



General Trustees

THE PROPERTY HOLDING ARM
OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Scottish Charity Number: SC014574

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PLEASE ATTACH TO LOCAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Fire Safety changes

The investigation requirement into all fire alarm activations within premises is in response to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) initiative to cease all attendance of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) throughout Scotland as of the **1st July 2023**.

This is a national decision taken by the SFRS to re-assert the Duty holders' responsibilities for Unwanted fire alarm activations and false alarms, this aims to minimise the SFRS attendance to Unwanted fire alarm activations which is limiting their resources and impacting response times to actual identified fire incidents across Scotland.

(SFRS) will not be attending any Automatic Fire Alarm activations and this is inclusive of any out of hours activations where there is no evidence or strong indicator of fire at any buildings identified as non-domestic premises.

There is no exemption for the building's significance, listing or heritable value, and this re-assertion of the duty-holder's responsibilities will need to be managed locally to minimise the risk to any church buildings.

This will include all church buildings including the ones which are fitted with sophisticated fire detection systems which are monitored via an external ARC (Alarm Receiving Centre). The ARC will still be required to communicate the existence of fire, smoke or smell prior to any fire appliances being dispatched. (They will accept that where the ARC has indicated that more than one detector has been activated within a building that this is a strong indicator of fire and will respond accordingly).

Previously where a fire was suspected, evacuating the building and calling 999 would immediately prompt a response from the fire service and this would ensure the dispatch of fire services to call at the location and carry out the fire investigation and take the necessary actions, this response model will now be replaced with a "Call Challenge" which will require the 999 caller to confirm the existence of **Fire/Smoke/Smell** prior to the dispatch of the fire services.

The General Trustees acknowledge that many of the church buildings are not fitted with sophisticated fire detection systems and are not connected to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) and will therefore be required to take further localised measures to safely investigate a fire within their building during periods of occupation where an outbreak of fire has been suspected or the alarm has been raised vocally or systematically. (Please refer to the Recommended Control measures at the base of this guidance to minimise the risk of fire damage and potential loss for out of hours and churches in rural locations).

All church building fire safety risk assessments and localised fire safety procedures should now be reviewed to ensure further control measures are taken to incorporate these changes and to further mitigate fire incidents and potential fire outbreaks particularly during the night and periods of regular vacancy where the buildings are unoccupied.

From **the 1st July 2023 the (SFRS) will no longer attend** fire alarm activations where the existence of fire, smoke or risk to life cannot be reasonably intimated by the property duty holders for all commercial and non-domestic premises that do not qualify for the sleeping risk exemption status. (See Below)

Exemptions:

They will only be maintaining their standard call out response for properties that pose a sleeping risk and they intend to maintain that immediate response for nursing homes, hospitals, hotels, sheltered housing and all other non-domestic properties that are considered to have a sleeping risk.

For all other premises the duty holder will be fully responsible for the investigation of a “fire alarm activation” and they will be call challenged by the (SFRS) prior to any dispatch of fire engines to the given location.

The person(s) carrying out the fire alarm activation investigation must now indicate the presence of **Fire/Smoke/Smell** or risk to life from the building prior to SFRS dispatching any fire appliances. Any false alarms and localised resetting of the fire systems will now be the responsibility of the property duty holder or others who are currently responsible for undertaking this task within their building(s).

These changes will require a more robust response and co-ordinated investigation process to ensure that the evacuation and activation investigation process is fully co-ordinated in-house and disruptions to operational church buildings is minimised and fully investigated **before the 999** call is made or where the fire alarm systems are reset and the building is re-occupied following the evacuation process.

These changes are not likely to create a significant change to the current fire evacuation and activation investigation processes that are currently in place at each church building location however the changes will require a generalised understanding of the local duty holders’ responsibilities with a consistent and organised response to dealing with fire alarm activations and local investigation across the COS estate.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) changes are aimed at re- focusing the properties duty -holder responsibilities for ensuring that false alarms and unnecessary responses are minimised across the fire service.

The requirement for fire investigation responses and procedures particularly during the night and out of hours will now need to be factored into the Fire Safety Risk Assessment and any localised fire plans.

A process for the investigation of Activated Fire Alarms (AFA) and safe low risk fire investigation protocol should be introduced across all premises prior to the **1st July 2023**.

Local duty holders or responsible persons should be aware of the changes and how to incorporate them into their local fire investigation processes, particularly for any activations and investigations which may be required out with their normal operating hours.

Guidance

SFRS are yet to publish the much-awaited public guidance for all who may be affected by these changes but they have confirmed that the changes will take effect from the **1st July 2023** and this is unlikely to be changed or extended.

We have put together our own generalised preliminary guidance aimed at ensuring that we have considered the changes and have provided the necessary information for the duty holders or responsible persons at each location to review their current procedures and fire safety risk assessments.

The Out of Hours and Occupied Mode below details the recommended duty holders response procedure as a guideline for ensuring that you have fully prepared for the upcoming changes to the fire service response protocols, if you have community groups or other hall or church lets you may have to review your letting or leasing arrangements which will have to include the duty holder(s) responsible person(s) for the building during these activities and ensuring that they are aware of the fire safety and evacuation procedures, fire control panel access and use, and any fire investigation process prior to calling 999 .

For larger and more complex building layouts, the SFRS has recommended that a floor plan of the building is also located at the fire panel location which details the zones that correspond with the fire panel detector locations.

OUT OF HOURS MODE	OCCUPIED MODE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicable out of hours • Alarm sounds • Premises evacuates (if occupied) • On duty key holder contacted by Alarm receiving centre (ARC) to undertake fire alarm activation investigation. • Key holder investigates and indicates false alarm/active Fire to (SFRS) or (ARC) • Key holder investigates resets alarm system and leaves (False Alarm) • (Fire,smoke,Smell detected)Key Holder calls 999 stands outside and awaits (SFRS) • Where the church has no sophisticated alarm system or (ARC) they will be fully dependant on general public or local community to call 999 (see recommended control measures section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be applicable during the day: • Alarm sounds. • Premises evacuated. • On Duty person(s) undertakes fire alarm activation investigation to determine source of alarm or report. • On duty person ensures good communication exists with (SFRS) or Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC). • The (SFRS) or (ARC) are notified of false alarm/active fire • Duty holder resets alarm and allows re-occupation of the building (False Alarm) • Duty holder informs (ARC) or (SFRS) of fire/smoke/smell and awaits at fire assembly location for (SFRS) response.



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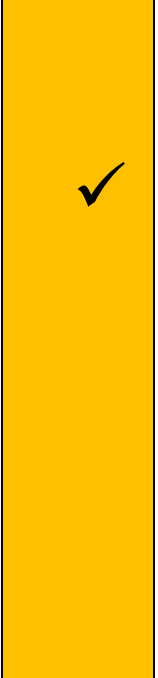

Out of Hours Mode
<p>Out of Hours Mode Is the recommended out of hours fire alarm investigation format, where an alarm signal, or telephone call from the ARC to the out of hours duty holder is made to inform activation of the fire alarm in their building, this shall be followed by an immediate callout to the premise an initial investigation prior to the ARC or duty holder notifying the SFRS of actual evidence of fire or false alarm incident. This call would be made in accordance with the existing Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) standard procedures e.g. identifying 'out of service' isolations etc.</p> <p style="color: red;">Where the church has no sophisticated alarm system or (ARC) they will be fully dependant on general public or local community to call 999 (see recommended control measures below)</p> <p>Out of Hours Mode is the recommended response model for all COS Premises that are not exempt under the (SFRS) sleeping risk policy.</p> <p>The hours where the Out of Hours Mode applies to your premises should be reflected here dependant on your congregational use of the building e.g. for some church settings this may be as shown below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon – Thurs , (24 hrs) • Fri 1800-0800 • Sat 1700 - 0800 • Sun 1300 - 0800 • Public Holidays • <p>On instruction of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity Trustees • Health and Safety appointed person

Occupied Mode
<p>Occupied Mode is the 'Fire Alarm Investigation' format where the onsite duty holder shall investigate the source of the signal or reported fire to determine the nature of the signal or suspected fire origin following the standard building evacuation procedure.</p> <p>The duty holder should communicate fire/smoke/smell directly on 999 with (SFRS) and communicate activation status with the (ARC)</p> <p>Once the false activation outcome of the investigation is established the duty holder will reset the systems and instigate the re-occupation of the building.</p>
<p>The actuation of the fire alarm system within the building shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a signal to the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC).(Dependant on fire system setup) • Raise the alarm within the building. <p>The signal, when received by ARC shall <u>not</u> instigate a 999 call on first receipt.</p> <p>Following investigation, if a fire is confirmed / suspected, the onsite duty holder will call 999 directly, followed up by a call to ARC to confirm discovery of fire and SFRS notification.</p> <p>The hours where the occupied Mode applies to your premises should be reflected here e.g. for some church settings this may as shown below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon – Thurs, 0800 – 1600 hours • Fri 08:00 – 12:30 • Sat & Sun (0900 - 1400) <p>On instruction of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity Trustees • Health and Safety appointed person

OCCURRENCE	Out of Hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
<p>ACTION ON DISCOVERING FIRE - In the event that a person discovers a fire but the alarm has not yet been raised</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the general alarm by breaking the glass of the nearest Fire Alarm Break Glass CallPoint or manually, vocally dependant on the local arrangements. • Where appropriate warn others in the immediate vicinity (do not however delay raising the general alarm). • Leave the building by the nearest fire exit. • Report circumstances of the fire to the duty holder as soon as possible. • Report to your designated assembly point. <p>All suspicions of fire, e.g. smell of smoke or extinguished minor fires which occur without actuating the fire alarm, should be reported immediately to the SFRS and ARC(if applicable)</p> <p>Employees/Volunteers should ensure their own safety at all times!</p>
<p>ACTION WHEN THE ALARM IS RAISED - On the sounding of the fire alarm</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All general or routine activity should cease on sounding of the fire alarm by any means (This includes vocalised raising of FIRE alarm). • <u>All persons</u> should evacuate building immediately in a calm / orderly manner. • Congregation, visitors, guests, contractors or other persons visiting the premises should leave the building by the nearest fire exit, or as directed by employees/volunteers. • Employees/volunteers and fire marshals should, where necessary, support and guide other visitors, or members of the public to evacuate the building. • Staff should support persons in their charge towards safety. • Vulnerable individuals, children and persons with compromised mobility issues should be supported appropriately. • Escape may be made by any safe available escape route, however use of the nearest designated escape route reduces congestion and speeds evacuation. • When vacating rooms staff should close the doors (rooms are not to be locked unless confirmed as being vacant). • Report to your designated Fire Assembly Point. • Ensure access for the fire service by keeping the building entrances clear • The building should not be re-entered except as directed by the SFRS or duty holder onsite.

OCCURRENCE	Out of Hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
<p>ALARM ACTUATION - ACTION OF THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON- If the identified responsible person for the premises fails to attend the fire alarm panel, the most senior person available should assume the responsibility of attending the fire panel and the fire investigation process to step in on the duties of the regular duty holder.</p>			<p>When the fire alarm activates the RP or identified duty holder is to examine the fire alarm indicator panel and co-ordinate the investigation of the alarm. Other duties of the RP include ensuring that persons are detailed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a full evacuation of the premises. • Call 999 (if fire detected / suspected / confirmed). • Call ARC (keeping them apprised of actions being taken). • Await the Fire Service (if attendance required). • Collate roll call logs and registers. • Monitor and control assembly areas. • Obtain assistance if appropriate. • Notify any other persons as appropriate e.g. charity Trustees on confirmation of fire incident. <p>When a fire is discovered but the alarm has not been raised then the RP or identified duty holder is to ensure the raising of the alarm, and carry out the duties shown above.</p> <p>The RP or the identified duty holder shall make appropriate decisions for safety on site as advised by SFRS (if attendance required).</p> <p>On actuation of the fire alarm, or discovery of fire the RP or identified duty holder is also to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full evacuation of the premises takes place. • Evacuation reports are collated. • Evacuation details are passed to SFRS. (where attendance is required) • Hazards are reported to SFRS. (Where attendance is required) • Continuity arrangements are initiated if necessary.

OCCURRENCE	Out of hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
<p>FIRE ALARM PANEL– Interpretation of information.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p>The RP or senior person attending the fire alarm panel is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret the information provided i.e. does the board show ‘fire’ or ‘fault’. • Check display for room of origin and for zone/compartments of origin. • Provide direction of action to take i.e. initiate investigation of room / area indicated on the alarm panel. <p>The fire alarm indicator panel should indicate the zone and active detector location. A detailed floor plan should be displayed to aid zone identification for larger or more complex building layouts. (Liaise directly with the General Trustees fire safety officer if you are concerned about zone identification) it should be clear and concise and easily understood by anyone who attends the fire panel location.</p> <p>In some circumstance’s information received from employees/volunteers or others may conflict with information shown on the fire alarm panel, all reports should be considered and investigated appropriately care should be taken to avoid assumptions of defective detection or false alarms.</p> <p>The default position of the RP or duty holder onsite should be, to ascertain the presence of fire/smoke/smell in the first instance after evacuation.</p>

<p>ALARM RESPONDERS – duties and responsibilities</p>			<p>An alarm responding team should, where possible and dependant on the size and complexity of the building, consist of two persons with hand held radios or mobile communication between them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One person to remain stationed at the alarm indicator panel.• One person to determine the origin of the alarm.• The investigation should be timed and should not exceed 3-5 minutes again this will be dependent on the size and complexity of the building layout.• The person at the panel should direct the other to the zones areas on the display, as above, and provide appropriate direction to the 'alarm investigation personnel carrying out the checks. <p>• Night Mode: A minimised out of hours response protocol where the hazards and risks to personnel are less likely can be carried out by a single duty holder who will be connected to the (ARC) or monitored via a mobile phone device during the out of hours fire investigation process.</p>
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OCCURRENCE	Out of Hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
<p>INVESTIGATING THE ALARM</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The alarm investigation personnel should proceed with caution to the location of origin. However, where any multiple activations are displayed on the panel or strong indications of fire/Smoke/smell are present, then the following actions should be taken (see also door opening procedure):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desist from further investigation of the incident. • Report findings to indicator panel team member and others. • Ensure a 999 call is made. • Investigation person(s) to vacate the building and await SFRS attendance. • Do not proceed further into the building or into any other areas not yet checked, immediately return to safety once the indication of fire/smoke/smell has been established. • Ensure findings are reported to duty holder. <p>Out of Hours Mode: Duty holders responding to out of hours fire alarm activations, are required to firstly take a walk around the perimeter of the building at a safe distance looking for any signs of fire/smoke/smell then they should immediately call 999 if there is strong evidence of fire and await the SFRS response without the need to enter the building to carry out any further investigation, No further internal investigation is required where the alarm panel is showing multiple activations call 999 and stand safely away from the building awaiting the SFRS Arrival.</p>
<p>FIRE OBSERVED / REPORTED /SUSPECTED – during alarm investigation</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>If during the alarm investigation a fire is observed, reported or suspected then the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desist from any further investigation of alarm origin. • Persons involved in the investigation should evacuate the premises. • Ensure a 999 call is made. • Ensure ARC is called. (Where applicable) • Keep other duty holders and charity trustees advised on actions taken at the earliest opportunity.

