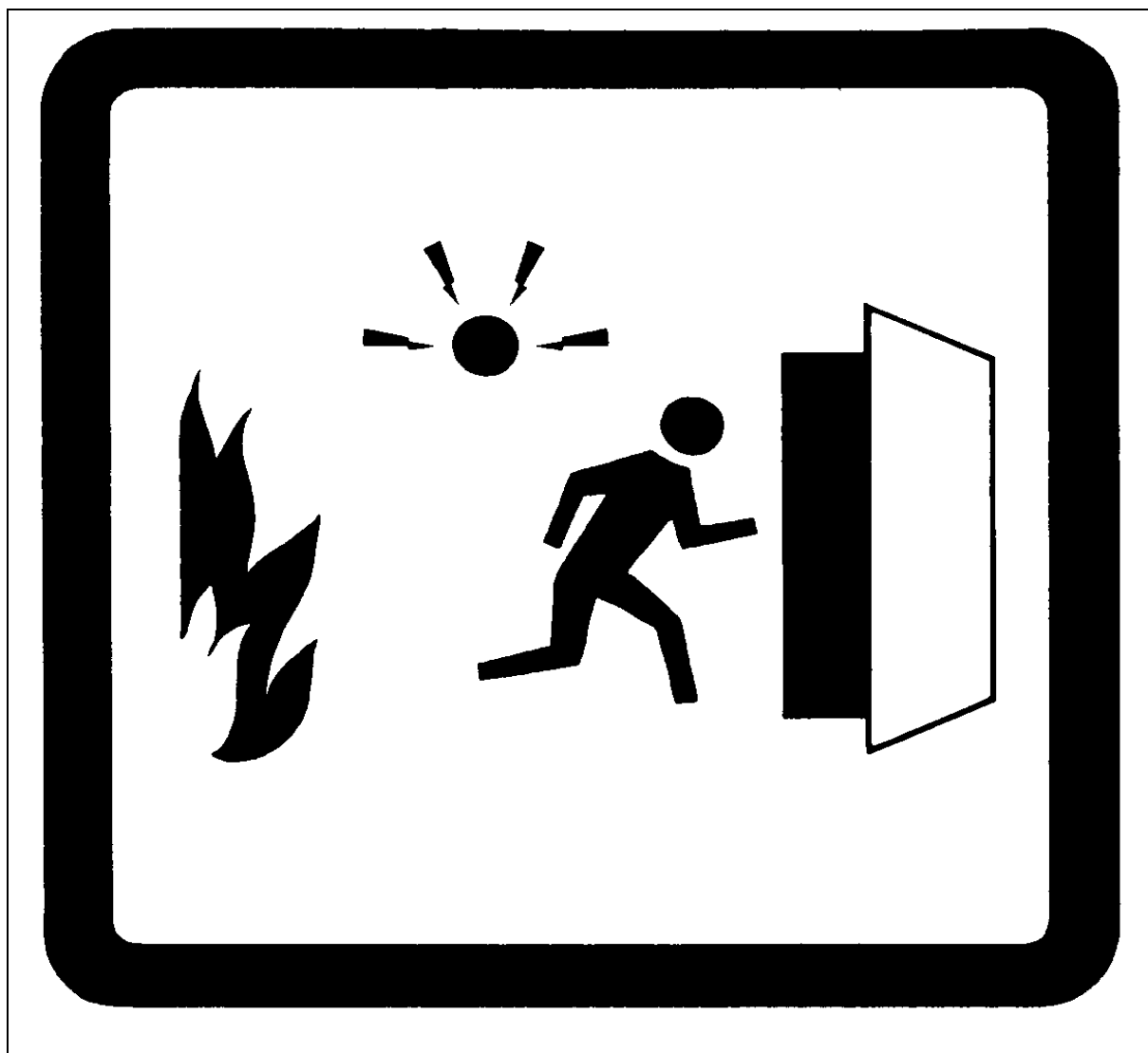


EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES



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1 SUMMARY

This Code of Practice applies to all University buildings, excluding residential property. It sets out generic emergency evacuation procedures that apply across each of our campuses and with which staff, students, tenants, and visitors must comply to ensure their own safety.

