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#### Health, Safety & Environment Committee

Subject: University Fire Officer’s Report October 2010

## 1. Fire Incidents

There have been 2 fire incidents in the current reporting period:

**Fire Incident** Chemistry Building **28th July 2010**

**Timeline**

17:15 Bold fire alarm signal received in Security control from Chemistry building

Security Officers dispatched, building fully evacuated.

18:10 incident stood down occupants allowed to re-enter the building

**In Summary**

At approximately 17:15 hrs the fire alarm system activated on BOLD alarm system in the Security gatehouse. Security Officers were deployed to the building.

Security Officers liaised with Students/Staff within Chemistry and discovered a fire in Laboratory F001-Organic Chemistry. The fire started from petroleum based liquid which was part of an experiment. A dry powder fire extinguisher was used to put out the fire.

A staff member was conducting the experiment and a Student triggered the fire alarm by activating the nearest MCP.

The Chemistry building was fully evacuated and the on-call duty electrician was called to refit a new brake glass and reset the fire alarm system, however, due to the lengthy time-scale of attendance, Security were unable to allow access to the building until the brake glass and fire alarm system had been reset, this took approximately 55 minutes.

The Fire & Rescue Service were not contacted as the fire had been extinguished by staff/students and the Security Supervisor at the scene was satisfied the appropriate measures were taken to extinguish the fire and evacuate the building of occupants.

No property damage caused to the building internally or other equipment affected.

**Recommendations**

The risk assessment/method statement be reviewed and up dated, together with changes to SOP (safe operating practice) and to move work with highly flammable solvents to a fume cupboard where a fire trace system has been installed to be considered.

**Fire Incident** Stewart Miller Building **9th August 2010**

**Timeline**

02:53 Bold fire alarm signal received in Security control from Stewart Miller building

Security Officers dispatched to investigate. The building was unoccupied at the time. They observed the address on the fire alarm panel and then proceeded to investigate, a smell of burning from the room of origin was sensed and security exited the building.

03:09 Security control telephoned for the Fire & Rescue Service

The fire service checked the room isolated the electrics and vented the room of smoke.

A member of staff was contacted at 0323 and asked to attend. At 0340 arrived at Stewart Miller and discovered that a piece of equipment in test cell 2, a Horiba motor exhaust analyzer, part of which had burnt out and was the cause of the alarm,

The duty electrician was contacted at 0327 to reset the alarm; the alarm was reset at 0350.

No damage caused to the building just the Horiba motor exhaust analyzer.

**In Summary**

Once again the added benefit of having AFD installed in remote building and connected to the Security Gate house has been justified. Had a similar fire occurred this time last year the fire may have had significant time to intensify without any knowledge, causing significant damage to parts of the building from smoke and fire, and cause interruption to business continuity?

2. The annual controlled fire evacuation

The above exercise was carried out at the following Holywell Park (Charnwood & Garendon wings), Holywell Building, Sir Dennis Rooke, Chemtech building, Utilities and Michael Pearson East & West and SportPark

Overall the annual controlled fire evacuations were very good and the majority of all occupants in the building at the time of the test evacuated, however, there was one issue which came to light the re-enforced area adjacent pavilion 3 SportPark proved to be difficult for persons in a wheelchair to negotiate. Facilities Management are reviewing the standard of the surface with the principal contractor.

Most Fire Marshals were in the buildings at the time of the controlled evacuation and

performed their duties well, sweeping their designated areas of the building and then

reporting to the fire alarm panel. At the end of the test a de-brief was conducted with the Fire

Marshals to address any particular areas of concern during the controlled evacuation.

3. **Unwanted Fire Signals New Policy and Procedure**

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) have reviewed their Integrated Risk Management Plan and this has implications for the resources based at Loughborough Fire Station. LFRS policy and procedures for dealing with calls originating from automatic fire detection systems is to ‘call challenge’ (non sleeping risk premises) and this would require changes to the fire management procedures at Holywell Park, associated buildings and Haselgrave.

We have at Loughborough University for the past five years investigated all AFAs to confirm the fire signal, unless a fire has been witnessed or reported before calling for the attendance of the LFRS. The only exception to this is Holywell Park, associated buildings and Haselgrave. The reason for this is that these buildings have a very good history of preventing false alarms and the fire alarm system requires that two separate detectors are activated before the fire service is called out automatically from the gatehouse. These buildings are also high value assets.

Loughborough University was initially challenged by LFRS to alter our fire management procedures in these buildings to fall into line with their policy. This would mean a delay in LFRS attending any fire incidents at these buildings pending a visit by security staff to verify if the 2nd detector activation is caused by fire.

Following site visits with the University Fire Officer, LFRS have agreed that they will continue to attend **out of hours** (22:00 – 07:00) to all fire signals from Holywell Park, adjacent buildings and the Haslegrave building. Their initial response will be with 1 appliance to check the cause of the alarm. Security must state on making the 999 call that the **premises is closed, site may have lone worker & a key holder is being mobilized)**.

A meeting with Security has been held to brief staff on the changes required and the fire action procedures have now been revised in line with the LFRS response.

4. Fire Alarm Activations and Fire Service call-outs.

In the last 4 month period the Fire Service have been called to 4 activations 2 of which involved an actual fire (see table below)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **June 10** | **July 10** | **August 10** | **Sept 10** | **Total** |
| **Number of Activations** | 29 Residential  4 Dining Halls  14 Academic | 20 Residential  2 Dining Halls  12 Academic | 8 Residential  0 Dining Halls  18 Academic | 13 Residential  1 Dining Halls  19 Academic | 70  7  63 |
| **Activations involving Fire Service** | 0 | Chemistry | S/Miller  Towers (West) | S/Union | 4 |
| **Genuine Fires** | 0 | 1 (Chemistry) | 1 (S/Miller) | 0 | 2 |

###### **Academic Buildings:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Admin II 1 | EHB 6 | FM Maintenance 3 |
| Haslegrave 4 | High Pack (Seb Coe) 1 | Holywell Park 4 |
| James France 11 | John Cooper 1 | John Pickford 1 |
| Keith Green 1 | Link Hotel 1 | Martin Hall 1 |
| Michael Pearson 1 | Rutland Hall (old) 9 | S Building 2 |
| Stewart Miller 2 | Sir David Davies 3 | Sir David Wallace 1 |
| Sir Frank Gibb Labs 3 | Sir Richard Morris 1 | SportPark 2 |
| Swimming Pool 2 | Students Union 1 | Wavy Top 1 |

**Dining Halls:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cayley/R-ford D/Hall 3 | Faraday/Royce D/Hall 2 | DavidCollett D/Hall 1 |
| Elvyn Richards D/Hall 1 | William Morris D/Hall 0 |  |

###### **Halls of Residence (University Managed):**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Butler Court 4 | Cayley 7 | David Collett 6 | Falk / Egg 10 |
| Faraday 7 | Royce 5 | Rutherford 2 | Telford 5 |
| Towers 5 | University Lodge 0 | Whitworth 6 | UPP Blocks 13 |
| 200 Ashby Rd 0 |  |  |  |

**Halls of Residence (Not managed by the University) Unite:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Harry French 22 | William Morris 2 | Holt 2 |

Note only 14 activations at Harry French had no visible cause/reason to activate

**The Major Causes of Fire Alarm Activations in LU Halls of Residence:**

* 15 Unattended cooking in self catering kitchens
* 16 Steam from showers in en-suite bedrooms and aerosol sprays
* 10 Faulty sensors or fire alarm panels
* 15 Unknown causes
* 1 Other (water contamination in detector head, lighting strike, power outage etc.)
* 6 Malicious call point activations or tampering/removing of detector heads
* 3 Accidental activation of call point
* 0 Smoking incident (including Candles & incense sticks)
* 4 Contractors (dust or fumes from paint)

**Cooking Related Incidents In LU Halls Of Residence:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Butler Court 2 | Cayley 1 | David Collett 1 |
| Falkner / Eggington 3 | Faraday 1 | Royce 1 |
| Rutherford 0 | Telford 0 | Towers 2 |
| UPP 3 | Whitworth 1 | University Lodge 0 |

**Note**

During this reporting period a high number of unwanted fire signals caused by contractors occurred (26 in total). The majority of cases in my opinion was due to contractors lack of respect/knowledge in fire detection sensors, it is recommended that project managers re-emphasize that all contractors must take into account, most of the university buildings are fitted with AFD and they must take appropriate action to stop unwanted signals occurring and request via FM to have the sensors protected against dust or smoke or by disabling the zone of the fire alarm system.

(All above information gathered from period 1/6/10 –30/9/10) R M Harrison –Health, Safety & Environment Office