



Loss Control TIPS

Technical Information Paper Series

Innovative Safety and Health SolutionsSM

Fire Drill and Evacuation Guidelines for Health Care Facilities

This paper contains information that can be used to help a facility develop a fire safety plan that will fulfill the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association *Life Safety Code*. The plan shall provide for:

- a) using alarms
- b) transmitting the alarm to fire department
- c) responding to alarms
- d) isolating the fire
- e) evacuating the area
- f) preparing the building and occupants for evacuation
- g) extinguishing the fire

Included in this document are a sample fire response procedure, general instructions and staffing chart fire drill report, and a fire drill attendance log.

The Importance of Fire Alarms

The importance of the sounding of an alarm of fire to alert others, and the prompt transmission of the alarm of fire to the Fire Department to initiate the rapid response of professional assistance, must be stressed in all Fire Drill and Evacuation Plans and related training sessions. Additionally, even though your alarm system is connected to the fire department or monitoring company, you must make contact to ensure that the alarm did, in fact, sound.

While it is understood that conditions present at the time of the discovery of a fire may require the discoverer to take an initial action other than *physically* activating the fire alarm, the sounding of an alarm is not to be considered secondary. In this instance, the alarm should be sounded *verbally* by the discoverer to alert another to *physically* activate the fire alarm and to cause the alerting of other staff members whose actions and assistance will be required to provide prompt attention to the overall situation as pre-planned.

Failure to sound an alarm at the earliest possible opportunity will result in a delayed reaction by others, a worsening of fire conditions, and the possibility of injuries, death and damage. These can be avoided if others are alerted in a timely manner.



Avoid the use of acronyms or code words in training sessions. Staff should be instructed to remember the *steps* to be taken when a fire is discovered. This should not necessarily be synonymous with the *order* in which the steps should be taken in any given situation.

Fire Alarm Pull Stations

Fire alarm pull stations are strategically located throughout the building, and tests are conducted to ensure that the system remains operable at all times.

1. Our facility is equipped with an automatic fire alarm system that will automatically activate when an extinguishing system operates, when manual pull stations are activated, or when smoke, heat, or a fire is detected within the facility.
2. Fire alarm pull stations are located throughout the facility. Locations for all alarm pull stations are noted on the floor plans posted throughout the building.
3. Fire alarm pull stations are red in color. Instructions for their use are posted on the pull station device.
4. Fire alarm zone panels are located at each nurses' station. When an alarm is activated, the zone in which the fire alarm was sounded will light up on the panel. The charge nurse shall immediately deploy personnel to the fire area.
5. The alarm will continue to sound until the fire alarm pull station that had been activated has been reset.
6. At least one (1) fire alarm pull station will be tested monthly and a record of each test will be recorded on our Alarm and Life Support Systems Test Record. Completed test records will be kept on file in the business office.

Fire Alarm Signals

Fire alarm signals and other emergency codes have been established so that personnel can be quickly informed of emergency conditions.

1. Our facility is equipped with an automatic audible fire alarm signal that, when activated, will sound a continuous loud ringing sound throughout the building until the fire alarm system has been disconnected or reset.
2. Our automatic fire alarm system, when activated, will sound an alarm at the fire department or central monitoring station.
3. A visual alarm system has been provided so that the hearing impaired will know when a drill is in progress, or when an actual emergency exists.
4. Visual alarm devices are located above each fire alarm bell. They will activate simultaneously with the audible alarm signal.
5. A flashing red light will indicate that a drill or actual emergency is in progress.
6. Should the automatic fire alarm system fail to activate the audible alarm signal, this facility shall use a code alarm signal.
7. The code alarm signal adopted by this facility is: *Code Red*.
8. The person assigned to communication procedures shall be responsible for notifying the fire department (dial 911). All fires will be reported, unless otherwise instructed by the administrator.
9. Code alarm signals may be used during drills which are conducted between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., or whenever the automatic fire alarm system fails to activate.
10. Training classes and drills will be conducted monthly in order to familiarize personnel and residents with our emergency alarm signals.

