What to do in event of a fire and evacuation procedure

If you discover or suspect a fire or smoke:

→ Operate the nearest fire alarm call point
→ Call the fire response team via switchboard on 2222 (WSH main site), state the exact location of the fire or smoke

The evacuation procedure differs between clinical and non-clinical areas.

In clinical areas

A continuous two tone alarm indicates the need to act immediately.
The clinical lead will direct the ongoing care of patients and their evacuation. Patients should be moved away from fire and smoke, initially through at least one fire door into another compartment or outside.

An intermittent single tone alarm is sounded in adjacent areas. Staff in these areas should prepare for evacuation and to accept patients from adjoining areas.

Make sure you are familiar with the fire action cards and evacuation routes before any incident.

In non-clinical areas
If there is a continuous fire alarm, evacuate to the fire assembly point as indicated on fire action notices.

Do not re-enter the building unless told it is safe by the fire response team or fire and rescue service.

Fire safety contact details
If you have any questions or concerns regarding fire safety, use contacts below.

IN AN EMERGENCY
Sound the alarm and then dial the emergency number from a safe location.
Emergency number (main WSH site): dial ext. 2222.

For non-emergencies please contact the fire safety advisor:
Email: firesafety@wsh.nhs.uk
Telephone: 01284 713011
Ext: 3011

Fire Safety

This leaflet provides staff and volunteers at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust with information and guidance aligned to the WSFT fire safety policy [PP014], UK core skills training framework (NOS) and legal requirements.

It provides basic awareness and must be supported by theoretical and practical training.

Fires in hospitals cause serious risks to people and services. We are all responsible for preventing fires, to use equipment safely and to instinctively know what to do if you are alerted to a fire.

Fire hazards and risks
Fuel, heat and oxygen hazards combine creating the 'fire triangle', a reaction that can develop quickly, producing toxic gasses and smoke.

By keeping fire hazards apart, fires may be prevented or extinguished.

Fire prevention
Take care when using electrical equipment, cooking, using materials that may be flammable or supply oxygen. Unplug equipment after use and put it away safely. Chemicals and flammable materials should be removed, stored or disposed of safely if not required.

Never use equipment that is damaged, unsafe or not suitable for the intended use.

Putting you first

Compartmentation

Fire-resisting doors, walls, glazing and floors provide 30 or 60 minutes protection from fire, smoke and heat. They create 'compartments' around wards and departments to contain the spread of fire and smoke. Compartment design limits the area that may be affected by a fire and reduces the distance you may have to move to get to clean air and a safe place.

Fire doors should be kept shut at all times, unless held open on an authorised device; they must not be wedged open as this will let smoke spread further.

Fire alarms

Fire alarms, call points and detectors are fitted in all buildings. Detectors sense the presence of smoke or heat. Call points are located near exits from each compartment and should be used to sound the alarm.

Buildings have different types of fire alarm which may sound and look different. You must be familiar with the system where you work.

Fire alarm indicator panels will detail the room or location of a suspected fire.

Every Tuesday morning the fire alarms are tested at the main hospital site between 8.15am and 10.20am. Switchboard operators will alert the fire response team and also call the fire and rescue service when the alarm actuates.

Fire response team (FRT) (West Suffolk Hospital site)

When alerted, the FRT will assist with any evacuation, commence initial firefighting and liaise with the clinical lead in patient areas.

Fire exits

Fire exits and exit routes are vital to evacuate quickly. They must be kept clear for people, wheelchairs and beds, without obstruction. Signs are used to indicate the location of fire exits and to detail the action to be taken in case of fire.

You should know where all exits are in your workplace and where they go. Where there are security devices you must know how these work; magnetic locks will open automatically when the fire alarm operates in an area.

Personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP)

A PEEP is a bespoke evacuation plan for employees who may require assistance. A separate PEEP must be completed for every area you work in at the Trust. Ask the fire safety advisor or your line manager should you want a PEEP to be prepared. There is a template in the WSFT fire policy [PP014].

Portable fire-fighting equipment

Don't fight the fire with extinguishers unless you have been trained. The correct type of extinguisher must be used and applied correctly to avoid injury or possibly making the fire worse.

Before use you must raise the alarm, select the correct type, know how to use it and constantly check the environment is safe. The extinguishers below are the main types used at West Suffolk Hospital:

CO_2 extinguisher - red with a black label on the front, it is easily identified by its black plastic discharge horn. Mainly for use on **electrical** fires.

AFFF extinguisher - red with a beige label on the front and has a flexible discharge hose. Can be used on **all types of fire** *except* **electrical**.

Fire blanket - contained within a plastic box, usually found in kitchens and special areas. Mainly used for **cooking pan fires.**

Check you know:
- ☑ How to prevent fires
- ☑ What to do and where to go
- ☑ How to raise the alarm
- ☑ What does the fire alarm sound like
- ☑ Where the manual call points are
- ☑ Where all of the fire exits are and where they lead
- ☑ How security doors open
- ☑ How evacuation is undertaken in your area(s) of work
- ☑ Where is your fire assembly point
- ☑ Your emergency number.