SILENCING THE ALARM - It should be noted that silencing an alarm prematurely may allow persons to enter the building elsewhere without knowing that the building is under 'fire alert'.



The fire alarm can be silenced by the Responsible Person, if after investigation it is found that any single activation is a false alarm. The (RP) or identified duty holder should only call 999 once they have confirmed fire/**smoke/smell** or if there is a strong indication of fire with multiple detector or zone activations shown on the panel.

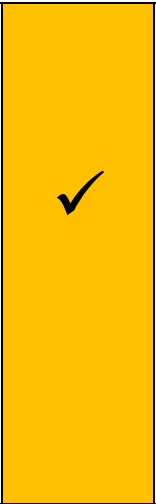

A false alarm should only be investigated where only one single Zone or detector has been activated on the fire alarm panel, **multiple zones or detector activations are a strong indicator of fire and 999 should be called immediately.**

Out of Hours Mode – For single investigated activations the fire alarm is to be silenced, the duty holder should wait approximately 30 minutes to ensure that there is no further activations before leaving the building.

OCCURRENCE	Out of Hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
DOOR OPENING PROCEDURE	✓	✓	<p>An approach to a door in an area suspected of fire should be made only with caution and with vigilance for indicators of fire e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smell of smoke. • Visible smoke. • Flame or flickering firelight. • Unusual amounts of heat. • Blackened glazing. • Discoloured, distorted or blistered paintwork. • Sounds of fire (crackling or popping). <p>If a door requires to be opened, whether to verify the location of the alarm or when suspected fire the following considerations should be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert for indicators of fire. • Check door with back of hand for heat. • Check door handle with back of hand for heat. • Open the door only fractionally, and be prepared to close the door immediately if substantial smoke escapes. • Keep head clear of door gap in case of smoke. • Fire may be assumed where smoke is observed escaping from around, or under the door, or if the door handle is hot. • Entry to a room should not be attempted where personal safety may become compromised. <p>The objective of employees/volunteers determining the source of alarm is to confirm if fire is present'; where fire is confirmed e.g. Fire/Smoke/Smell is observed within a corridor then no further investigation is necessary – including opening further rooms or cupboard doors.</p> <p>Never proceed any further within the building than required when any evidence of fire/smoke/smell are present.</p>

			<p>(see Fire Observed above).</p>
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OCCURRENCE	Out of Hours Mode	Occupied Mode	
<p>RESETTING THE ALARM - It should be noted that an alarm panel failing to reset may indicate either fault, or the continued presence of fire. The continued presence of fire may cause multiple detectors to be actuated. A system fault will not necessarily indicate the defective detectors. The cause of activation must not be assumed to be a system failure reset should only take place after the investigation has taken place.</p>	✓	✓	<p>Occupied Mode - once the RP or identified duty holder is satisfied the actuation is a false alarm (following investigation); the fire alarm panel can be reset in accordance with local procedures.</p> <p>Failure of the system to reset should be treated as a 2nd alarm and then further investigated, where there is no reason for the activation it may be faulty or defective detection equipment and the fire alarm engineer should be contacted to investigate the fault.</p> <p>Out of Hours Mode - the fire alarm panel is not to be reset prior to the investigation taking place, If the panel is showing multiple detector or zone activations, that should be accepted as a strong indication of fire call 999 and inform them of the multiple activations and await the SFRS arrival whilst safely away from the building. Do not reset or attempt to interrogate the fire alarm access panel until the SFRS have arrived on site</p>
<p>2ND FIRE ALARM ACTUATED (after being silenced or reset)</p>	✓	✓	<p>Once you have concluded your investigation and reset the panel and a 2nd alarm or event occurs in the same zone or location then the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-investigate the area of activation to confirm false alarm if no (Fire/Smell/smoke) it's a strong indication of faulty sensors or false activation. • Do not allow building to re-occupy until the secondary investigation has taken place and deemed a false activation. • Ensure ARC (where applicable) are aware of the ongoing investigation and secondary activation. • Engineer to be contacted to ensure any repairs or testing of the equipment.

<p>INDICATORS OF FIRE</p>			<p>All reports of fire/smell/smoke are to be investigated.</p> <p>Any indication or reports of fire/smell/smoke even where the activation of the fire alarm has not been triggered should be appropriately investigated by the RP or the identified duty holder to ensure that the alarm can be raised manually where the sensors or alarm equipment may have developed a fault.</p> <p>Any strong indications of Fire/Smell/Smoke should result in the alarm being raised via the fire call points to instigate the building evacuation process, any failures to raise the alarm should be followed up with a vocalised communication to ensure an immediate building evacuation.</p> <p>Care should always be taken to avoid assumptions as to the source. Even if you have had previous false alarm instances. The investigation process should be followed through to ascertain Fire/Smell/Smoke</p>

OCCURRENCE	Out of hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
NO SIGN OF FIRE	✓	✓	<p>If the room of alarm origin shows no sign of fire the wider area should be checked for signs of fire, if the zone consists of more than one particular part of the building (The RP or Identified duty holder should familiarise with the floor plan and areas indicated by the zones on the fire alarm panel).</p> <p>If the room of alarm origin shows no sign of detector actuation, the other rooms in that fire alarm zone should be checked for detector actuation in case, of any 'mislabelled' detectors or travelled smoke creating the activation.</p> <p>Failure to locate fire in the zone shown on the fire alarm panel should be followed eventually by a further check of all areas in the building.</p> <p>Remember : Multi activations are a strong indicator of fire, call 999 immediately you are not required to further investigate where there is strong evidence of a fire and the panel is indicating various zones or detector activations.</p>
REOCCUPY BUILDING	✓	✓	<p>Occupied Mode - Do not re occupy building until the RP or identified duty holder confirms that it is safe to re-enter the building (Confirmed False Alarm). This may be delayed Where SFRS, or alarm engineers are in attendance to ensure that it is safe to do so.</p> <p>Out of Hours Mode – The building should not be reoccupied until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Single activation is investigated • The relevant fire panel zone is confirmed as being 'clear' of fire; or, • The alarm panel is reset and does not re-activate within 30 mins. • The alarm panel is isolated as defective, with the 'Fire Alarm Impairment Procedure' initiated. • Do not reoccupy the building or carry out any further investigation if a secondary zone or alarm activation event occurs in addition to the initial activation call 999 and inform the ARC of the secondary activation.

RESTRICTED REOCCUPATION OF BUILDING



During inclement weather conditions, where preliminary investigations confirm the absence of risk or the extent of the incident, sensible decisions may then be made by SFRS as to the re-occupation of unaffected areas or parts of the building which are considered to be safe e.g a hall or separate wing where remoteness from the incident can be suitably contained. SFRS should be consulted if onsite prior to any re-occupation of the properties affected. No one should re-enter any part of the building until the duty holder or SFRS have confirmed that it is safe to proceed.

OCCURRENCE	Out of Hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
<p>CALLING THE FIRE SERVICE - The actuation of a fire alarm detector head or a manual call point will send a call via an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) (Where applicable) and thereafter onto Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, whenever it's a confirmed or suspected fire.</p> <p>Where the church building(s) are not fitted with such fire alarm systems, the call will have to be made manually on 999 following the brief investigation process</p>	✓	✓	<p>The SFRS should only be contacted on confirmation of a fire/smoke/smell, or where a fire is strongly suspected by multiple zone or detector activations.</p> <p>To make the call, dial 999 and request 'Fire Service' and confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address. • fire in building; or • alarm sounding; or • other indicators e.g. smell of smoke/observed fire/observed smoke. <p>If asked about fire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report all information known. • If no information is available yet, then report "No fire details known"; • If fire has been reported but information is incomplete, then report extent of known information e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "strong smell of burning in an upper corridor" ○ "smoke reported on third floor" ○ "heavy smoke in plant room"
<p>FIREFIGHTING BY EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS - The first priority in all instances of fire should be to raise the alarm.</p>	✓	✓	<p>Priority CALL 999</p> <p>Firefighting should only be considered as a final resort by competent staff who have undertaken the relevant training and should only be carried out where the fire is very small (e.g. small bin fire), or through a hot works procedure where the operator is trained, competent and confident in the safe use of portable firefighting equipment.</p> <p>appropriate fire safety risk assessments for your building should identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the Fire Equipment and extinguishers • Competent persons. • Nature of potential hazards in the area e.g. Stored gases, combustible materials or any chemicals within the building

			<p>Firefighting Staff should ensure their own safety at all times and never attempt to extinguish a fire considered to be out with their level of competency and relevant training !</p>

OCCURRENCE	Out of Hours Mode	Occupied Mode	ACTION
<p>Recording Fire related Incidents – All fire alarm actuations, whether it involves a fire or of false alarm, should be recorded in a fire incident log.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p>The RP must ensure all fire related incidents are recorded as a ‘Fire Incident’ in The log, and follow up investigation findings are also recorded. This is important for the congregation to identify where any additional support or system improvement is required, as well as for statistical UFAS records which may need to be shared with the SFRS who will now be monitoring the unwanted fire alarm activations received.</p> <p>The following events should be recorded as a Fire Incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date and Time of any fire related incident (whether the alarm was actually activated or not). • Date and Time of any false fire alarm incident and reason e.g .

Recommended Control Measures

In addition to the generalised guidance, we are aware that many church buildings are not fitted with sophisticated fire alarm systems or connected to an alarm receiving centre (ARC), in many church buildings the fire alarm is raised vocally or by other manual means and this is sufficient for the duty holder(s)/Responsible persons to ensure immediate evacuation and investigation during the occupied periods of the building(s).

The primary consideration is always the safety of people, however there are steps that can be taken locally to ensure that your church building(s) can be further protected from the outbreak of fire and the potential loss of heritable and significant listed buildings.

The local Fire Safety Risk Assessment should now be reviewed to include the potential risks posed during the night and whilst the church buildings remain unoccupied during week days or any longer periods of closure or inactivity. You should consider the location of the church building(s), its risk to neighbouring properties and the likelihood of others within the community identifying and reporting a fire where the church may be in a rural or isolated setting.

There should be no sleeping risks within the church buildings (with the exception of the manse which is regarded as a domestic dwelling and will be treated as such by the SFRS). **If your other church building(s) have a sleeping risk or elements of living accommodation you must inform the General Trustees and the SFRS to ensure that the building is appropriately exempted from the upcoming changes.**

Some factors to consider during the risk assessment process:

- Sleeping risks
- Periods of inactivity and occupation of buildings
- Distance from closest Fire Service
- Risk of arson/fire setting /building security
- Isolation/rural location
- Any neighbouring properties or domestic dwellings at risk
- EICR (Electrical safety certification) (Must be up to date)
- Gas Safety certification (Must be up to date)
- Fire exit locations and emergency lighting
- Feasibility of electrical isolation during periods of buildings inactivity
- Firefighting equipment
- Fire proof safes/cupboards for the storage of valuable or heritable items
- PAT testing and inspection of electrical items (stored or brought onto the premises by others)
- Combustible materials stored on site (Stored materials, wood, furniture, gases chemicals, fuels) etc

Ongoing assistance with these upcoming SFRS changes and ensuring local compliance are available from the general trustees Safe buildings team and all enquiries should be submitted to : safebuildings@churchofscotland.org.uk where they will be allocated to the health and safety /fire safety officer accordingly.