

# Fire Safety

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# Contents

## **Section 1 – Introduction**

- 1.1 Context
- 1.2 Purpose
- 1.3 Scope

## **Section 2 – Procedure**

- 2.1 The Fire Prevention Triangle
- 2.2 Sources of Heat
- 2.3 Sources of Oxygen
- 2.4 Sources of Fuel
- 2.5 Cleanliness & Housekeeping
- 2.6 Safety Data Sheets
- 2.7 Fire Prevention Overview
- 2.8 Fire Fighting Equipment
- 2.9 Fire Resistant Doors / Walls
- 2.10 Emergency Lighting Systems
- 2.11 Fire Safety Signs
- 2.12 Fire Alarm Systems

2.13 Fire Evacuations

2.14 Fire Evacuation Drills

2.15 Training

2.16 Fire Wardens

### **Section 3 – Definitions**

# Introduction

## **1.1 Context**

A fire prevention strategy is key in providing a safe place for our employees and customers and all employees must be aware of the information given in this policy. Everybody has a responsibility to ensure that good practice is followed and that any risks are reported immediately to their line manager.

Staff training in fire prevention must be conducted by all employees in order to maintain a safe working environment. It is also essential that a fire evacuation drill is practiced at least twice per year to ensure that all employees are aware and confident in the evacuation procedures.

## **1.2 Purpose**

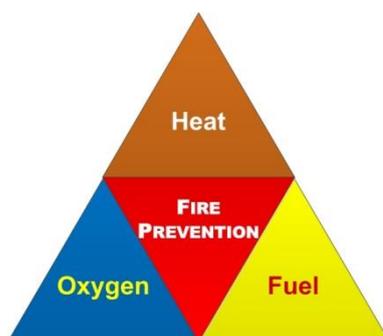
Every employer must identify hazards, assess risks and have a documented risk assessment in regards to fire safety to comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at work Act 2005. The risk assessment is contained within the risk section of your online health and safety dashboard and must be completed annually, as a result of an incident or following changes within the pharmacy.

## **1.3 Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, customers and visitors of our pharmacies.

# Procedure

## 2.1 The fire prevention triangle



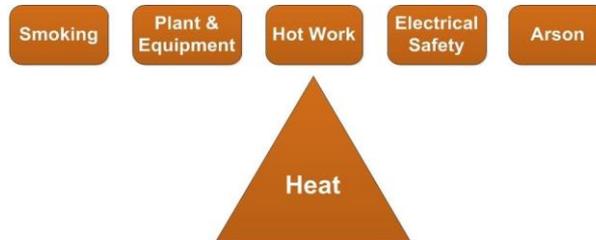
### Heat, Oxygen and Fuel

A fire needs three elements - heat, oxygen and fuel. Without heat, oxygen and fuel a fire will not start or spread. A key strategy to prevent fire is to remove one or more of the three elements required.

The fire safety policy and the fire risk assessment includes detail and a full consideration of all of the issues - including issues arising from heat, oxygen and fuel. Advice on these three elements follows. This advice is not exhaustive and is given in no particular order.

## 2.2 Sources of heat

Heat can be generated by work processes and is an essential part of some processes such as cooking. This heat must be controlled and kept away from fuel unless carefully controlled. Heat generated as a by-product of a process must be dealt with properly.



### Heat Safeguards

- Ensure employees are aware of their responsibility to report dangers.
- Control sources of ignition.
- Have chimneys inspected and cleaned regularly.
- Ensure cooking food is always attended.
- Use the Electricity Supply Board's Safety webpage.

### Smoking

- Provide no-smoking signs at appropriate locations.
- Ensure designated smoking area(s) are away from flammable materials.
- Arrange for cigarettes and matches to be disposed of safely and away from other combustible rubbish.

### Portable Heaters

- Do not use portable heaters unnecessarily.
- They should have emergency tip-over switches, and thermostatic limiting controls.
- Turn them off if people leave the room or are going to sleep.
- Ensure they are 1M away from anything that can burn.
- Do not use them to dry clothes.
- Do not store any combustible materials/chemicals nearby.