Discovering a Fire

Should a fire be discovered:

1. Immediately activate the nearest fire pull station. Announce the location of the fire at least twice over the public address system.
2. Evacuate everyone who is nearest the danger area first. Work away from the danger area.
3. Evacuate residents to prearranged safety areas.
4. Be sure that all residents are accounted for.
5. Close all doors and windows to rooms as they are evacuated.
6. Check exits to ensure that they are safe and usable.
7. Turn all the lights on so everyone can see the exit route clearly.
8. Report any missing residents or personnel to the person in charge immediately. Do not return to the danger area once away from it.
9. Turn off any pieces of equipment that have blower fans (e.g., heating and cooling systems) (to minimize the spread of smoke).
10. Shut off all unnecessary electrical equipment.
11. Do not let any people return to the area once they are out.
12. Remain calm. Do not panic.
13. Follow all instructions issued. *Time is of the essence.*

Sounding a Fire Alarm

When the fire alarm is sounded, follow these procedures:

1. Contact the fire department (dial 911 or _____). (Even though our alarm system is connected to the fire department or central monitoring station, we must make personal contact to ensure that the alarm actually sounded at the fire station or central monitoring station.)
2. Provide the Fire Department with the following information:
 - a. Type of fire
 - b. Exact location of fire
 - c. Extent of the fire
 - d. Whether evacuation is in process
 - e. Other information as necessary or as requested.
3. Keep communication lines open. Do not make any unnecessary calls. Do not answer questions from callers. Simply state that an emergency exists, and that all communication lines must be kept cleared for emergency use.
4. Relay instructions as issued by the person in charge.
5. Remain calm. Do not panic. Speak in a clear and distinct voice. Follow instructions as issued.

Fighting the Fire

When a fire is discovered, immediately begin fire fighting procedures.

1. Use extinguishers which are located throughout the facility.
2. Remember, *safety comes first*. Do not endanger lives.
3. When using portable fire extinguishers, follow these instructions: (Note: Our office uses only ABC type extinguishers, which will work on all types of fires except combustible metals):

- a. Hold the extinguisher upright.
 - b. Pull the ring pin to snap the safety seal.
 - c. Stand back ten (10) feet from the fire.
 - d. Aim at the base of the fire. Do not start the spray at the top of the fire.
 - e. Squeeze the lever. The spray will last for 6-10 seconds.
 - f. Sweep the hose from side to side.
4. Do not attempt to put out an overhead fire. Only fire fighters shall proceed with this (because of the extreme danger involved).
 5. Fight the fire until the Fire Department arrives, but *only* if you have been properly trained.
 6. Leave the area if the fire is no longer controllable.
 7. Do not endanger the personal safety of yourself or others.

Evacuation Routes and Drills

Should it become necessary to evacuate the building, or any part thereof, it is essential that planned evacuation routes be used and that planned evacuation procedures be followed. This will make it easier to keep track of personnel and residents.

1. Evacuation routes have been established for all areas of our facility. Such routes are clearly identified on the floor plans posted throughout the building.
2. Should it become necessary to evacuate the building, or any part thereof, evacuation routes and procedures established by this facility will be followed.
3. Training classes and drills will be conducted periodically to familiarize personnel and residents with our evacuation routes and procedures.

Preparing for Evacuation

1. Inspection of Exits

- a) Do not evacuate until an evacuation order has been given, unless emergency conditions warrant that other actions be taken. It could be more dangerous to evacuate the building than it might be to remain in the area.
- b) Turn all the lights on.
- c) When the fire alarm is sounded, inspect exits to ensure that they are safe and passable.
- d) First, check the primary exit route. If it is clear and safe, use this exit if evacuation is ordered.
- e) Should the inspection reveal that the primary exit is blocked, use the secondary exit.
- f) Should both exits be blocked, make every effort possible to clear at least one of the exits.
- g) Should additional assistance be needed, the person in charge shall immediately deploy such personnel to the area.
- h) Follow all instructions issued.

Order to Evacuate: Ground Level

- a) When the order has been given to evacuate, use only those exits that have been declared safe.
- b) Close doors as you pass through them (to slow down the advancing fire).
- c) Evacuate persons nearest the danger area first.
- d) Work away from the danger area, if possible, and evacuate all persons to the assembly area designated for that exit, unless otherwise instructed.

- e) One person must remain at the assembly area to ensure that everyone remains in that area. Do not let anyone return to the building or to the danger area.
- f) Should evacuation become necessary before an exit has been cleared (that is, if both the primary and secondary exits are blocked), go to the room furthest from the danger area. Close the door to the room. If necessary, use an object to break a window. Remove the glass from the window. If necessary, place a blanket, coat, etc., over the window sill to prevent cuts. Exit the building.
- g) Upon arrival at the assembly area, count all residents and personnel.
- h) Immediately report any missing residents or personnel, by name, to the person in charge.

2. Order to Evacuate: Multiple Levels

- a) Follow evacuation procedures outlined in "Preparing for Evacuation," above.
- b) Establish the primary and secondary evacuation routes as the means for escape.
- c) Proceed down the stairwell, unless instructed otherwise. If the stairwell is blocked, go up.
- d) Should both stairway exits be blocked, go up to the next floor. Be sure to close all doors as you pass through.
- e) Should evacuation become necessary before an exit has been cleared (that is, if both the primary and secondary exits are blocked), go to the room furthest from the danger area. Close the door to the room. If necessary, use an object to break a window. Remove the glass from the window. If necessary, place a blanket, coat, etc., over the window sill to prevent cuts.
- f) Do not attempt to exit from the window at this point. Call for assistance and await the arrival of rescue personnel. Serious injury or death could result from a jump.
- g) Do not use the elevators. They can become instant death traps should they fail to operate.
- h) Use exits as they are assigned. Do not alter your exit route unless absolutely necessary.
- i) Once evacuation is made, use the assembly area designated for that exit unless otherwise instructed.
- j) Once out, do not return. Stay with the group unless you are otherwise instructed.

3. Safety Precautions During Evacuation

- a) When traveling through smoke, keep low. Smoke and heat rise. Crawl along the floor if necessary, but remain low.
- b) Do not run, or allow anyone to run, in smoke filled areas.
- c) When going through smoke, cover your face from the nose down.
- d) Do not touch anything. Watch for falling debris, wires, etc.
- e) Do not open a door into an area where a fire might be, even if the door is not warm. Before opening the door, follow the procedures outlines below. (Should a fire be on the other side, this test will aid you in closing the door instead of letting the fire blast through:)
 - Brace your shoulder against the door.
 - Brace your foot against the base of the door.
 - Place one hand on the door knob.
 - Place one hand along the door opening at about head level.
 - Open the door slowly.
 - Be sure that the face is turned away from the door opening.
 - If smoke seeps through, close the door immediately.
 - Place a blanket, coat, etc., under the door to prevent smoke from entering the room.
- f) If safe, proceed to evacuate. Be sure to test all doors in this manner. Should a door be opened, and fire be present, the air from the room from which you are entering could create the phenomenon called "flashover," causing the heated gases in the room to explode.

- g) Choose the safest way out.
- h) Be sure to close all doors and windows as you passed through.
- i) Once you are out, do not let anyone return.
- j) Remain calm. Do not panic. Follow all instructions issued.

4. Exit/Assembly Areas

- a) Exit routes and assembly areas have been prearranged for each section of the building.
- b) Primary and secondary areas have been established; these must be used as instructed.

5. Emergency Medical Treatment

- a) Once evacuation has been made, check residents and personnel for injuries.
- b) Take injured persons to designated areas as instructed.
- c) Only emergency first aid treatment that can be adequately provided by this facility will be administered. People who have injuries requiring treatment beyond our capabilities shall be transferred to a facility that is capable of treating such injuries.

7. Missing Persons

Once evacuation has been made to an assembly area, conduct a head count to ensure that all residents and personnel are accounted for.

- a) Report information about missing persons to the individual in charge immediately.
- b) Do not return to look for missing persons. Special teams will be assigned to this task.

Arrival of the Fire Department

- a) When the fire alarm system is activated, it will automatically sound a fire alarm at the fire department or central monitoring station.
- b) Upon their arrival, fire department personnel shall assume all fire fighting responsibilities.
- c) Provide as much information as possible or as requested by fire department officials.
- d) Once the fire department has arrived, assume your assigned duties.
- e) Do not panic. Remain calm. Safety comes first. Follow all instructions issued. Evacuate those nearest the danger area first. Keep exit ways clear at all times.

References

1. *Fire Procedures, Fire Drill Report, Attendance Log*, Ridgefield, Conn., Ridgefield Associates.
2. "Health Care Occupancies: Procedure in Case of Fire, Section 31-4.2." *Life Safety Code Handbook*, 6th ed.. Quincy, Mass.: National Fire Protection Association, c1994.
3. Heaton Publication, Inc, *Operational Policy and Procedure Manual*

For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant. Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

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General Instructions and Staffing Chart

Floor: _____ Nearest interior fire alarm box: _____

Should *You* Discover A Fire, Smoke Or Excessive Heat Condition:

1. Cause the nearest interior fire alarm box to be transmitted.*
2. Remove persons in the immediate hazard area.
3. Fight fire only if properly trained and if possible, with the appropriate extinguisher. .
4. Close door(s) in the immediate hazard area.
5. Clear passageway of residents, visitors, equipment & material.
6. Operate under the direction of the response team chief.

*NOTE: If you are not directly involved in the fire response, transmit the nearest interior fire alarm box.
If you are directly involved in the fire response, announce the code phrase:

Any staff member hearing this phrase shall immediately go the aid of that person and transmit the nearest interior fire alarm.

RESPONSE TEAM CHIEF: Cause the fire department to be notified at _____ giving the *address, floor, and wing* involved.

Should a fire, smoke or excessive heat condition be discovered *elsewhere* in this facility (Alarm Signals OR Coded Announcement), determine location and report the fire to the fire department

Designated person in charge of *this floor/area***:

	PRIMARY	ALTERNATE
DAY SHIFT:	_____	_____
EVENING SHIFT:	_____	_____
NIGHT SHIFT:	_____	_____

**DUTIES: Assume charge of all personnel at this floor/area and direct them in the discharge of their duties outlined in Fire Procedures Special Instructions.

Designated person in charge of the response team (Response Team, Chief***)

	CHIEF	MEMBERS
DAY SHIFT:	_____	_____
EVENING SHIFT:	_____	_____
NIGHT SHIFT:	_____	_____

***DUTIES: Assume charge of the Response Team, directing members in their duties as specified in the Fire Safety/Emergency Manual.

— **POST THIS NOTICE CONSPICUOUSLY** —



Fire Drill Report

DATE: _____

SHIFT: 7-3 PM _____ 3-11 PM _____ 11-7 AM _____ OTHER _____

TIME: Started _____ All Clear _____ Total Time _____

AREA: Floor _____ Wing _____ Room / Area _____

TYPE: Station _____ Sprinkler _____ Smoke / Thermal _____

Coded Announcement _____ Other _____

Administrator/Designated On Duty: _____

Receptionist/Switchboard On Duty: _____

Security Supervisor On Duty: _____

Drill - Initial Discoverer/S: _____

Simulated Case Given: _____

FIRE DRILL CONDUCTOR NAME: _____ Phone Number: _____

Staff Performance Results:

Initial Discovery:

I. Alarm Transmitted? _____

II. Rescue Accomplished? _____

III. Extinguishment? _____

IV. Door/s Closed? _____

V. Corridor Clear? _____

1. Response Team Chief Responding: _____

2. F.D. Entry & Directed To Scene? _____

3. First Response Team Member On Hand Within: _____

4. All Response Team Members On Hand Within: _____

5. Did Alarm Annunciate Appropriate Zone? _____

6. Where Doors Closed and Not Reopened? _____

7. Were Corridors and Exits Kept Clear? _____

8. Were Elevators Used? _____ Held? _____ Where? _____

9. Signals And/Or Announcements Audible Throughout? _____

10. Evacuation Accomplished? Horiz _____ Vertical _____ Isolation _____

11. Fire/Smoke Compartment/s Observed? _____

12. Total Persona Attending: _____

13. Equipment/Material On Hand: _____

14. Emergency Instructions Posted? _____

15. General Staff Proficiency and State Of Training? Exc _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____

16. **TOPIC/S OF INSTRUCTION GIVEN** Review Simulated Case Given Discovery Event Sequence

Alarm Transmission Evacuation Search Extinguishment Confinement Response Team

Signals/Codes Alarm Failure Use of Elevators/Beds/Lighting Smoke/Thermal Activation Duties

Sprinkler Activation Duties Other _____ Other _____ Other _____

17: COMMENTS (Corrective measures, Hazards, Observations): _____

18. Fire Station Notified - Testing At: _____ # _____

Fire Station Notified - Complete At _____ # _____

Alarm Signal Transmission Confirmed: Yes _____ No _____ N/A _____



ATTENDANCE LOG

Signature	Print Name	Signature	Print Name
1.		26.	
2.		27.	
3.		28.	
4.		29.	
5.		30.	
6.		31.	
7.		32.	
8.		33.	
9.		34.	
10.		35.	
11.		36.	
12.		37.	
13.		38.	
14.		39.	
15.		40.	
16.		41.	
17.		42.	
18.		43.	
19.		44.	
20.		45.	
21.		46.	
22.		47.	
23.		48.	
24.		49.	
25.		50.	

