**Title:** Guidance on the Provision of Fire Wardens

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|  | **Guidance on the Provision of Fire Wardens** |  |

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**1. Introduction**

Fire wardens should be provided in each BU building. The role is voluntary but does have the additional benefit of an extra days leave which is granted in each leave year that a person is undertaking this role.

Bournemouth University uses the terms Fire Marshall and Fire Warden both have different roles.

A Fire Marshall is the person in charge of the evacuation and is identified by an orange high viz jacket. These are usually caretaking or facilities staff. They may not be in the building at the time of an evacuation and are radioed to attend.

A Fire warden is appointed by individual Departments or Faculties and will be identified by a yellow high viz jacket.

**2. What is the role of a fire warden?**

A fire warden will effectively have two roles: a day-to-day role and one for when the fire alarm sounds.

**2.1 Day-to-day role:**

* To keep an eye on the general fire safety of the area, building or floor the warden has been allocated,
* Keep an eye on corridors and walkways to ensure combustible materials are not stored there,
* Monitor escape routes to see they are kept free of obstructions,
* Check that fire doors are not tied, propped or wedged open where they should not be,
* To check that final exit doors are not obstructed,
* To check that extinguishers are where they should be and no obvious misuse or defect has occurred,
* Possibly assist with the creation of personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) if requested by their Manager, School or Health and Safety Advisers or ALS

This may seem like a lot of extra work but in reality it can be done as part of the “day job” just by being a little more observant. Any problems or defects need to be reported to the appropriate person, be that their Manager, Health and Safety Department or Fire Safety Officer (FSO) for “user” problems, the Estates Department Service helpdesk (65515) for buildings-related issues.

**2.2 Role when the fire alarm sounds:**

* Put on the yellow high-visibility jacket,
* Sweep through the allocated area, closing doors/windows in passing but not delaying their own escape unduly, while encouraging people to leave via the nearest fire escape route. The fire warden should normally be the last person off the floor/out of the allocated area.
* Checking all accessible rooms including toilets and offices to make sure people are beginning their evacuation,
* Checking any refuge in their area in case someone is waiting for assistance to escape
* Reporting to the person in charge of the evacuation, normally the Fire Marshall at the front of the building, to advise their area is clear (or to report anyone who can’t or won’t leave the building) and confirm whether there is fire/smoke in their area or if it’s clear.
* To assist the Fire Marshall with crowd control, verbally encouraging people towards the assembly area.
* To support the Fire Marshall in charge with any other tasks – for example monitoring final exit doors to prevent unauthorised re-entry.
* To take part in any post-alarm de-briefing to identify any shortcomings in the evacuation procedures.

Faculties or Departments may want their fire wardens to do other things in addition to the roles outlined above.

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**Lecturers must act as fire warden for their lecture theatre/classroom. If an alarm occurs during a lecture they must report to the Fire Marshall their area is clear or if there are people requiring assistance to evacuate.**

**3. What extra responsibilities does a fire warden have?**

Apart from the actions listed above and the normal fire safety responsibilities of any member of staff, a fire warden will not take on any additional responsibility for fire safety. That remains with Deans of Schools and Heads of Professional Services.

**4. Who is responsible for providing fire wardens?**

Deans of Schools and Heads of Professional Services are responsible to the Vice Chancellor as Duty Holder(s)but may delegate the day to day tasks to their representatives. They are responsible for the fire precautions and safe management of fire risks in areas occupied by their department and, anyone else who may be affected by departmental activities at risk of injury from fire. They should arrange for sufficient trained fire wardens to be in place.

Where buildings are jointly used by different Faculties or departments Duty Holder(s) must co-ordinate to ensure adequate fire warden coverage. If a fire warden permanently leaves the building a replacement should be found and trained.

**4.1 How many fire wardens are needed in a building?**

Ideally there should be sufficient wardens to cover all areas of a building. Some guides indicate a ratio of 1 Fire Warden per 10 staff is required - however, this is complicated by the size of a building and the complexity of its layout, plus the nature of peoples’ work as it often takes them out of their own building. Add to this scheduled holiday and other absences and it becomes apparent quite a few wardens could be needed!

As a rule of thumb, if a floor or area takes longer than three minutes to sweep, there needs to be more fire wardens. Here are two examples:

1. A small building with a single staircase and offices etc off the staircase may only need one fire warden if that warden is stationed on the top floor and rarely leaves the building. A deputy is needed to cover for absences. Ensuring all staff know their role and responsibilities in a fire alarm will make the warden’s role less onerous.

2. A large building with lots of rooms and complicated escape routes may need to have each floor divided into sweep areas and a fire warden, plus deputy, provided for each sweep area. This can only work where there is sufficient staff in the building so again, all occupants need to know their roles and responsibilities with respect to fire alarm procedures.

**4.2 What if there are not enough people to act as fire wardens?**

As an organisation Bournemouth University must do the best it can with the resources available. If there are too few people to act as fire wardens it is imperative that building occupants are given basic fire safety training and know what to do when the fire alarm sounds. This is why the annual online fire safety training is so important. Failure to act correctly when a fire alarm sounds could have serious, possibly life-threatening consequences if there is a real fire.

Where only a few people can act as fire wardens, they should ensure other occupants are aware of their own responsibilities. Effectively, everyone in the building then acts as an unofficial fire warden and looks out for everyone else.

**4.3 What happens if a fire warden is not on their floor when the alarm sounds?**

If the fire warden is out of their area when the alarm sounds they must report to the Fire Marshal in charge to advise they have not swept their area. This is less of a problem when all occupants know what to do and act appropriately. The Fire Marshal will need to record this fact and, if the Fire & Rescue Service is called, pass that information to the Officer in charge so they can act accordingly. There is no reason why a fire warden on another fire warden’s floor cannot assist that fire warden. If the fire warden is outside of the building when the fire alarm sounds they do not re-enter to carry out their sweep.

**4.4 How do fire wardens get training?**

Fire warden training is available from the Fire Safety Officer. Courses can be booked by emailing [fire@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:fire@bournemouth.ac.uk) or [estatesadmin@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:estatesadmin@bournemouth.ac.uk) If there are sufficient people to be trained in one building, the Fire Safety Officer can deliver an event there.

Refresher training would normally be required every 3 years.

**5. Where can I get more information?**

Other advice and information can be obtained from the Fire Safety Officer directly:

David Gale

**Phone:** 61015

**Phone**: 07711389515

**email:** [**dgale@bournemouth.ac.uk**](mailto:dgale@bournemouth.ac.uk)