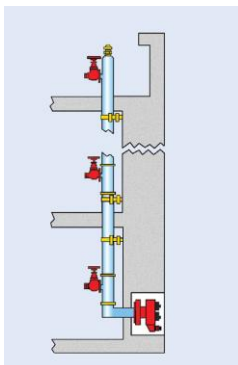
Gas Based Flooding Systems

These systems are usually designed into computer suites, laboratories and other sensitive sites. The theory is that the drench used will put the fire out, causing the minimum amount of damage to equipment. The drench is designed to rob the atmosphere of oxygen, by chemical or other means.

They are very effective, so effective that any human being left in the same environment would suffer oxygen starvation hypoxia, and die. Activation of this type of system is usually preceded by alarms and there should be signs informing people what to do in the event of fire. Everyone should evacuate the area without any delay whatsoever and stay out until it is declared safe to re-enter.

Dry and Wet Risers

Large buildings may have a riser system built into the design. They are large bore pipes that rise vertically inside the building. They enable large amounts of water to be delivered on any floor level, saving the need to lay hosepipes. The only difference between wet and dry is that the wet riser is always full of water (primed), whereas the dry riser is only primed in the event of a fire by the fire brigade on arrival at site.



Sprinklers



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Most people are aware of sprinkler systems. The pipe-work is fitted overhead, and spaced, equidistant along the pipe-work, are special valves; sometimes called fuses. When a certain temperature is reached, the valve activates and allows pressurized water to be sprayed below. The distance between each valve is such that when all valves are in the open position, a deluge of water from above covers the entire floor area.

Part of the security officer's duties may be to check and record the water pressure of the system at regular intervals. Once activated, the system has to be shut down manually. The location of the stop valve will be in the site specific Assignment Instructions.

Sprinklers (Continued)



Foam Flooding System

Foam flooding can be found in places, such as paint stores, anywhere where a large volume of flammable liquid is stored. It enables foam to be pumped into the store from an external position, saving the risk of entry. The inlet valve will be boxed and clearly marked. It should never be obstructed for any reason.



Fire Doors

More people are killed by smoke (fire gases), than are burned to death and fire doors are put in place to impede the smoke flow and fire spread throughout the building. They will be clearly marked. Unless they are electronically designed to close in the event of fire i.e. hospital corridors, they should remain in the closed position and unobstructed at all times. Failure to do so is a very serious matter.



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Discovering a Fire

- Find
- Inform
- Restrict
- Evacuate/extinguish If a security officer discovers a fire, the following procedure should be followed:
- Sound the alarm
- Call the Fire Brigade and any other emergency services that are needed
- Inform the control room
- Assist in evacuation, if needed If the fire is small and it is safe for him/her to do so:
- Attempt to extinguish
- Never compromise his/her own safety
- Always leave him/herself an exit In all other situations, providing it is safe to do so:
- Attempt to starve the fire of oxygen by securing doors and windows
- Attempt to starve the fire of fuel by removing combustibles in its path



Where evacuation is needed:

- Encourage the use of fire exits, where possible



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- Encourage people to move quickly to the Assembly Point
- Stay calm
- Do not allow anyone to go back for personal belongings
- Do not use lifts At the Assembly Point all personnel should be accounted for, including visitors. If it is operationally possible, meet the Fire Brigade and assist where it is safe to do so.

You should be able to offer the Fire Brigade the following critical information:

- Missing personnel
- Location of fire
- Special risks
- Location of hydrants and main services
- Location of pumping positions
- Access and escape routes
- Fire and alarm panel locations

Critical information (Continued):

- Type of fire Keep a full record of events in your pocketbook:
- All timings: time began, time brigade called, time arrived
- All names: senior fire officer, witnesses, police
- Possible cause of fire, location, damage and your actions

Conclusion

Fire is a very dangerous and unpredictable element. Good housekeeping, such as keeping the fuel and ignition sources apart, is a very good method of preventing fires from starting. Where it is apparent that they are not kept apart for any good reason, the matter should be reported to the management.

Security officers:

- Must be familiar with all the fire points and fire equipment stowed there. They should have sufficient knowledge to enable them to use the right extinguisher on the right fire.
- Should never attempt to fight any fire that is liable to put him or her in any danger whatsoever.
- Must, on discovering a fire, raise the alarm and inform the manager.
- Security officers should meet the Fire Brigade, if they are called and give the appropriate assistance.
- Must make appropriate notes in their pocketbook in the event of a fire. These notes should contain all the relevant information and times, so that any future report will have all information needed.



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- Must never underestimate how quickly a fire can spread, get out of control, maim, kill and destroy. Fire is potentially deadly. Call the Fire Brigade, get people out and stay out.

This policy has been approved & authorised by:

Name: Dave Pattinson Stacey Vivian

Position: Managing Director

Date: September 2022

Signature: