



QA122 Buildings & Estates Fire Drill Procedure

Code: QA122

Title: Buildings & Estates Fire Drill Procedure

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Scope

This guidance applies to fire drills in the National University of Ireland, Galway and should be read in conjunction with the Fire and Emergency Procedures contained in Part 5: Specific Health and Safety Guidelines of the NUI Galway Safety Statement Policy and the NUI Galway Fire Marshal training document both of which can be found on the Health & Safety Office website, http://www.nuigalway.ie/health_safety/

Introduction

The guidance below describes what to do, and some of the issues that need to be considered as part of arranging and carrying out a fire drill.

Purpose of a fire drill

Fire drills are important exercises and provide an opportunity for fire evacuation plans for university buildings and personnel to be developed and modified if necessary. They are intended to provide a realistic test of a Unit's plan to evacuate the areas it occupies in an emergency. All personnel in a university building must co-operate and evacuate the building when the fire alarm sounds. Fire drills also give the opportunity for university personnel (who have specific duties during the course of fire evacuation) to exercise their duties and report any problems they may encounter to their Safety Co-coordinator.

Organisers and those with a responsibility for fire safety e.g. Heads of Units, Fire Marshals, in a building can assess the effectiveness of their fire safety management procedures including:

- Use and effectiveness of fire marshals plus the control of the evacuation and assembly area;
- Suitability of procedures for evacuating those people who are unable to escape without assistance (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans or PEEPs);
- It is an opportunity to get building occupants familiar with the alternative escape routes from buildings, rather than falling back on the normal way into and out of the building;
- Students, staff and other building occupants will become familiar with the sound of the fire alarm and how to respond to it, including use of alternative escape routes; how to get from the final exits to the fire assembly area; how to look out for friends and colleagues; and to raise awareness of those who cannot escape without assistance.

How often should a fire drill take place?

According to the NUI Galway Safety Statement, *"it is the responsibility of Heads of Units to ensure that Fire drills are carried out in their Unit buildings(s) at least once a year"*.

When should a fire drill take place?

There is no benefit in holding a fire drill when a building is empty or lightly occupied, as the drill is intended as a learning exercise. The first fire drill in all academic buildings should be held at a time when the buildings are fully occupied. Ideally this should be carried out during Semester 1, soon after students first arrive after the summer break.

Fire drills in research or non-academic buildings can take place at any time during the year.

Fire drills will not be carried out in buildings at times during which they are being used as exam venues.

Who arranges a fire drill?

Buildings & Estates arranges to have fire drills carried out on campus. Buildings & Estates personnel will activate the fire alarm system to initiate the fire drill and reset the fire alarm on completion of the exercise. Fire drills will be carried out annually based on a fire drill programme drawn up by Buildings & Estates.

A log of all fire drills is provided by Buildings & Estates to the Health & Safety Office and updated regularly by the Health and Safety Office on their website.

How to arrange to have a fire drill carried out

If by the end of Semester 2 you have not had a fire drill in your building then you can request one through the Buildings & Estates Help Desk.

In advance of a fire drill

Each Head of Unit must have a plan in place (set out in Part 7(b) of their Unit Safety Statement Policy) setting out how the areas they occupy are to be effectively evacuated in an emergency. In the case of Units that share a building, the Units should agree on how the building evacuation is to be coordinated e.g. who is to check common areas such as meeting rooms, toilets or corridors.

During the fire drill

Once the fire alarm is activated it is the responsibility of each Unit's Head and fire marshal(s) to manage the fire drill and implement the evacuation of their area. Except by prior arrangement and only in exceptional circumstances, everyone in a building must leave and go to their appointed assembly area.

Post the fire drill

Buildings & Estates will reset the fire alarm following the completion of the drill. Each Unit Head should ensure that a Unit Fire Drill/Emergency Review Form is completed for their Unit and kept on file. Details should include the time and date of the exercise, the time taken to achieve a full evacuation, the problems encountered etc. This fire drill report should detail any remedial action required.

Every opportunity should be taken to learn lessons from any fire drill. Fire marshals encountering any problems during the exercise e.g. with alarm audibility, obstructed escape routes, congestion, poor signage, problems with fire doors etc. should report the problems to Buildings & Estates through the Pemac help desk or by calling the NUI Galway Fire Prevention Officer on Ext 2188.



Unit Fire Drill/Emergency Review

1. Unit:	
2. Building:	
3. Date of drill:	
4. Time of drill:	
5. Time from alarm activation to full evacuation.	# minutes
6. If evacuation took more than 5 minutes please note the reason(s) for this delay?	Comment
7. Number of Fire Marshals who took part in drill:	#
8. Was this sufficient?	Yes No Comment
9. Did all Fire Marshals have hi-vis vests?	Yes No Comment
10. Were all areas of the Unit/Building checked?	Yes No Comment
11. Were there any personnel who did not evacuate the Unit/Building?	Yes No Comment
12. Was the fire alarm audible in all areas?	Yes No Comment
13. Were all internal fire doors functioning? If not specify issue:	Yes No Comment
14. Were all fire exit doors functioning? If not specify issue:	Yes No Comment
15. Were any exit routes or stairwells used to store equipment/materials?	Yes No Comment
18. Were there any obstructions on exit routes?	Yes No Comment
16. Were there any difficulties reported by the Unit Fire Marshals?	Comments:
17. Remedial actions required:	
18. Any other comments:	

Signed _____
Head of Unit

Date: _____

Signed _____
Fire Marshal/Safety Coordinator/Other

Date: _____

Notes:

- Buildings & Estates action items e.g. questions 12 to 14 should be logged on PEMAC by the Unit's Buildings Liaison.
- All other action items should be addressed by the Unit.
- This completed Unit Fire Drill/Emergency Review form should be held by the Unit as part of their Unit safety management record.