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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Royal Mail Group - Fire Safety Focus Week 2020:

Royal Mail Group has informed the Health, Safety & Environment Department that during the week of 29th June 2020 the RMG SHE Team are asking all managers to complete a review of their fire risk assessment as part of a 'Focus on Fire Week'. Attached is a copy of the slides which will be issued in the functional updates on the week commencing 29th June and the slides that will be shown on workplace plasma screens.

Normally as part of this week RMG SHE would request that all sites complete their annual fire alarm evacuation test and training. However due to the Coronavirus restrictions and guidance under social distancing, this task will be replaced with a request to ask employees some key questions about the fire evacuation procedures in their unit. The request for this is not prescriptive as what is possible will be different at every site.

We are circulating the information and materials shared with us for your information. Please feel free to share this material with your Workplace Safety Reps as part of the week. RMG SHE would normally request that Area Safety Reps engage with their area constituency units and get fully involved, supporting and assisting with the completion of Fire Risk Assessments which is one of the key tasks for the week. However with the complications around Coronavirus, Covid-19, social distancing etc., the situation is anything but normal and the RMG SHE Team Director and Business Partners have asked that in the units where ASRs/WSRs are operating (in line with social distancing rules and precautions) if they can and wish to assist and take part in those units it would be very much appreciated.

The purpose of Fire Safety Week is to help raise awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the Person In Control and the important part they play in the management of fire safety on their sites. This is to ensure legal requirements are met and to ensure employees and visitors to the property are kept safe at all times.

Fire Safety Week highlights the requirement for an annual review of the Operational Fire Risk Assessment and ensures that all actions highlighted within this are undertaken and recorded as required.

The attached slides give some context around the types of issues PiCs can expect to deal with. These are a selection of issues highlighted in the Technical Fire Risk Assessors.

Fire Risk Assessments

All employers must carry out and regularly review a fire risk assessment of their premises and keep it up to date. This will identify what is needed to do to prevent fires and keep the workforce and visitors safe.

Written records of fire risk assessment must be retained.

Carrying Out The Assessment

1. Identify the fire hazards.
2. Identify people at risk.
3. Evaluate, remove or reduce the risks.
4. Record your findings, prepare an emergency plan and provide training.
5. Review and update the fire risk assessment regularly.

Items to consider:

- emergency routes and exits
- fire detection and warning systems
- fire-fighting equipment
- the removal or safe storage of dangerous substances
- an emergency fire evacuation plan
- the needs of vulnerable people, for example the elderly, young children or those with disabilities
- providing information to employees and other people on the premises
- staff fire safety training

Fire Safety - Future Building Safety Regulations

The government has asked the HSE to establish a new building safety regulator in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster.

Most Fires Are Preventable

Those responsible for workplaces and other buildings to which the public have access can avoid them by taking responsibility for and adopting the right behaviours and procedures.

General Fire Safety Hazards

Fires need three things to start – a source of ignition (heat), a source of fuel (something that burns) and oxygen:

- Sources of ignition include heaters, lighting, naked flames, electrical equipment, smokers' materials (cigarettes, matches etc.), and anything else that can get very hot or cause sparks.
- Sources of fuel include wood, paper, plastic, rubber or foam, loose packaging materials, waste rubbish and furniture.
- Sources of oxygen include the air around us.

Actions

Once the risks have been identified, appropriate action must be taken to control them. Consider whether the risks can be avoided altogether or, if this is not possible, how they can

be reduced and managed. Also, employers must consider how to protect people if there is a fire:

- Carry out a fire safety risk assessment.
- Keep sources of ignition and flammable substances apart.
- Avoid accidental fires, e.g., make sure heaters cannot be knocked over.
- Ensure good housekeeping at all times, e.g., avoid a build-up of rubbish that could burn.
- Consider how to detect fires and how to warn people quickly if they start, e.g., installing smoke alarms and fire alarms or bells.
- Have the correct fire-fighting equipment for putting a fire out quickly.
- Keep fire exits and escape routes clearly marked and unobstructed at all times.
- Ensure workers receive appropriate training on procedures they need to follow, including fire drills.
- Review and update risk assessments regularly.

More Information

- The [Department for Communities and Local Government \(DCLG\) website](#) has advice on the legislation, including premises-specific guidance documents designed to help you meet your responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The Welsh Government website also provides information.
- [The Scottish Government](#) provides similar information to help you meet your responsibilities under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.
- The HSE website has [guidance on fire safety in the construction industry](#).

The Law

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 covers general fire safety in England and Wales.
- In Scotland, requirements on general fire safety are covered in Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, supported by the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.
- In the majority of premises, local fire and rescue authorities are responsible for enforcing this fire safety legislation. The HSE has enforcement responsibility on construction sites, for nuclear premises, and on ships under construction or undergoing repair.

What Are The Hazards?

Many substances found in the workplace can cause fires or explosions. These range from the obvious, e.g., flammable chemicals, petrol, cellulose paint thinners and welding gases, to the less obvious – engine oil, grease, packaging materials, dusts from wood, flour and sugar.

It is important to be aware of the risks and to control or get rid of them to prevent accidents.

What do I have To do?

To help prevent accidental fires or explosions, you first need to identify:

- What substances, materials, processes etc., have the potential to cause such an event, i.e., substances that burn or can explode and what might set them alight.
- The people who may be at risk/harmed.

Once risks have been identified, management should consider what measures are needed to reduce or remove the risk of people being harmed. This will include measures to prevent these incidents happening in the first place, as well as precautions that will protect people from harm if there is a fire or explosion.

Key points to remember

- Think about the risks of fire and explosions from the substances you use or create in your business and consider how you might remove or reduce the risks.
- Use supplier safety data sheets as a source of information about which substances might be flammable.
- Consider reducing the amount of flammable/explosive substances you store on site.
- Keep sources of ignition (e.g., naked flames, sparks) and substances that burn (e.g., vapour, dusts) apart.
- Get rid of flammable/explosive substances safely.
- Review risk assessments regularly.
- Maintain good housekeeping, e.g., avoid a build-up of rubbish, dust or grease that could start a fire or make one worse.

Employers/management also need to consider the presence of dangerous substances that can result in fires or explosions as part of your fire safety risk assessment. This is required under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (in England and Wales) and under Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act.

The Fire and Rescue Authorities deal with general fire safety matters in workplaces apart from on construction sites including shipbuilding where these are dealt with by HSE or its agents. Enforcement responsibility for fire safety where dangerous substances are kept and used generally lies with HSE (or local authorities if they inspect the premises).

Any Management Enquiries Or Further Information Should Be Directed To:

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Yours sincerely



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