All persons on university premises must understand the emergency arrangements that apply in their area and must comply with them. This means knowing where the nearest evacuation route is, knowing where their assembly point is, who to report to, and complying with instructions not to re-enter the building until the 'all clear' is given by the Evacuation Officer, Campus Security officers, or emergency services.

2 SCOPE

This code of practice is to assist Schools and Functions prepare for a building emergency evacuation. It provides generic guidance on emergency evacuation procedures. This code of practice does not apply to university-owned tenanted residential housing. These types of premises will have handbooks for occupiers that set out the fire safety arrangements in the individual premises.

Safety notices and guides that include information that are more detailed are listed in section 7 of this guide.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The University has a duty to ensure that procedures are in place to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger. This includes ensuring that all persons (staff, students, visitors, members of the public, contractors, tenants in buildings shared with university departments) can be evacuated from any premises where there is a potentially dangerous situation. All persons must be able to proceed immediately to a place of safety.

3.1 Duties of managers

Heads of Schools and Functions and other managers (including other employers in tenanted areas or areas under the control of contractors) must ensure that:

- staff are appointed to manage emergency situations that might affect their buildings or their occupants (which means appointing suitable numbers of Fire Wardens, Evacuation Officers, Evacuation of people requiring assistance, Safe use of fire extinguishers, and others as necessary, in consultation with School/department managers)
- staff receive training appropriate to their role in the emergency.
- all staff are trained in the action to take in the event of an emergency.
- information is available to building occupants and visitors (including students) about the emergency procedures.
- all building occupants comply with the emergency evacuation procedures.
- if anyone fails to comply, this is regarded as a breach of university rules and is dealt with accordingly.

- local risk assessments are used to identify any other emergencies, which could require a building to be evacuated, and to develop local procedures to take account of this.
- after any emergency evacuation, procedures are reviewed to ensure that any lessons are learnt, and procedures are modified if necessary.

3.2 Duties of all building occupants

All staff, students, and other building occupants must comply with the building emergency procedures, both during a 'real' incident and during practice drills. Any staff member or student who fails to do so may be subject to disciplinary action. Contractors who fail to do so may be excluded from university premises.

Any person who intentionally and wilfully misuses or interferes with equipment provided for alerting building occupants to a serious and imminent danger may be subject to disciplinary action.

3.3 Centrally booked rooms.

In some University buildings, there may not be Fire Wardens readily available to check all areas. This is particularly true in buildings where centrally booked rooms are used out of normal hours. Therefore, in centrally booked rooms, the person in charge of the event (lecture, seminar, meeting etc.) must ensure that the room is cleared, and they must report this to the Evacuation Officer or the Security team who are investigating the alarm.

This applies to all centrally booked rooms and for all events.

3.4 Evening class organisers and hire of premises to external groups.

Evening class organisers must ensure 'Fire procedures' are made known to persons responsible for individual events, such as sessional lecturers, and that all persons attending the evening class are made aware of the procedures.

Similarly, where areas are rented, leased, or hired to external groups for e.g., social events, extra-mural events, conferences, club meetings etc., the University member responsible for the hire must provide emergency information and instructions to the person or persons hiring the venue. This must include the fact that the person in charge of the event/meeting etc. must ensure that all persons in the group evacuate the building when the fire alarm sounds.

4 FIRE SAFETY

The most significant risk to life in most university buildings is fire. This section describes the University facilities and services available in support of the emergency evacuation procedures.

4.1 Fire alarm systems

The fire alarm systems within many university buildings are linked to the University Security control room, or to an alarm-receiving centre. University security will call the Fire Service when they are alerted to an actual fire. An alarm receiving centre will contact University Security to inform of a fire alarm activation. However, this should be regarded as a back up to building occupants summoning

the Fire Service and must not be viewed as a substitute for calling the Fire Service. The Fire service operate a call challenge policy and therefore, will not send a fire appliance unless there has been a confirmed fire. However, the fire service will automatically attend halls of residence and Hotels.

University Security will investigate all fire alarm activations.

The standards of the fire alarm system within university buildings often exceeds those required, thereby helping to ensure the earliest possible warning of a fire.

4.2 Fire action notices

Standard "FIRE ACTION NOTICES" should be displayed beside fire alarm call points, in circulation corridors, bedrooms, areas of high circulation, e.g., bars, common rooms, lecture theatres, etc.

It is highly recommended that all building occupants are familiar with their building fire action notice.

A template for fire routine notices is available from Fire Safety and is downloadable from the H&SS Fire Safety web site.

Example of a fire action notice is in appendix 1.

4.3 Assembly points

An assembly point is a place of total safety. The location of an assembly point is clearly indicated on the fire action notice. A large green sign may also be located outside of the building. Assembly points are chosen bearing in mind the need to provide safe refuge for the assembled building occupants and unhindered vehicular access for the Fire Service and other emergency services. Assembly point relocations will be considered with consultation from the University fire safety advisers.

4.4 Passenger lifts

Lifts cannot be used as a means of escape during fires or other emergencies. Passenger lifts will automatically travel to the ground floor, or the safest floor where the lift doors will open. Any passengers in the lift will then have to evacuate on foot using the nearest available fire exit.

4.5 Evacuation for people requiring assistance.

Schools and Functions must arrange to assist disabled people during an evacuation. This will require nominating staff trained to assist anyone who needs help from the building. General Emergency Evacuation Procedures are already in place in many University buildings that will help most people who may require assistance. A Personal emergency evacuation plan will be created for anyone who may additional assistance that is not already provided.

Evacuation aids and techniques include the use of evacuation chairs, evacuation lift, escape mattress, or self-evacuation by the disabled person. People with other types of disability may need to be accompanied out of the building.

Wherever practical a disabled person or person requiring assistance will make their way to a refuge as per the general emergency evacuation procedures, or their Personal emergency evacuation plan.

If the person who requires assistance is a visitor, then the visitor must be guided to the refuge, the communication system operated by the host, and their presence in the refuge is reported to the

Evacuation Officer. The host should then return to their visitor in the refuge and await further instructions.

Wherever practical, a disabled person must not be left alone in a refuge area. A designated friend, or carer may stay with the person in the refuge, if not then a fire warden must return to the refuge to stay with the person.

Anyone waiting in a refuge will only be evacuated on a confirmed fire. It is more practical and safer for the person in the refuge to remain there until further notice.

Staff in schools and functions must be nominated and trained in the methods required to assist someone from a refuge. Security Officers are also trained and will help staff to assist someone from a refuge if they are able to.

In centrally booked rooms, the person in charge of the meeting/lecture/seminar must ensure that any disabled person in the room who cannot evacuate is escorted to a refuge area. They may be escorted by the disabled person's "buddy," by a student, or by a member of staff. The person in charge of the meeting/lecture/seminar must ensure that the presence of a disabled person in a refuge is reported to the Evacuation Officer.

4.6 Disabled refuge

A building that allows for access to the upper floors via a passenger lift will have disabled refuges. A disabled refuge is a place of relevant safety and can be found in or near to a storey exit (staircase or evacuation lift lobby). The refuge is protected from fire and smoke by a minimum of thirty minutes fire resisting construction.

4.7 Communication in a disabled refuge

A staircase refuge or evacuation lift refuge have communication systems that are connected to a master communication panel next to the fire alarm panel and to the university security control room. Operating the communication system during a fire alarm activation will alert the security control room who will pass the details to the security officers' en-route to the building.

4.8 Evacuation Lifts

The University has adopted a policy of installing evacuation lifts in new buildings and during the refurbishment of existing buildings, where this is reasonably practicable – see Safety Guide 34 Part B. These are the ONLY lifts than can be used for the evacuation of disabled people. Evacuation lifts can only be used during an evacuation to assist disabled people. They must not be used for the evacuation of any other persons. It is essential that building and security services staff be trained in the procedures to use the evacuation lift in an emergency.

4.9 Tackling a fire

Whether or not an individual should tackle a fire is dependent upon several basic factors:

- The size and nature of the fire.
- Difficulties of access (to get to the situation) and available means of escape.

- Available and appropriate type of fire extinguishers/fire blankets.
- Confidence and competence of the individual in being able to operate the appropriate extinguisher(s) safely.

Anyone in doubt should not tackle the fire but should follow the instructions for raising the alarm and evacuating the building.

As a rule, attempts to fight a fire should be limited to the following situations:

- A small, localised fire, e.g., fire no bigger than you.
- A chip fryer, frying pan or small kitchen fire (i.e., burning food under a grill or in a toaster), where an appropriate extinguisher or fire blanket is immediately available.
- You know what is on fire and the have the correct fire extinguisher.

4.10 Means of escape

Doors must be always available as a means of escape in the premises.

It is essential that anyone responsible for unlocking and securing building doors are aware of this and when the building may be occupied. When unlocking buildings both leaves of the door should be fully unlocked so that the maximum door width possible is available to reduce the evacuation time to the minimum possible.

When locking the premises, it must not be possible to lock people into the building. Security of premises for the benefit of persons and property must not override the need for maintaining means of escape routes.

All final exit routes that are at risk of being blocked externally will have “FIRE EXIT KEEP CLEAR” signs fixed to the external face of the final exit door.

4.11 Identification of Building Evacuation team

An orange fluorescent vest that clearly identifies the Evacuation Officer as a focal point is provided in the evacuation officer pack. The Evacuation Officer must be the only one wearing the orange fluorescent vest.

A yellow fluorescent vest that clearly identifies Fire Wardens are provided in the sweep packs along with the planned route. Fire Wardens must wear the yellow fluorescent vest.

4.12 Emergency folders

Most high risk or large buildings on campus have a building emergency folder, which contains information that will assist the emergency services in the event of fire. The folder is normally located in the main foyer of the building by the main fire alarm panel. Typical information provided includes:

- plans of the premises including means of escape routes.
- location of disabled refuges and associated control and communications equipment
- lines of fire resisting construction
- Associated risks (cylinders, chemicals, radiation sources, biohazards, highly flammable liquids, oxidising substances, etc.)
- Power supplies, intakes, etc.
- fire hydrants

The University Fire Safety Adviser initially prepares the building emergency folder. The Head of School, functions, technical managers, and Health and safety coordinators are subsequently responsible for ensuring any reduced or increased risks are passed to the University Fire Safety Adviser. Amendments can then be made to the emergency folder and the current information sent to the fire service.

If for any reason the fire service feels that the information is not correct, they may not commit a fire crew to the fire and instead fight the fire externally which, increases the risk of loss of the building and possibly many years of research.

5 EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

The university must have procedures in place to ensure that all building occupants are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency. These procedures may require areas of additional training and the procedures must be practised to ensure compliance and competency.

5.1 Fire Procedures

Fire action notices give a brief description of what to do if you discover a fire or on hearing the fire alarm. The general rules apply:

On discovering a fire.

- Close the door on the room providing it is safe to do so,
- Raise the alarm, by shouting fire and operating the nearest available red break glass call point.
- Call the fire service 999, and Security control 0118 378 6300.
- If safe to do so, attempt to tackle the fire with an appropriate fire extinguisher.

On hearing the fire alarm:

- Close rooms doors and if safe to do so any windows.
- Leave the building by the nearest available fire exit.
- Make your way to the assembly point.
- Do not leave the assembly point, until you told to by the Evacuation Officer, or Security
- Do not attempt to reenter the building.

5.2 Duties of fire wardens

When the fire alarm sounds, **Fire Wardens** must:

- Check their designated area, for persons not responding to the alarm signal.
- Marshal people out of the building using the nearest available exit route.
- Note anyone waiting in a refuge.
- Report to the Evacuation Officer who will be outside the main entrance.

Each Fire Warden must report to the Evacuation Officer:

- that their area has been checked, and any findings.
- details of any persons refusing to leave the building.

- anyone who is waiting in a refuge.
- The location of, and what is on fire if one has been discovered.

Under no circumstances must Fire Wardens endanger themselves and significantly delay their own evacuation from the building.

Fire Wardens should then be ready to respond to requests for assistance from the Evacuation Officer.

5.3 Duties of evacuation officer

Evacuation Officers must make their way to the main fire alarm panel. The Evacuation Officer will then take control of the situation as follows:

- Collect the building Emergency Folder that is normally located within the main entrance,
- Record the information on the fire alarm panel pack and collect the evacuation officer pack.
- Wear the orange hi viz jacket, and co-ordinate the evacuation near to the buildings main entrance.
- Record the results of sweeps conducted by the Fire Wardens on the checklist.
- Establish areas of the building not checked by Fire Wardens. If safe to do so, request Fire Wardens to check any missed areas.
- Allocate Fire Wardens and other responsible persons specific duties as required, such as acting as a Deputy Evacuation Officer, appointing Door Wardens, passing messages to the assembly point, key person to stand with the security officer at the fire alarm panel, and operating evacuation lifts, evacuation chairs, and escape mattresses (if suitably trained).
- Call the fire service if a fire has been discovered. Call security to confirm a fire.
- Establish communications with any disabled persons located in refuge areas.
- Instruct a Warden to walk round the perimeter of the building and report back upon any fire situation.
- Ensure that evacuees do not leave the assembly point until the 'all clear' is given. This decision may involve the emergency services depending upon the severity of the situation.
- Provide the following information to the emergency services:
 - Persons reported with last known locations.
 - Building emergency folder.
 - Location of someone waiting in disabled refuge areas.
 - Location of fire incident if known.

5.4 Duties of University Security

Security Services investigate all fire alarm activations. They will:

- Attend the building.
- Check the fire panel, and if safe to do so, the location of any automatic detection device that has activated.
- Collate any available information about the cause of the fire/fire alarm.
- Call the fire service if there is a fire and relay this to the emergency services.
- Provide on-scene support.
- Reset the fire alarm panel if it is a false alarm.
- Consult with Estates if the fire alarm will not reset.

5.5 Reporting post fire incident

All fires and emergencies occurring on university premises - regardless of size - must be reported to the University Health & Safety Services using an Incident Report Form. The form and guidance in completing the form is available on the Health and Safety Services web pages. A Link to the HSS pages is [here](#).

5.6 Using the fire alarm for other emergencies

The fire alarm system can also be used to evacuate a building where there are laboratories or other high hazard areas. If there is a significant spill of hazardous materials that could cause injury, then the fire alarm could be used if it is unsafe for occupants of the building to remain inside because of the nature of the spill or contaminants released.

As you would for a fire, press the red break glass call point to raise the alarm and follow the local school procedures for emergencies involving hazardous materials.

Inform the HSS Biological and Scientific Adviser. Inform Security Control on the emergency security number and inform the officers when they attend the building. If the spill is significant, it may require specialist handling to contain from the fire service.

Have all the information regarding the spill such as the URN number, COSHH data, etc, when calling the fire service and have this information ready for the fire service officer in charge on their attendance.

The Evacuation Officer will need to be informed of the reason of the fire alarm activation. Prevent Fire wardens from entering the area of contamination.

For further advice regarding this type of incident, speak with the School Health and Safety Coordinator, the Health and Safety Services Biological and Scientific Adviser. Guidance documents that give further information is listed in section 7. Check the HSS pages for these documents and the **HSE website for any further information.**

5.7 Other Evacuations

There may be the rare occasion that the evacuation of a building or an area may be required. This may or may not include the use of the fire alarm system.

The type of incidents could be:

- Active shooter
- Bomb threat
- Suspect package

Security has procedures in place to deal with these types of incidents. Further information may be available from Security on request.

6 TRAINING

Training courses are available online on the University LMS system. These are Fire Safety Induction/Refresher, Fire Warden, Fire Evacuation Officer, Fire Evacuation for people who require assistance, and the safe use of fire extinguishers.

There will also be training around spills and other laboratory activities. Contact the School Health and Safety Coordinator, and the Health and Safety Services Biological and Scientific Adviser for further information regarding training in these areas.

7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Safety Code of Practice 24. Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres.

Safety Code of Practice 34 Fire Safety Design Guide

Safety Code of Practice 46 Part 3 (section 10 and appendix 2) Management and use of work equipment – Pressure systems.

Safety Code of Practice 55 Spill Management.

CLG Means of escape for disabled persons.

CoP 56 PEEPS

SN20 Evacuation of Disabled People.

8 REVIEW & AUDIT

The Head of School or Function must ensure there are satisfactory evacuation arrangements. This will include suitable and sufficient Fire Warden and Evacuation Officer cover, and if required to nominate colleagues for Fire evacuation for people who require assistance and the safe use of fire extinguishers.

For further guidance or help in these arrangements contact the University Fire Safety Advisers.

The Head of School or Function should also ensure that all staff complete the Fire Safety Induction/Refresher training annually.

This code of practice should be reviewed every 3 years and may be subject to intermittent audit by the Health and Safety Service Auditor.

9 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

[The Regulatory \(Fire Safety\) Reform 2005.](#)

[The Disability Act 1995 \(DDA\)](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 \(SENDA\)](#)

[Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.](#)

Appendix 1: FIRE ACTION NOTICE

University fire procedure		University of Reading
	On discovering a fire – - Operate the nearest fire alarm call point and - Dial 999 for the Fire Brigade, <u>then</u> - Dial 0118 378 6300 for University Security. Your location is:	
	Only attempt to fight the fire if it is safe to do so. Use an appropriate fire extinguisher. Do not use WATER on ELECTRICAL OR FLAMMABLE LIQUID fires.	
	On hearing the fire alarm, leave the building by the nearest available exit. - CLOSE all doors and windows as you leave. - DO NOT stop to collect belongings. - DO NOT use the lift. - DO NOT re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the Senior Fire Officer or the Evacuation Officer.	
	Go immediately to the ASSEMBLY POINT. The assembly point is at:	
	Disabled people should remain in the designated Refuge Area and wait for instructions from the Fire Brigade or Evacuation Officer. - Persons accompanying a disabled person must report the presence of a disabled person in a Refuge to the Evacuation Officer. - University Security can be contacted for information by dialling 0118 378 6300.	

Fire Action Notice Ver 3.2

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Health and Safety Services

Appendix 2: Summary of generic evacuation procedure

1. Laboratory users to make safe any experiments in progress, turn off any electrical or open flame appliances.
2. Occupants to close room doors and windows if safe to do so.
3. Occupants to alert anyone in their immediate vicinity and raise the alarm by using the red break glass call point. Report to the assembly point.
4. Lifts will ground or stop on the next available floor during a fire alarm activation. In some University buildings, evacuation lifts may be available – These lifts can be brought back into action by trained staff for evacuating people in the refuges.
5. Disabled persons are to make their way to the nearest available Refuge Area. Wherever practicable, disabled people should not be left alone in Refuge Areas. A friend may stay with them, or a fire warden must return to the refuge after informing the Evacuation Officer. Persons in Refuge Areas should use the refuge communication to report the location. They can also phone Security from their mobile phone on the Security emergency number.
6. People waiting in the refuge area, may do so for the duration of the fire alarm activation. Only if there is a confirmed fire will the person in the refuge be assisted from the refuge to outside. Refuge areas are protected from smoke and fire for a minimum of 30 minutes.
7. The Evacuation Officer will collect the building Emergency Folder and put on the orange hi viz vest, record the information displayed on the fire alarm panel, and proceed outside near to the main entrance.
8. Fire Wardens must wear the yellow hi viz vest, then using the sweep plan check their area for any persons remaining in the building. Report to the Evacuation Officer and confirm that the area is clear or not.
9. Persons in charge of events in centrally booked rooms must report to the Evacuation Officer that the room they are using has been cleared.
10. Evacuation Officer must record the areas of the building that have, and have not, been checked by Fire Wardens. They can request that fire wardens check any missed areas, if safe to do so.
11. Door Wardens must be deployed to prevent re-entry into the premises. Anyone can be a door warden. These can be colleagues waiting at the assembly point.
12. Evacuees must remain at the Assembly Point.
13. A Fire Warden should patrol the exterior of the premises to check for any signs of smoke or flames externally.
14. The Evacuation Officer should appoint a deputy to help assist with other duties.
15. Security Services will attend and investigate the fire alarm panel activation. They will inform the Evacuation Officer and Security Control of what they find.
16. The Evacuation Officer should brief the Fire/Emergency crews on the situation, i.e.:
 - location of fire.
 - y persons still in the building and their location.
 - areas of the building that have and have not been checked.

- location of Refuge Areas and any information about persons located in the Refuge.
 - Hand over the emergency folder plans of the premises, plus details of any specific hazards in the building.
17. Having received an all-clear message from the Fire Service, or Security Officers, the Evacuation Officer can inform building occupants, the Door Wardens, and Fire Wardens and that it is safe to re-enter the building.

People should only leave the assembly point and re-enter the premises on the instruction of the Evacuation Officer and after the alarm signal has been isolated. **NB Cessation of the alarm does not mean that you can re-enter the building.**