

OFFICE FIRE SAFETY POLICY

APPROVED BY HHP BOARD:
EFFECTIVE DATE:
JUNE 2025



hebridean housing
partnership

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE	2
EVACUATION PROCEDURES FOR THE DISABLED	7
MONITORING & REVIEW	10
APPENDIX 1 - FIRE ASSEMBLY POINTS.....	12
APPENDIX 2 - FIRE CALL POINT & FIRE EXTINGUISHER LOCATIONS	13
APPENDIX 3 - FIRE MARSHALLS AS AT 20.04.2022	15
APPENDIX 4 - EVACUATION TIMES	16
INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS	17

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is the policy of Hebridean Housing Partnership to ensure that all employees, visitors and contractors are protected from the risks of fire. In order to achieve this aim, appropriate fire prevention/precaution measures shall be taken; additionally, appropriate evacuation procedures have been developed, implemented and periodically tested. All persons shall be provided with appropriate fire awareness training and instruction. All premises shall comply with relevant fire safety legislation and recognised good practice standards and guidance.
- 1.2 This policy is prepared in order to comply with Part 3 of the *Fire (Scotland) Act 2005* and *The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006*

PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

General Instruction

- 2.1 All staff must be familiar with the fire procedures as required by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.
- 2.2 Our staff operate from a number of offices and other buildings. Fire procedures are posted throughout these premises and can be found on exit routes normally adjacent to fire alarm call points or portable fire equipment where applicable.
- 2.3 All staff are required to ensure that they are familiar with the exits and the alternative means of escape in case of fire by walking the routes from the areas in which they are employed. Occupants should know their assembly points which are listed at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 If you have to evacuate the premises:
 - exit quickly and calmly;
 - go directly to open air and proceed to the assembly point;
 - close the door behind you;
 - Do not enter an adjacent building;
 - Do not stop to collect bags;
 - Do not use lifts; and
 - Do not attempt to fight a fire unless you have been specifically trained to do so.

- 2.5 Any staff not at their usual work location on hearing the evacuation alarm must leave the building and go to the assembly point. On no account must they return to their usual work location prior to evacuating the building.
- 2.6 Break glass fire alarm call points can be found at the Stornoway and Balivanich offices. Their locations are shown at Appendix 2.
- 2.7 The location of portable fire extinguishers are sited adjacent to storey and final exits and other strategic locations throughout the premises. Their locations are shown at Appendix 2.
- 2.8 Emergency light fittings are located in each office.

Fire Safety

- 2.9 Fire safety is everyone's responsibility. All employees, visitors and contractors are expected to follow established safety procedures to ensure the safe use of electrical/gas appliances, the safe use, storage and disposal of hazardous/combustible materials and compliance with the requirements of our Smoking Policy.

Fire Precautions

- 2.10 Fire doors must be kept closed at all times to maintain compartmentalisation of the building and to prevent the spread of fire and/or toxic smoke.
- 2.11 Corridors, stairways, landings and escape routes must be kept clear at all times of anything that is likely to cause a fire or accident or to impede evacuation in an emergency.
- 2.12 Hazardous materials must be stored, used and disposed of in accordance with all legal requirements and safe working practices. This also applies to materials kept by the Handyman Service in their garages and stores. The inventory and location of these substances should also be kept up to date on the COSHH register.
- 2.13 All fire-fighting equipment must be kept free from obstruction, be visibly conspicuous and readily available for use in an emergency. Portable fire-fighting equipment must not be removed or repositioned without authority from the Corporate Resources Officer.
- 2.14 Any obvious or suspected damage to, or misuse of, a fire alarm or fire-fighting equipment must be reported to the Corporate Resources Officer.

Housekeeping

2.15 The following general housekeeping rules shall be applied by all staff:

- The photocopier/IT area shall be maintained in a safe and tidy condition;
- All paper/documents/drawings shall, as far as practicable, be secured in storage cabinets when not in use and at the end of each working day. To ensure that storage space is not wastefully used, full use of the archiving system shall be made; and
- Both the Stornoway and Balivanich offices have been designed for use by multiple occupants. No equipment or other hazardous materials should be stored in corridors, access ways or under stairs.

Electrical Equipment

2.16 We have in place a system of regular inspections of portable electrical appliances on all HHP-owned electrical equipment and any faults found are rectified or the item of equipment replaced.

2.17 We reserve the right to carry out such regular inspections on non-HHP owned electrical equipment (e.g. desk fans, charger units, etc) used on the premises.

Fire Extinguishers

2.18 Fire extinguishers are located in the vicinity of all fire exits and must only be used by staff who are trained to use them.

2.19 Do not attempt to fight a fire with extinguishers unless you are certain that you can put it out. If you do use an extinguisher make sure that you have a clear exit behind you. Your main priority should be to evacuate the building.

2.20 There are two types of extinguishers in the offices, both have red bodies but are clearly labelled.

- Water, for use on wood, paper and textile fires (red label)
- Carbon Dioxide, for electrical, metal and flammable liquid fires (black label)

Fire Action Procedure

2.21 Any person suspecting or discovering a fire shall:

- Raise the alarm by breaking the glass of the nearest fire alarm call point; and
- Follow the procedures below "on hearing the fire alarm".

2.22 Any person hearing the fire alarm shall:

- Leave the building by the nearest available exit route – **DO NOT USE LIFTS**;
- Close all doors (and windows where safe to do so) behind you as you leave;
- Leave the building calmly – **DO NOT RUN**;
- Go directly to your assembly point designated for the building;
- Never re-enter the building until instructed to do so by a Fire Marshall or the Senior Fire Officer attending; and
- Never re-enter the premises while the alarm is still sounding.

2.23 Instructions given by the nominated staff (Fire Marshall) must be followed and breaches of these procedures will be considered serious and will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedures.

Contacting the Fire and Rescue Service

2.24 The Fire Marshalls are the nominated persons for establishing contact with the Fire and Rescue Service. (This action will require to be co-ordinated, by the Corporate Resources Officer or the Senior Fire Marshall present, to ensure that a call is actually made to the Fire and Rescue Service). In the event of a fire alarm being raised they are responsible for accessing the fire alarm panel, contacting the Fire and Rescue Service and undertaking the following procedures:

1. Dial 999, provide the Operator with the premises telephone number and request the Fire Service; and
2. When the Fire Service answers, provide the following message distinctly:
 - There is a fire at XXXXXXXXXX;
 - Inform them of the location of the fire within the building;
 - Advise them if all persons are out of the building and accounted for; and
 - Do not replace the receiver until the address has been repeated by the Fire Service.

2.25 Thereafter the Fire Marshals will be responsible for liaising with the Fire and Rescue Service.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.26 Within HHP a number of personnel have defined responsibilities relating to fire and safety which are detailed at Appendix 3.

Chief Executive

- 2.27 The Chief Executive assumes overall responsibility for the generation, administration and implementation of our Fire Safety Policy. The Chief Executive may delegate any or all of their responsibility to another person with sufficient and appropriate experience/knowledge.
- 2.28 The Chief Executive shall:

Task	Delegated to
Be directly responsible for the establishment and maintenance of an effective Fire Safety Plan (see Appendix 2), take a direct interest in such a Plan and publicly support those to whom she delegates responsibility for Fire Safety	Corporate Resources Manager
Ensure the Fire Service is contacted in the event of a fire or fire alarm being raised	Corporate Resources Manager
Provide adequate funds and resources to meet the Fire Safety requirements	Corporate Resources Manager
Ensure that all liability is covered by insurance as appropriate, and renew insurance and loss records annually	Corporate Resources Manager
Ensure that responsibility is properly assigned and accepted at all levels	Corporate Resources Manager
Ensure that annual fire drills are carried out at each office in co-ordination with other building users	Corporate Resources Manager

