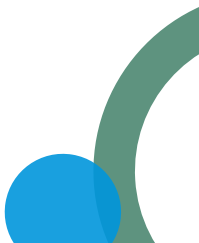NHS
National
Services
Scotland

NHSScotland Firecode
Fire Safety - Model Management
Scottish Health Technical Memorandum 80

SHTM 80

Draft 0.1 - July 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. This Scottish Health Technical Memorandum (SHTM) provides guidance on the management of fire safety by providing clarity on roles, responsibilities and governance.

1.2. It will assist NHSScotland Health Boards achieve the necessary high standards of fire safety in healthcare premises for the protection of staff, patients and other occupants.

1.3. It will also assist Health Boards to demonstrate that they have clearly identifiable dutyholders with responsibility for fire safety, who have the authority to make improvements where reasonable and practicable.

1.4. It includes a methodology to assess and maintain the competence of fire safety staff through continuing professional development and training, as well as managerial and peer review.

1.5. It details fire safety responsibilities for defined staff groups.

1.6. It also advises on the role that NHSScotland Assure can undertake to assist Boards with a review of their fire safety processes.

1.7. The guidance in this document is compatible with the [Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council, Competency Criteria for Fire Risk Assessors](#)

About this publication

1.8. This SHTM consists of:
- model management (sections 1-3)
- competency framework (sections 4-6)

1.9. Additional guidance on the application of fire safety standards, referred to in this document, is contained in the complete suite of NHSScotland SHTM Firecode, and where applicable, this will be signposted.

Legislation

1.10. Legislation relevant to the construction and management of healthcare premises includes:
- The Building (Scotland) Act and Regulations
- The Fire (Scotland) Act and Regulations
- The Health and Safety at Work Act and Regulations
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations

- The Equality Act

1.11. The primary legislation for fire safety in occupied premises is the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, which sets out rights and responsibilities in respect of fire safety.

1.12. The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 states those in control of premises, to any extent, have a responsibility to ensure the safety of occupants from harm caused by fire, furthermore, it places a duty on those responsible for fire safety within relevant premises to carry out a fire risk assessment.

1.13. Failure by 'bodies corporate' or 'relevant persons' to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act constitutes an offence.

1.14. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is the authority responsible for enforcing this legislation. They may visit premises to determine whether the fire precautions are being maintained to a satisfactory standard and that the requirements of legislation are being met.

2.   Scope of SHTM 80

2.1.   Scottish Health Technical Memorandum (SHTM) 80 is applicable to the fire safety managerial structure, governance, and staff roles within NHSScotland Health Boards.

2.2.   It applies to all healthcare premises including hospitals and other premises used for the treatment of patients, as well as laboratories, pharmacies, storage facilities, and office buildings.

2.3.   NHSScotland Health Boards should reference this document in the formation and implementation of fire safety policies, plans, and procedures.

3. Guidance on the management of fire safety

3.1.   NHSScotland Health Boards must have a defined fire safety management structure. This section outlines a model management structure that will assist NHSScotland Health Boards to meet legislative and mandatory requirements and ensure that appropriate resources are in place for the fire safety function.

3.2.   This document refers to three levels of fire safety advisor and the differing knowledge and experience required for each post. The senior fire safety advisor and fire safety advisor should possess the full skillset and experience to undertake the role.

3.3.   An assistant fire safety advisor may be employed, where they have the experience and knowledge, to carry out aspects of the role such as a fire safety trainer or fire risk assessor. Alternatively, an assistant fire safety advisor may be employed without fire safety work experience, in a developmental role, provided there is a robust training programme in place and any work that they undertake is under the supervision of a senior/ fire safety advisor.

3.4.   Where a Health Board does not have the capacity to fully replicate this model management structure, they should, as a minimum, have a competent fire safety advisor.

Roles and responsibilities, and governance structure

3.5.   Section (a) of Figure 3.1 below defines the governance structure for the fire safety function within Health Boards. Section (b) defines the fire safety roles within individual healthcare premises.

Figure 3.1 - Roles, responsibilities and governance structure
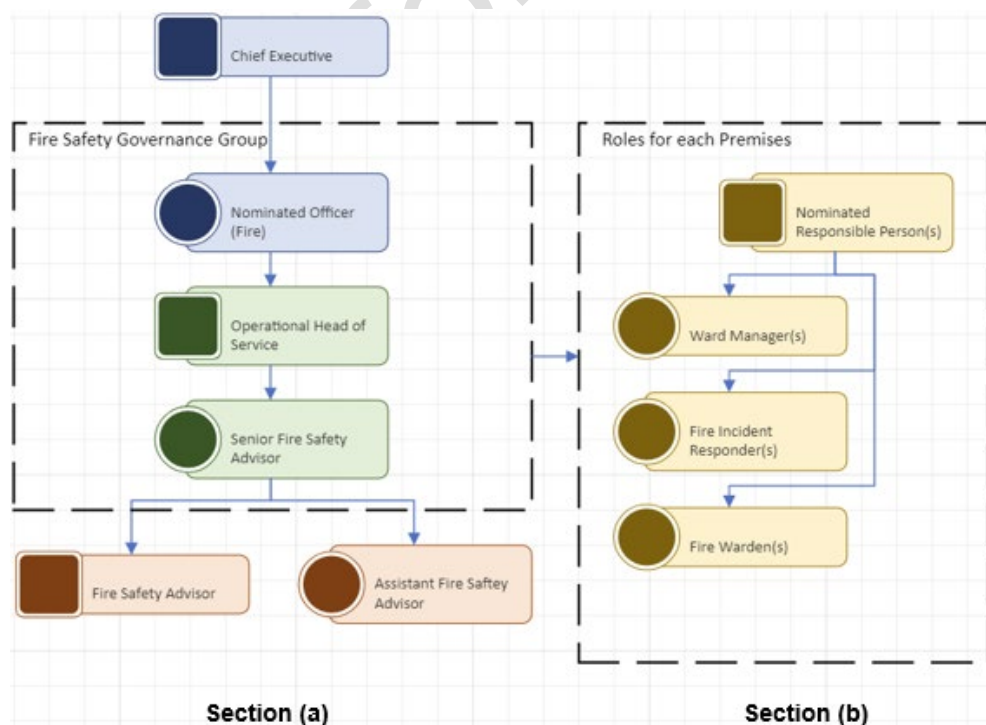
Chief Executive

3.6.   The Chief Executive will, on behalf of the Health Board, have overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the statutory duties detailed in the Fire Scotland Act.

3.7.   They will ensure that the fire safety management structure, competency framework, fire safety training, and technical benchmarks as detailed in the current NHSScotland Scottish Health Technical Memorandum (SHTM) Firecode suite of guidance documents are adhered to.

3.8.   They will ensure that all agreements for the provision of care and other services by third parties include sufficient contractual arrangements to ensure adherence to NHSScotland SHTM Firecode and the Health Board's fire safety policy.

3.9.   They will discharge aspects of managerial responsibility as defined below.

Fire Safety Governance Group

3.10.   Each NHSScotland Health Board should have a fire safety governance group who are responsible for overseeing legislative and mandatory fire safety compliance. The group is likely to consist of the Nominated Officer (fire) (NOF), Operational Heads of Service with fire safety responsibilities, and the Health Board's senior fire safety advisor.

3.11.   Standard agenda items should include:
- fire incidents
- fire risk assessment compliance
- staff training compliance
- fire and rescue service audit outcomes
- fire safety risk register
- unwanted fire alarm signals

3.12.   The group will act as a conduit for reporting on high fire safety risks to the Health Board's strategic management team.

Nominated Officer (fire)

3.13.   The Chief Executive discharges aspects of managerial responsibility for fire safety to the NOF.

3.14.   The NOF should be a member of the strategic management team and have the authority to implement fire safety measures across all sectors of the organisation. They should assist the Chief Executive with Board level responsibilities for fire safety matters including capital programme and funding.

3.15. The NOF will ensure that there are nominated responsible persons appointed for each premises.

3.16. The NOF duties are as follows:

- ensure that the construction of new healthcare facilities and the refurbishment of existing facilities conform to all prevailing statutory and mandatory fire safety requirements, including NHSScotland SHTM Firecode

- ensure co-operation on fire safety duties, between the Health Board and other organisations in jointly occupied premises, in accordance with The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006: Section 21 'Co-operation and Co-ordination'

- ensure that suitable fire risk assessments are undertaken in each of the Boards healthcare premises

- ensure the findings of fire risk assessments are acted upon

- ensure fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed

- monitor all fire safety provisions, policies, and procedures are in place, including:

  o staff training

  o emergency fire action plans

  o fire evacuation exercises and fire drills

  o testing and maintenance of passive and active fire safety measures

- receive reports of fire incidents

- receive reports of unwanted fire alarm signals

- receive compliance and performance reports from the fire safety advisor

- ensure that high-risk fire safety issues are highlighted to the strategic management team

- ensure that agreed programmes of investment in fire precautions are properly accounted for in the Boards business plan

- ensure that an annual report on fire safety performance is undertaken and communicated to the Health Board's strategic management team

- ensure that the Health Board is represented at the NHSScotland Fire Safety Advisory Group

- ensure that there is a procedure for staff, contractors, and volunteers to report fire safety deficiencies that they encounter as part of their daily duties, and ensure onward reporting of faults to the fire safety team

Operational Head of Service

3.17. The NOF may discharge aspects of managerial responsibility for fire safety through operational heads of service.

3.18. The operational head of service should:-

- ensure that processes are in place to implement the Boards fire safety procedures

- ensure that the construction of new healthcare facilities and refurbishment of existing facilities conform to all prevailing statutory and mandatory fire safety requirements including NHSScotland SHTM Firecode

- ensure the delivery of the Boards fire safety training programme and that it adheres to SHTM 83 Part 2: Fire safety training

- ensure that fire risk assessments are undertaken for all Health Board premises

- ensure fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed

- ensure that high risks identified in the fire risk assessments are notified to the NOF and fire safety governance group

- ensure there are trained fire incident responders/fire wardens for Health Board premises

- ensure that all passive and active fire safety measures and equipment are tested and maintained in accordance with the relevant standards, and that comprehensive records are kept

- receive reports of fire incidents and unwanted fire alarm signals from the fire safety team

- receive fire safety compliance reports from the fire safety team

- report on fire safety compliance to the NOF regarding legislation, policies, procedures, and training provision

- ensure that there is a procedure for staff, contractors, and volunteers to report fire safety deficiencies that they encounter as part of their daily duties, and ensure onward reporting of faults to the fire safety team

- ensure that each Health Board premises has a process for silencing and resetting the fire alarm where:

  o a fire incident has been dealt with by the fire and rescue service or

  o it is established as an unwanted fire alarm signal

Senior Fire Safety Advisor

3.19.   In Health Boards that employ more than one fire safety advisor, it is recommended that the structure includes a senior fire safety advisor with responsibility for the coordination of work programmes and management of the fire safety team.

Fire Safety Advisor

3.20.   The fire safety advisors' duties are as follows:-

- advising on the application and compliance with fire safety legislation, NHSScotland SHTM Firecode, and other applicable guidance

- development of Health Board fire safety procedures

- advising on technical fire safety standards as an integral member of the project team during the design, construction, and commissioning of healthcare projects and the refurbishment of existing facilities

- completing and recording fire risk assessments and ensuring action plans are put in place to reduce any identified risks to as low as is reasonably practicable

- preparing and delivering fire safety training that adheres to SHTM 83 Part 2: Fire safety training

- deliver targeted evacuation management training to ward managers for onward cascading to their staff

- ensuring that fire drills and practical evacuation exercises are undertaken by staff

- monitoring the effectiveness of fire safety training

- liaising with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service auditors

- investigating fire incidents and implementing measures to prevent recurrence

- investigating unwanted fire alarm signals and implementing preventative and reduction measures

- escalation of high fire safety risks to the senior fire safety advisor/ operational head of service/ NOF

- conducting regular inspections of healthcare premises and updating the fire risk assessment as required

Assistant Fire Safety Advisor

3.21. Assistant fire safety advisors' duties may include the following:

- completion of reports

- assist fire safety advisors on the application and compliance with fire safety legislation, NHSScotland SHTM Firecode, and other applicable guidance

- assist with the development of the Health Board's fire policies and procedures

- advise on technical fire safety standards

- complete and record fire risk assessments and ensure that an action plan is in place to reduce any identified risks to as low as is reasonably practicable

- prepare and deliver fire safety training and evacuation exercises

- conduct regular inspections of healthcare premises and update the fire risk assessment as required

- liaison with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service auditors

- assist in the investigation of fire incidents/ unwanted fire alarm signals and implement measures to prevent their recurrence

Nominated Responsible Person for each healthcare premises

3.22. Each healthcare premises should have a designated responsible person whose duty is to ensure that fire safety standards are maintained, for the protection of staff, patients, and other occupants.

3.23.   The responsible person must have managerial authority to ensure actions will be completed and will usually be the site director or premises manager.

3.24.   The nominated responsible person should ensure that:

- a fire risk assessment has been undertaken by the Health Board's fire safety team

- the findings of the fire risk assessment are acted upon

- the fire safety team is informed of changes to the building layout, work processes, or a significant increase in the number of occupants

- staff receive fire safety training in accordance with SHTM 83 Part 2: Fire safety training

- staff participate in fire drills and practical evacuation exercises

- there is a suitable emergency fire action plan for the premises

- fire safety training records are completed and readily available for inspection

- fire safety systems maintenance records are completed and readily available for inspection

- fire incidents and unwanted fire alarm signals are reported to the Health Board's fire safety advisor

- sufficient fire wardens and fire response staff are available to ensure that emergency and evacuation procedures are carried out in the event of a fire

- ensure that there is a procedure for staff, contractors, and volunteers to report fire safety deficiencies that they encounter as part of their daily duties, and ensure onward reporting of faults to the fire safety team

- ensure that the Health Board premises have a process for silencing and resetting the fire alarm where:

    o a fire incident has been dealt with by the fire and rescue service or

    o it is established as an unwanted fire alarm signal

Ward Managers (including managers of areas with progressive horizontal evacuation procedures)

3.25.   Ward managers are responsible for maintaining fire safety standards within their area of control, such as ensuring escape routes and other areas are free from obstructions and combustible materials. They should ensure that fire safety defects are reported to the appropriate persons.

3.26.   Ward managers should receive fire evacuation management training that is specific to their area/ workplace, this training should be delivered by the Health Board's fire safety advisor.

3.27.   It is the ward managers' responsibility to cascade fire evacuation training to their staff and ensure that staff participate in regular ward/ area evacuation exercises to ensure they are familiar with and can act on the emergency fire action plan.

3.28.   In the event of a fire incident, ward manager duties are as follows:

- take control of the incident

- initiate the emergency fire action plan

- ensure that a 999 call is made to the fire service

- ensure that fire response teams are alerted

- liaise with and direct fire incident responders

- liaise with the fire and rescue service

Fire Incident Responders

3.29.   In hospitals and other healthcare premises with sleeping accommodations, there should be sufficient, trained fire incident responders.

3.30.   In response to a fire alert their duties are as follows:

- report to the ward manager

- attend the location of a fire incident

- assist in the evacuation of patients

- direct other occupants towards exit routes

- conduct a sweep of the area to ensure that all occupants, including visitors; have responded to the alarm

- safely investigate the source of a fire

- fight the fire if safe to do so

- provide information and assistance to the fire and rescue service

Fire Wardens

3.31.   In healthcare premises that do not have sleeping accommodation, there should be sufficient, trained fire wardens.

3.32.   In response to a fire alert their duties are as follows:

- ensuring that a 999 call is made to the fire service

- assist in the evacuation of the premises in the event of a fire

- conduct a sweep of their designated area to ensure that all occupants have responded to the fire alarm

- fight the fire if safe to do so

- take a roll call at the designated assembly point

- liaise with the fire service

Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers

3.33. All Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers should:

- comply with the Health Board's fire safety policy, protocols, and procedures

- participate in fire safety training and fire evacuation exercises

- staff should report fire safety deficiencies to their line manager for onward reporting to the fire safety team

- contractors and volunteers should report fire safety deficiencies using the local standard operating procedure

- report fire incidents and false alarm signals by following the Health Board's protocols and procedures

4. NHSScotland - fire safety management system

4.1.   Meaningful data collection is essential to make evidence-based decisions, drive innovation, and improve organisational outcomes.

4.2.   The NHSScotland fire safety management system has the facility to gather accurate and reliable data that can be analysed for patterns and trends relating to fire safety issues. This data can be utilised to optimise working processes and measure their effectiveness, inform resource allocation, identification of improvement opportunities, and assist in guidance development.

4.3.   The system functionality assists in providing a national overview of fire safety and ensuring 'Once for Scotland' approaches can be developed.

4.4.   The system has cross-functionality with the NHSScotland Strategic Asset Management System (SAMS) whereby, fire safety question sets, templates, and reports are automatically populated with the name of the building, block number, address, and region.

4.5.   It is mandated that the fire safety management system is used as the primary means of recording fire risk assessments, fire incidents, and unwanted fire alarm signals.

5. Competency

5.1. It is essential that NHSScotland Health Boards can evidence the effectiveness of their fire safety processes, including the competency of fire safety advisors, who play a crucial role in ensuring the safety of occupants in healthcare premises.

5.2. NHSScotland Firecode defines 'competent persons' as those who are appropriately qualified with sufficient technical knowledge relevant to the healthcare environment.

5.3. This section details the key factors that Health Boards should consider, to ensure that fire safety staff achieve and maintain competency.

5.4. This Scottish Health Technical Memorandum (SHTM) details a career progression pathway, whereby staff who are recruited to the role of assistant fire safety advisor, have a clear and measurable progression route toward competency as a fire safety advisor.