## Hot Work

Hot work often arises from construction and/ or maintenance activities. Hot work is work that might generate sufficient heat, sparks or flame to cause a fire. Hot work includes welding, flame cutting, soldering, and brazing, grinding and other equipment incorporating a flame, e.g. tar boilers, etc. Hot work can be very dangerous and stringent controls must be in place. Please see the separate Hot Works Policy.

The maintenance provider will ensure that all hot works are dealt with correctly.

A final check of area must be conducted at least 60 minutes after the job is completed.  
(See Maintenance Policy in documents section of your health and safety dashboard for additional information)

## Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment which is not properly maintained can cause fires.

- Ensure all work equipment protects against catching fire or overheating.
- Ensure proper housekeeping, such as preventing ventilation points on machinery/computers becoming clogged with dust or other materials - causing overheating.
- Electrical equipment is serviced regularly by a competent person to prevent sparks and fires.
- Properly clean and maintain heat producing equipment such as burners, heat exchangers, boilers (inspected and tested yearly), ovens, stoves, and fryers. Require storage of flammables away from this equipment.
- A planned maintenance programme is in place for all pharmacies to properly maintain plant and equipment.

## Electrical safety

- A qualified electrical contractor will carry out installation and repairs to electrical equipment and fittings through your maintenance helpline.
- Check electrical equipment regularly and remove defective equipment immediately.
- Ensure electrical cords are in good condition.
- Plug appliances and lights into separate electrical outlets.
- Avoid using extension cords. If you require an outlet in an area where there is none, have one installed by a qualified electrician.
- Use extension cords safely - not under carpets or across walking areas.
- Use only one device per outlet.

## **Arson**

Deliberately started fires pose very significant risks to all types of workplace.

The possibility of arson is considered as a component of your risk assessment and it is one that you can do much to control. The majority of deliberately started fires occur in areas with a known history of vandalism or fire-setting. Typically, offenders light the fires outside the premises as an act of vandalism, using materials found nearby. Appropriate security measures, including the protection of stored materials and the efficient and prompt removal of rubbish, can therefore do much to alleviate this particular problem. You should therefore seek advice from the local Gardaí or the fire authority who will involve the other agencies as appropriate if a risk is identified.

Occasionally, arson attacks in the workplace are committed by employees or ex-employees. Employers and other workers should be aware of this potential threat and be alert for early signs, such as a series of unexplained small fires. Again, the Gardaí or the local fire authority can provide further useful guidance.

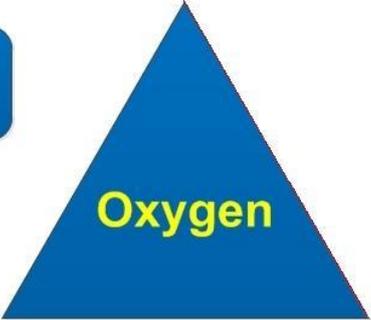
- Provide adequate security: exterior/interior lighting, intrusion alarms, well-secured access openings.
- Prevent access by unauthorized personnel.
- Keep flammables properly stored and secured.

## 2.3 Sources of Oxygen

Oxygen gas is used

- In welding, flame cutting and other similar processes.
- For helping people with breathing difficulties.
- In hyperbaric chambers as a medical treatment.
- In decompression chambers.
- For food preservation and packaging.
- In steelworks and chemical plants.

**Oxygen  
safeguards**



**Oxygen**

The air we breathe contains about 21% oxygen. Pure oxygen at high pressure, such as from a cylinder, can react violently with common materials such as oil and grease. Other materials may catch fire spontaneously. Nearly all materials including textiles, rubber and even metals will burn vigorously in oxygen.

With even a small increase in the oxygen level in the air to 24%, it becomes easier to start a fire, which will then burn hotter and more fiercely than in normal air. It may be almost impossible to put the fire out. A leaking valve or hose in a poorly ventilated room or confined space can quickly increase the oxygen concentration to a dangerous level.

The main causes of fires and explosions when using oxygen are

- Oxygen enrichment from leaking equipment.
- Use of materials not compatible with oxygen.
- Use of oxygen in equipment not designed for oxygen service.
- Incorrect or careless operation of oxygen equipment.

### **Oxygen Safeguards**

- Ensure employees are aware of their responsibility to report dangers.
- Oxygen should never be used to “sweeten” the air in a confined space.

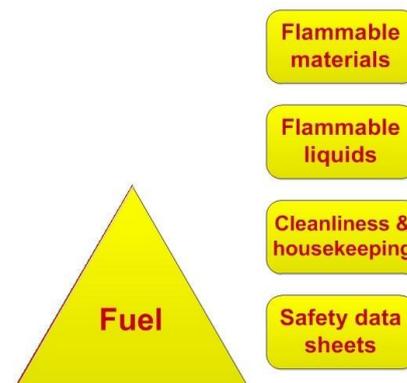
### **Where oxygen is used,**

- Follow safety advice from the supplier.
- Follow the safeguards on the safety data sheet.
- Keep the safety data sheet readily available.

## 2.4 Sources of fuel

Workplaces in which large amounts of flammable materials are displayed, stored or used can present a greater hazard than those where the amount kept is small.

In relation to fire, fuel consists of flammable material. Flammable material is material that burns readily in a normal atmosphere. Flammable materials include flammable liquids (e.g. petrol), flammable gasses (e.g. propane and butane) and flammable solids (e.g. charcoal, paper). It is important to identify all flammable materials that are in your workplace so that proper controls can be put in place.



Great care is required in the storage, handling and use of flammable materials. Safety Data sheets may provide detailed advice.

### Fuel Safeguards

- Ensure employees are aware of their responsibility to report dangers.
- Ensure furnishings and fittings in places of assembly comply with the Code of Practice for Fire Safety of Furnishings and Fittings in Places of Assembly.
- Permit no timber lining on ceiling, corridor walls, ceilings, stairways and fire evacuation routes.

### Flammable materials

- Identify all flammable materials so that proper controls can be put in place.
- Identify use of substances with flammable vapours.(e.g. some adhesives)
- Reduce quantities of flammable materials to the smallest amount necessary for running the business and keep away from escape routes.
- Replace highly flammable materials with less flammable ones.
- Store remaining stocks of highly flammable materials properly outside, in a separate building, or separated from the main workplace by fire-resisting construction.
- Provide clearly marked separate storage for flammable chemicals, gas cylinders, and waste materials.
- Train employees on safe storage, handling and use of flammable materials.
- Keep stocks of office stationery and supplies and flammable cleaners' materials in separate cupboards or stores. They should be fire-resisting with a fire door if they open onto a corridor or stairway escape route.

## **Flammable liquids**

Flammable liquids can present a significant risk of fire. Vapours evolved are usually heavier than air and can travel long distances, so are more likely to reach a source of ignition. Liquid leaks and dangerous vapours can arise from faulty storage (bulk and containers), plant and process - design, installation, maintenance or use. Ignition of the vapours from flammable liquids remains a possibility until the concentration of the vapour in the air has reduced to a level which will not support combustion.

- The quantity of flammable liquids in workrooms should be kept to a minimum, normally no more than a half-day's or half a shifts supply.
- Flammable liquids, including empty or part-used containers, should be stored safely. Small quantities (Tens of Litres) of flammable liquids can be stored in the workroom if in closed containers in a fire-resisting (e.g. metal), bin or cabinet fitted with means to contain any leaks.
- Out of date hazardous or dangerous liquids must be disposed of immediately by your hazardous waste contractor.

## **Metal Storage for Flammable Chemicals**

Larger quantities should be stored in a properly designated store, either in the open air (on well ventilated, impervious ground, away from ignition sources) or in a suitably constructed storeroom.

- Flammable liquids should not be decanted within the store. Decanting should take place in a well-ventilated area set aside for this purpose, with appropriate facilities to contain and clear up any spillage.
- Container lids should always be replaced after use, and no container should ever be opened in such a way that it cannot be safely resealed.
- Flammable liquids should be stored and handled in well ventilated conditions.

## **Containers for Flammable Liquid**

Storage containers should be kept covered and proprietary safety containers with self-closing lids should be used for dispensing and applying small quantities of flammable liquids.

There should be no potential ignition sources in areas where flammable liquids are used or stored and flammable concentrations of vapour may be present at any time.

## 2.5 Cleanliness & housekeeping

Avoid accumulations of combustible rubbish and waste and remove at least daily and store away from the building. Never store flammable or combustible rubbish, even temporarily, in escape routes, or where it can contact potential sources of heat. Position skips so that a fire will not put any structure at risk. Clean cooking surfaces on a regular basis to prevent grease build-up.

- Parts of the workplace which are not normally occupied, such as basements, store rooms and any area where a fire could grow unnoticed should be regularly inspected and cleared of non-essential flammable materials and substances. You should also protect such areas against entry by unauthorised people.
- If the workplace has waste or derelict land nearby, you should keep any undergrowth under control so that a fire cannot spread through dry grass, for example.
- There should be no potential ignition sources in areas where flammable liquids are used or stored and flammable concentrations of vapour may be present at any time.

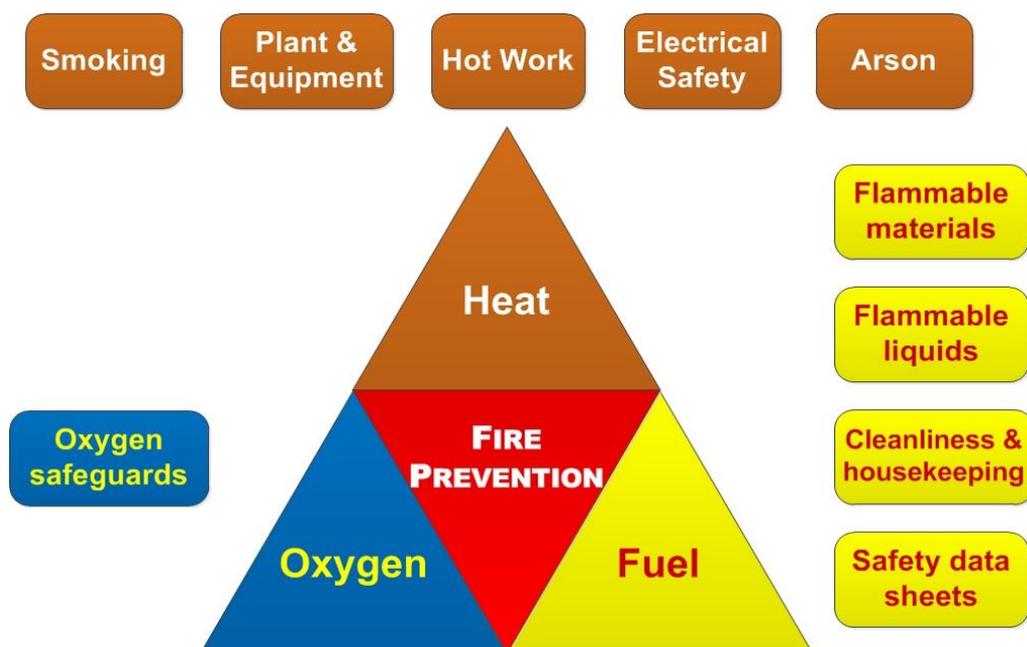
## 2.6 Safety data sheets

Safety data sheets provide useful information on chemicals and handling, storage and emergency measures. A safety data sheet should be provided with any hazardous chemical and includes useful information. Please see the Chemical & Dangerous Substance policy.

- Handle material in accordance with the advice on the safety data sheet.
- Keep safety data sheets readily available.
- Keep safety data sheets safely available in the event of a fire so that the information is available for emergency services.

## 2.7 Fire prevention overview

This diagram gives an overview of fire prevention for workplaces



## 2.8 Fire fighting equipment

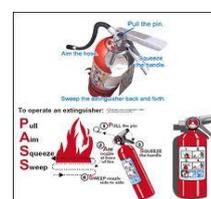
These pieces of equipment are provided to your pharmacy based on content and size of the pharmacy.

A number of differing types of fire extinguishers are provided along with signage to ensure correct usage to relevant fire type.



Fire Extinguisher Signage

Fire extinguisher training will be provided to your pharmacy by your maintenance provider.



Fire extinguishers are tested and maintained annually by an approved supplier and each extinguisher will be updated with last date of service.

- If a fire extinguisher has been utilised or tampered with the maintenance helpline must be informed immediately to arrange for refill/replacement.
- Never remove a fire extinguisher from its designated location and do not utilise fire extinguishers to prop doors open.



Fire Blankets may also be provided where there are canteen facilities/cooking appliances.



Fire Blanket

Weekly visual checks of all fire fighting equipment must be performed by the pharmacy and documented.

## 2.9 Fire resistant doors / walls

- Fire resistant doors will show a sign on them which reads ‘fire door keep shut’.
- These doors are essential in minimising the spread of fire to other areas of the pharmacy.
- Fire doors must be kept closed and never propped open, especially outside of trading hours.



- In the event of an evacuation care must be given by staff to close fire doors behind them when using the evacuation route.



**Evacuation Plan**

- Consideration must be given to re-fit works carried out in the pharmacy to ensure that damage is not caused to fire doors/walls and that materials/paints used are suitable.

## 2.10 Emergency lighting systems

- These are utilised for the safe evacuation of persons in the event of a fire/power failure.
- These systems operate by battery and are connected to the fire alarm in the pharmacy.
- Training and operating guidance on the use of the emergency lighting system is provided by your maintenance engineer.

## Emergency Lighting Cont...

The following approx. levels of equipment makes up your emergency lighting system:

- 2x Exit Units over front and rear exits.  
(More or less may be required depending on layout of shop and number of exits).
- 4x Bulkhead Light units in areas throughout shop.  
(Or min one for every room).
- 1x Central Test unit to permit testing of lighting without interrupting normal lighting.



## Tests

In accordance with standards your emergency lighting system should be tested quarterly by a member of the pharmacy team for 40 minutes.

- Training on how to test your system will be given by your emergency lighting engineer during their preventative maintenance visit.
- Your emergency lighting engineer will also test your system for a period of 3 hours annually (this test can be counted as a pharmacy quarterly test).
- These tests must be recorded on your Physical Security Audit in your on-line health and safety dashboard.

## 2.11 Fire safety signs

- These are provided and placed in each pharmacy by your maintenance provider.
- A full list of signage will be left in each pharmacy and any damaged/missing signage must be reported to the maintenance company who will replace immediately.
- Fire safety signage must be checked monthly and recorded on the physical security log.



Fire Signage

## 2.12 Fire alarm systems

All pharmacies will have a functioning fire alarm system which is designed to raise an alarm in the event of a possible fire.

The system is linked to the intruder alarm and will notify the alarm monitoring station in the event of activation.

The fire alarm can be activated in 2 ways:

- Smoke detectors registering enough smoke to determine a possible fire.
- Break Glass units activated by a person.

### Fire alarm systems will consist of

- A fire alarm panel
- Smoke detectors
- Break glass units and test keys
- Linked to access control devices on doors (if applicable)



The fire alarm, detectors and break glass units will be tested and maintained twice a year by a service engineer and a report will be given to the pharmacy manager and maintenance company. A site plan detailing the locations/zones of the fire alarm equipment will be provided by the installer.

The installation company will provide training on the use of the fire alarm system to the pharmacy manager and key staff.

### **Daily fire safety checks**

- You must conduct daily fire safety checks to reduce the likelihood of a fire occurring and to ensure that people will be able to escape safely if a fire does occur. In particular, ensure that escape routes and exits are clear and available for use, and that doors marked “fire door keep shut” are not being wedged open.

### **Preventing False Fire Alarms**

- Ensure that appliances such as toasters/cookers/microwaves are cleaned regularly in accordance with manufacturer’s guidelines.
- Ensure toasters and other cooking equipment are not left unattended when in use.
- Ensure that any water leaks in roofing areas are dealt with immediately as this can cause damage to smoke detectors/break glass units and may cause damage to the pharmacies electrical systems.
- Ensure that any maintenance work carried out involving ‘hot works’ for example welding is carried out by approved contractors and away from combustible materials.
- Ensure that any maintenance works carried out involving dust for example carpentry are carried out by an approved contractor and that dust covers are utilised for detectors during the works (covers must be removed as soon as work has been completed and overnight).

## 2.13 Fire evacuations

### In the Event of a Fire Alarm Activation

A fire evacuation route map must be devised and placed in prominent positions of the pharmacy to ensure that in the event of a fire all persons can safely find the nearest fire evacuation route.

#### **All staff must follow the evacuation process:**

- All electronic internal access devices (keypads) on fire escape routes will deactivate in the event of fire alarm activation.
- A member of staff must check the control panel to identify the source of the activation. If it is safe to do so the area of activation is to be checked by a trained fire warden to determine the cause of the activation.
- The staff member must obtain adequate fire fighting equipment e.g. Fire Blanket/Fire Extinguisher before proceeding to check the area of activation.
- If the source of the activation is a small fire which can be safely extinguished the staff member may extinguish with the correct equipment but only if safe to do so.
- In the event of a confirmed false alarm you may inform the alarm monitoring station that the fire services are not required to attend and allow evacuated persons to re-enter the pharmacy.
- In the event of smoke/smell of burning present but the source cannot be identified all persons must be evacuated and await the arrival of the fire services.
- In the event of the cause of activation not established or there are no adequately trained staff on site the pharmacy must be evacuated to await the arrival of the fire services.
- The alarm monitoring station will call the pharmacy to reduce the rate of false alarms and to also deter unnecessary charges which may be incurred.
- If the alarm monitoring company's call is not answered it will be presumed that the pharmacy has been evacuated and the fire services will be contacted to respond immediately.
- Under no circumstances must any persons be allowed to re-enter the premises following an evacuation until the fire services have authorised re-entry. Upon arrival of the fire services they must be informed of the location of the activation.
- Once authorisation has been granted to re-enter the fire alarm panel must be reset. If this cannot be achieved the maintenance helpline must be informed. An attempt will be made to reset over the phone, if this cannot be achieved and engineer will be dispatched to resolve the issue.
- If the fire alarm is activated out of hours please refer to the section of 'key-holders & key control'.
  - **Dealing with less abled people**
- Account must be taken not only of the people in the workplace (employed or otherwise) who may be able to make their own escape, but also those who may need assistance to escape, e.g. by having adequate staffing levels in premises providing treatment or care.

- Also where there are stairs staff may be required to carry out 2 man lift to assist those who are less abled.

## **2.14 Fire evacuation drills**

An unannounced fire evacuation drill must be completed at least twice a year.

The fire alarm system must be placed into test mode through your monitoring station prior to the drill being conducted.

The following must be recorded in the Fire Evacuation Drill audit contained in the audit section of your on-line health and safety dashboard.

- Length of time taken to evacuate the pharmacy
- Efficiency of employees in evacuating customers
- Fire exits utilised (closest to employees)

## **2.15 Training**

All staff must complete the on-line training module on Fire Prevention.

At least 2 staff members will be trained annually in safe use of fire fighting equipment by your fire extinguisher maintenance company.

## **2.16 Fire Wardens**

The pharmacy must nominate accountable persons who have completed both the fire prevention and the fire equipment training, to be responsible in the event of the fire alarm activating for the safe evacuation of employees and customers.

The number of fire wardens required will be dependent on the size of the premises. Sections of the premises may be devised and allocated to responsible persons.

Accountable fire wardens must be documented in the accountable person's sheet within the audit section of your on-line health and safety dashboard.

## Definitions

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