Task	Delegated to
Ensure that an audit of the Fire Safety Policy is carried out annually	Corporate Resources Manager
Maintain, and periodically update, an effective Fire Safety Policy for the Company	Corporate Resources Manager
Monitor the effective operation of maintenance contracts for Fire Safety Systems and Equipment	Corporate Resources Manager
Ensure that manual checks are carried out in accordance with the Fire Safety Policy requirements and ensure the following checks are carried out	Corporate Resources Manager
Fire extinguishers – monthly visual inspection and annual maintenance inspection	Corporate Resources Manager
Fire alarm – weekly	Corporate Resources Manager
Emergency lighting – monthly/ annual (3 hour drain down of battery)	Corporate Resources Manager
Appoint and allocate areas for each of the Fire Marshals.	Corporate Resources Manager

EVACUATION PROCEDURES FOR THE DISABLED

- 3.1 Wherever possible HHP will collect and record any tenant or applicant vulnerability so that staff can be aware of any additional communication or other steps they may require to carry out in order to assist and serve an in-office visit or telephone enquiry. This should assist the staff member in dealing with a disabled visitor in an appropriate way should a fire occur.

Wheelchair users – personal assistant in attendance

- 3.2 On hearing the fire alarm the personal assistant in attendance should proceed with the wheelchair user to the assembly point applicable to the office.

Wheelchair Users

- 3.3 The wheelchair user should make themselves known to a Fire Marshall, who will ensure that they are removed safely from the building to the assembly point.

Deaf/Hearing Impaired Persons

- 3.4 There are no visual fire alarm signals within the HHP offices. Deaf or hearing impaired occupants are encouraged, by appropriate signage in our Customer Service areas, to advise an appropriate member of staff of this fact when they visit the office, so that they can be notified of any alarm.

Blind/Visually Impaired Persons

- 3.5 Blind/visually impaired staff will be specifically shown how to physically locate evacuation and assembly points in the office and should make special arrangements with their Team Leader or Fire Marshall for their evacuation in the event of a fire.

Blind or visually impaired visitors should advise an appropriate member of staff of this fact when they visit the office, so that they can be assisted in the event of a fire.

Evacuation Drills

- 3.6 In accordance with fire safety legislation, there will be a minimum of two fire evacuation drills carried out by HHP a year.
- 3.7 The drills will monitor the effectiveness of the local evacuation procedures and, where necessary, identify required changes. They will also time the evacuation and compare the time to a previously determined acceptable time for the particular building, based on national standards and accepted good practice. (See Appendix 4) In cases where the evacuation takes longer than the expected time, a second drill may be carried out at a later date.
- 3.8 Reports on the effectiveness of drills will be presented to the Health and Safety Committee.

Fire Marshalls

- 3.9 Fire Marshalls will be familiar with all the exit points for their area and will direct staff and visitors towards the most appropriate available exit.

It must be stressed that Fire Marshalls are not trained to be fire fighters.

3.10 In the event that a fire alarm sounds, Fire Marshals are to:

- direct staff and visitors towards the nearest available exit;
- maintain a steady flow of people evacuating the building and preventing "bottlenecks" building up by redirecting staff and visitors towards other available exits as necessary (so that they are not placed at risk);
- ensure (as far as is reasonably practicable) that the floor is clear or is actively evacuating;
- leave the building themselves by the nearest available exit;
- carry out a roll call of staff present and to identify staff who are off-site or unaccounted for;
- report to the Corporate Resources Officer or the Senior Fire Marshall present on the status of their area (using a predetermined short checklist);
- maintain an up to date Fire Register;
- keep their Team Fire Pack in a readily accessible location and ensure it contains the following:
 - fire procedure;
 - fire escape plans; and
 - clipboard and pencil.

Employees

3.11 It is the duty of every employee to:

- notify their line manager or team of their location and expected time of return if they are away from the office;
- comply with the building evacuation procedure;
- upon hearing the fire alarm (except for the weekly test), proceed to the assembly point, ensuring their visitors, when present, accompany them;
- comply with instructions from Fire Marshals;
- report any violation of fire safety policy to either the Corporate Resources Officer or a Fire Marshall.