5.5. Fire safety advisors should have a comprehensive knowledge of, and be competent in the following areas:

- NHSScotland Firecode guidance

- legislation, including The Fire Scotland Act and Regulations

- Scottish Building Regulations and Building Standards Technical Handbooks

- fire safety-related British Standards

- fire science and human behaviour - factors influencing fire development, fire behaviour, fire dynamics, factors associated with human behaviour in a fire situation

- building construction, including elements of structure, type and the effects of materials used in construction, and occupancy profile

- fire risk assessment - identification of fire hazards, the likelihood of a fire and its impact, as defined in SHTM 86 'Fire Risk Assessment'

- effective communication skills to convey complex fire safety concepts clearly and understandably

- documenting and reporting - producing clear, comprehensive, and well-documented reports

Continuous professional development (CPD) - Portfolio

5.6. Each member of the fire safety team should maintain a continuous professional development portfolio with the following evidence:

- courses attended

- training received

- formal fire safety courses/ qualifications

- attendance at fire safety seminars

- training programmes delivered

- completion of fire risk assessments

- involvement in, as part of the project team, the design, construction, and commissioning of healthcare projects and the refurbishment of existing facilities with references to NHSScotland SHTM Firecode, building standards and other technical standards

- details of fire and unwanted fire alarm investigations

- copies of completed fire/ Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS) reports

- qualifications and membership of fire safety professional bodies

Fire safety recruitment

5.7.   As part of the fire safety recruitment process, it is important to assess a candidate's technical knowledge and experience, therefore, the recruiting panel should include a competent senior/fire safety advisor at the shortlisting and interview stage.

5.8.   If a Health Board is unsure whether they have sufficient competency to form a recruitment panel, they should seek assistance from another Health Board or NHSScotland Assure.

Staff development

5.9.   NHS Boards should have a formal staff development and appraisal process in place to ensure that fire safety staff maintain existing skills and progress their knowledge base to take account of technical advancements and legislative changes.

5.10.   Staff development should include a measurable program of personal study, work activity and mentoring.

5.11.   The following should form part of a development programme:
- knowledge of NHSScotland SHTM Firecode

- knowledge of fire safety legislation

- knowledge of Scottish Building Standards

- knowledge of British Standards

- completion of fire risk assessments

- knowledge of policies and procedures applicable to the role

- completion of mandatory training applicable to the role

- interpretation of fire strategies

- interpretation of fire safety plans

- awareness of legislative changes and advances in fire safety technologies and practices

5.12.   The CPD portfolio should be referenced in the completion of the Health Board's staff appraisal process.

5.13.   Where gaps in knowledge are identified or there is a potential for skill development, the fire safety staff member and their line manager should agree on the additional training and assistance that is required and a planned programme should be put in place.

Assistant fire safety advisor

5.14.   As part of a career progression pathway, assistant fire safety advisors should be given the opportunity, through a formal development programme, to gain the skill level required for the role of fire safety advisor. This will enable them to apply for the role of fire safety advisor, should one become available.

Fire safety qualifications

5.15.   Post holders should evidence that they possess the requisite qualifications, normally a fire safety-related degree and experience relevant to the role. Alternatively, post holders who do not have formal qualifications should be able to provide evidence of significant, demonstrable experience in the fire safety sector.

5.16.   Health Boards should encourage staff to attend accredited fire safety training courses and gain formal qualifications that would be an enhancement to their skill set, this is particularly applicable to those employed as assistant fire safety advisors.

5.17.   NHS Boards should encourage staff membership of recognised professional bodies such as the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE), Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) or Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). Fire safety advisors are also encouraged to be members of the National Association of Healthcare Fire Officers (NAHFO) as this organisation offers access to CPD activities, UK wide networking with other healthcare fire professionals and sharing of good practice.

6. NHSScotland Assure

6.1.   It is the duty of individual Health Boards to ensure that fire safety standards are met and maintained, however, NHSScotland Assure can assist Health Boards with an independent review of their processes.

6.2.   Where areas of improvement are identified the review team will support the Health Board to form an action plan.

6.3.   NHSScotland Assure can undertake sample reviews of the undernoted and report their findings to the Boards Nominated Officer (fire) (NOF):

- appraise the Health Boards management of fire safety against standard benchmarks including, Firecode, national framework, and public inquiry reports

- appraise fire risk assessments

- appraise training programmes

- appraise fire safety staff's CPD portfolios

- identify staff training needs and assist Health Boards with training programmes.

Abbreviations

CPD: Continuous Professional Development

IFE: Institution of Fire Engineers

IFSM: Institute of Fire Safety Managers

IOSH: Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

NAHFO: National Association of Healthcare Fire Officers

NOF: Nominated Officer (fire)

SAMS: Strategic Asset Management System

SHTM: Scottish Health Technical Memorandum

UFAS: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal