



Fire safety advice concerning the implications of the fire fighters strikes

This note has been prepared to inform Schools and Departments of the implications for the University arising from the fire fighters industrial dispute. The Fire Brigades Union Executive Council has set the following date for a further period of strike action:

Commencing: Wednesday 25th February 2015 at 07-00hrs

Ending: Thursday 26th February 2015 at 07-00hrs

This is a 24 hour strike

The dispute does not increase the risk to members of the University since the normal fire alarm and evacuation arrangements will continue to be in place. However, although the Government is putting contingency arrangements into effect the effectiveness of these compared to the normal fire response seems uncertain.

Out of Hours Arrangements

Some strike dates cover "out of hours" periods. Where a strike date covers an "out of hours" period the normal resources within a building to assist in the event of problems or incidents will not be available. Consequently no laboratory work that could give rise to a fire, such as working with flammable or combustible materials or hot work, should be done during this period. If this is unavoidable then the work must be formally approved by the Head of School or designate subject to a risk assessment that covers fire extinguishing and response.

All persons working in academic buildings must sign the late working book since the Fire Brigade will only respond to incidents where there are people known to be trapped by a fire. The late working book is the means by which Security can provide this information to the Fire Brigade.

University Fire Response Procedure

It has been stated that during the strikes there will only be a response by the Fire Brigade to confirmed reports of fire, automatic fire alarms will not elicit a response. Consequently it will be necessary to modify the University Fire Response Procedure during strike periods since it entails immediate notification of automatic alarms to the Fire Brigade outside the normal hours for the type of building. [The procedure can be found at: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/documents/fire-response.pdf>]

With the exception of the Medical School and other outlying units subject to local emergency arrangements, it will be essential to immediately notify Security (extension 8888) of the fire situation (Derby GEMS and Nursing are included within this). During **normal hours** this should be done by the local responsible person, such as the Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator or School Safety Officer. **Out of hours**, Security will

immediately attend all automatic alarms to verify the situation. Anyone detecting a real fire must notify Security immediately.

Within the Medical School, the hospital switchboard should be notified immediately (2222) of the fire situation.

Late Working

To assist in ensuring the correct response to a fire alarm out of hours it is essential that the local arrangements for late working are strictly followed. In particular:

- Sign in and sign out of the register - this is essential to account for occupants in the event of an alarm.
- In the event of an alarm, go to, and wait at, your assembly point.

Fire Safety - Advice on Good Practice

Although all of us should always be vigilant concerning fire risks, the following basic, commonsense actions are identified by way of a reminder. The co-operation of all members of the University is expected in applying them.

Fire Prevention

Combustible Materials:

Is the workplace kept free of rubbish and combustible waste materials?

Are combustible materials and flammable liquids and gases stored safely and securely?

Are processes using flammable liquids or gases controlled to prevent ignition?

Are flammable liquids moved safely within buildings, i.e. stoppered containers, enclosed Winchester carriers?

Hot work (welding, cutting, and grinding) is subject to Hot Work Permit Procedure.

Electrical Equipment:

Turn off all unnecessary electrical equipment when not in use and especially at the end of the day.

Is electrical equipment in a good condition?

Is the use of electrical extension leads and multi-point adaptors kept to a minimum?

Are the flexes run in safe places where they will not be damaged?

General Security - Good House Keeping:

Have suitable measures been taken to protect against the risk of arson?

Is rubbish stored away from buildings in a secured location?

Means of Escape

Do you know all the alternative means of escape from your work area?

Are you able to open easily the final exit door?

Have plans been made and rehearsed regarding assisting disabled staff and visitors to evacuate the premises?

Are all escape routes free from obstructions and other hazards?

Are internal fire doors normally kept closed to ensure that smoke and flames cannot spread from one compartment within the building to another?

Fire Extinguishers

Do you know the location of the nearest fire extinguishers?

Do you know what type of fires they can be used on - see its label, or the sign above it?
Replace any extinguishers on their holders.

At the End of the Day

Check your work area for fire risks.

Electrical Equipment isolated where possible.

Flammables, etc. locked away in approved stores.

All internal doors closed.

Heat sources removed or isolated.

All doors and windows securely shut.

Dr J A Sutherland, Director of Health and Safety

8th December 2014