Training, Instruction and Information

3.12 All new employees shall be given local fire safety induction training by their Team Leader (or other appropriate person) in the first month of employment. This will

include identification of escape routes, location of fire extinguishers and call points, where the assembly point is and any local hazards that they need to be aware of.

- 3.13 All employees shall be given general fire safety awareness at least every two years (through online safety modules) or by an appropriate person approved by the Chief Executive.
- 3.14 The Chief Executive should ensure that Fire Marshalls have been appointed, and have each been trained to an appropriate level.
- 3.15 The Evacuation Procedures and the Assembly Point location shall be displayed at strategic points throughout the buildings.

Fire Risk Assessments

- 3.16 In accordance with Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 fire risk assessments shall be organised and/or carried out by the Chief Executive (or representative). The risk assessments shall be amended as necessary when circumstances require it (e.g. building changes). The risk assessments shall be reviewed at least annually to ensure their on-going relevance and adequacy.

Housing Stock

- 3.17 Fire safety within the housing stock will be addressed through the Landlord Fire Safety Policy, and any associated policies, such as the Repairs & Maintenance and Gas Safety Management policies.

MONITORING & REVIEW

Monitoring and Audit

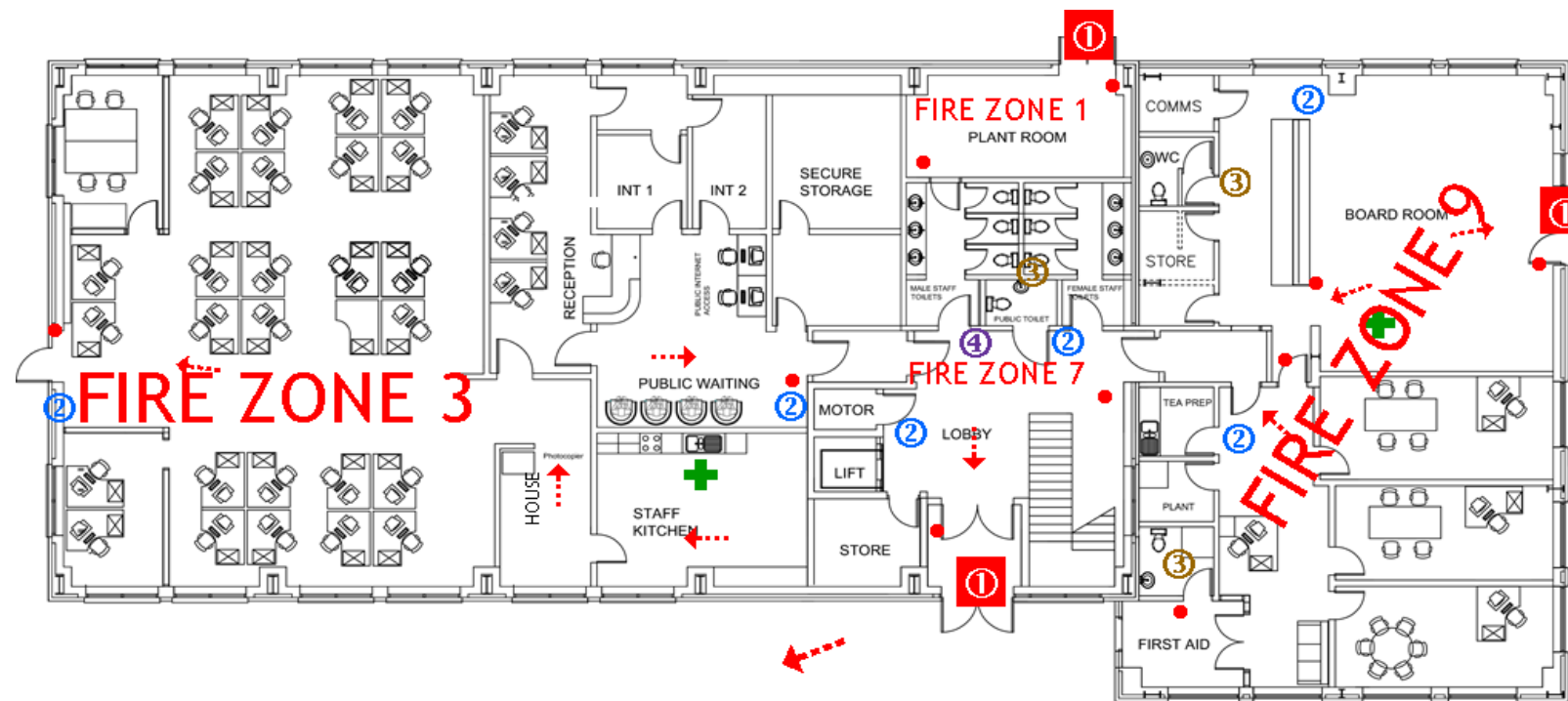
- 4.1 Team Leaders and Fire Marshalls shall, as part of their day-to-day duties and during inspections, ensure that fire safety precaution and prevention measures are in place and are working as they are intended to. Any deficiencies observed shall be reported to the Corporate Resources Officer for remedial action.
- 4.2 An annual report will be prepared for the Chief Executive on the operation of the policy by the Corporate Services Manager. The report will be prepared in April each year.
- 4.3 We will review this policy every 3 years. More frequent reviews will be considered if, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy guidance.

- 4.4 The appendices will be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in staff and/or working patterns.

APPENDIX 1 – FIRE ASSEMBLY POINTS

Creed Court Stornoway	Car park at front of building
17 Winfield Way, Balivanich	Car park at front of building
Garage 1, Tindill Road, Balivanich	Grass area at front of building
Garage 2, Tindill Road, Balivanich	Grass area at front of building
Garage 6, Columbia Place	Driveway at front of garages
Garage 1, Macqueen Street, Tarbert	Road at front of garages

APPENDIX 2 - FIRE CALL POINT & FIRE EXTINGUISHER LOCATIONS



CAR PARK



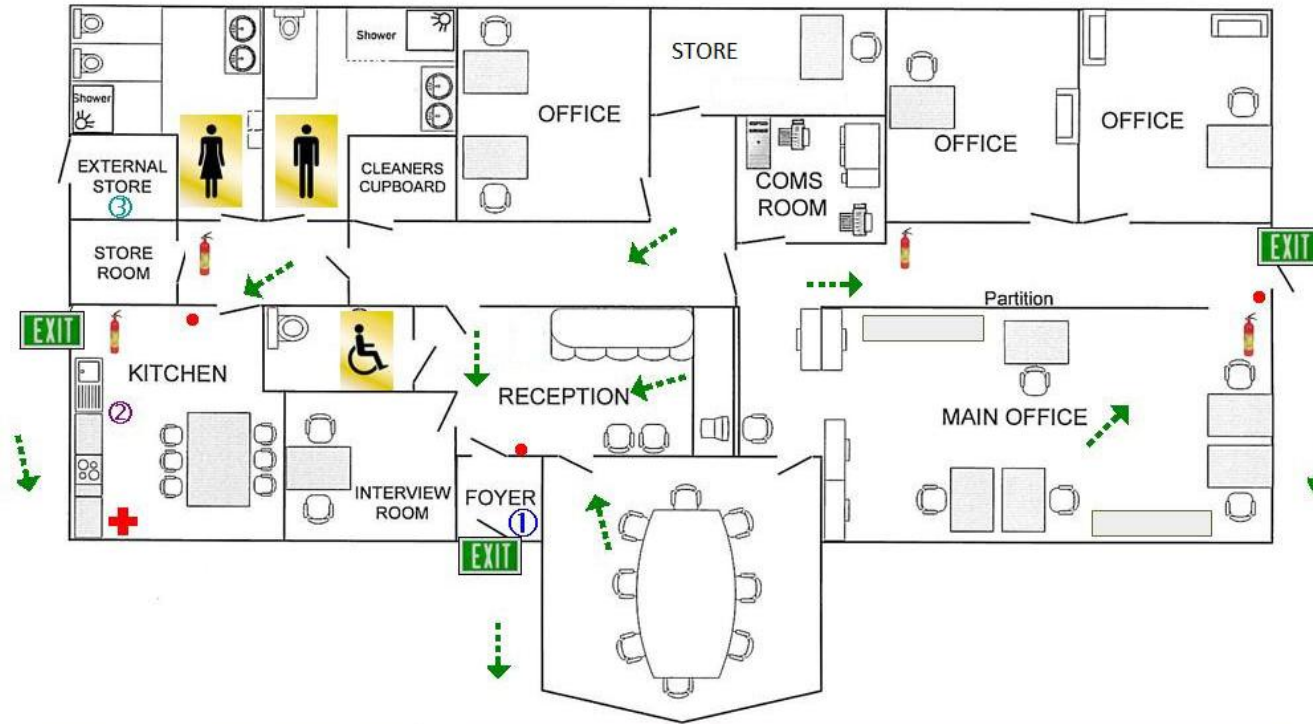
FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT

FIRE ZONE 3 – MAIN OFFICE
 FIRE ZONE 1 - BACK BOILER ROOM
 FIRE ZONE 7 – MAIN FOYER & TOILETS
 FIRE ZONE 9 – EXECUTIVE AREA

① Exits ② Fire Extinguisher ③ Toilets ④ Fire Alarm Panel

→ Nearest Exit • Break glass point + 1st aid box

HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP BALIVANICH OFFICE



CAR PARK 
FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT

① **Fire Alarm Panel** ② **Water Stop** ③ **Fuse boxes**

---> **Nearest Exit** • **Break glass point** + **1st aid box**

The other properties will be completed once the Fire Risk Assessments have been carried out

Stornoway Office

Angus Smith – Corporate Resources Manager

Shona Matheson/Alick Maclean – Corporate Resources Officer

Mina Maclean – Allocations Officer

Jackie Macleod – Personal Assistant

Alistair MacDonald – Customer Services Supervisor

Iona France – Corporate Governance Officer

Garage 6, Columbia Place

Donald Murray - Harris Handyman

Garage 1, Macqueen Street, Tarbert

Alex John Macleod – Harris Handyman

Uist Office*

Katie Walker – Area Manager

Norman MacAskill – Clerk of Works

Linda Johnson – Housing Officer

Aaron Mason-Gullick – Allocations Assistant

*Given the operation and work practices of this office, we would expect any two from the above marshalls to be present during office opening hours.

Garage 1 & 2 Tindill Road, Balivanich

John Currie – Uist Handyman

APPENDIX 4 – EVACUATION TIMES

Current evacuation time target:

Stornoway Office – 3 minutes

Balivanich Office – 2 minutes

These are based on national standards and accepted good practice.

INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

WORD	INTERPRETATION
<i>HHP or Partnership</i>	Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board</i>	Means the Board of the Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board Members</i>	All Members of the Board including co-opted Members
<i>COSHH</i>	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
<i>PAT</i>	Portable Appliance Testing
<i>Fire Service</i>	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
<i>Fire Marshall</i>	A person who helps makes sure that employees leave a building safely if there is a fire
<i>Team Fire Pack</i>	Collection of documents and equipment to be used in association with an evacuation process.
All references to the masculine gender in this policy shall read as equally applicable to the feminine gender	



HHP is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registered Number: 2644R(S), Registered Office: Creed Court, Gleann Seileach Business Park, Willowglen Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2QP. It is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number: SCO35767, registered as Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Registration Number: 359 and registered as a Property Factor, Registration Number PF000183

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