



Fire Safety Policy

1. Fire Safety Policy

- 1.1 To make the Hall as safe as possible from the risk of fire.
- 1.2 To have a robust action plan to enable safe evacuation of all occupants in the event of a fire.
- 1.3 To implement fire safety training.
- 1.4 To ensure ESCH Ltd is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021.

2. Fire Action Plan (see also separate **Fire Action Plan** document, displayed throughout the Hall building, that is also part of the ESCH new hirer's induction)

2.1 If a fire is discovered the following action should be taken:

- Raise the alarm
- Leave the building by the nearest safe emergency exit
- Do not stop for personal belongings
- Go to the assembly point at 7-10 Exeter Street (opposite the Chimney House pub)
- Call the Fire Service on 999
- Contact the Hall's emergency contact number
- **Do not take risks**
- Do not re-enter the building unless authorised to do so

2.2 If the alarm sounds the following action should be taken:

- Leave the building by the nearest safe emergency exit
- Go to the assembly point at 7-10 Exeter Street (opposite the Chimney House pub)
- Do not stop for personal belongings
- **Do not take risks**
- Do not re-enter the building unless authorised to do so

3. Implementation

3.1 Raising the Alarm

The premises are protected by an automatic fire detection system. The fire detection system has two Zones:

Zone 1: Main Hall where three smoke fire detector alarms are fitted and one smoke fire detector above the Fire System Control panel and electricity distribution unit.

Zone 2: Rear toilets, kitchen and meeting room where a heat detector fire alarm is fitted in the Kitchen and a smoke detector alarm is fitted in the rear meeting room.

A control panel is located by the Hall's southern emergency exit.

There are 4 fire alarm activation buttons by the two front exits of the Hall, outside the Kitchen and outside the Community Room.

The automatic fire detection system must be tested weekly and recorded in the Fire Log Book.

The system is maintained under contract by Matrix Security Ltd.

3.2 Emergency Exits

There are two emergency exits – the main entrance/exit at the front north end of the building and a secondary emergency exit at the front south end of the building. The secondary exit has a step down to street level. To open the doors push on the bar.

The two rear exit doors, one adjacent to the kitchen and one adjacent to the accessible toilet, both lead to the yard which is a dead end so they are **not** to be used as emergency exits.

Exits should be kept free from obstructions and doors should not be wedged open. Prior to all events/classes the Hirer must check that exits are unobstructed, unlocked and functioning as intended.

3.3 Maximum Capacity

The maximum number of people allowed in the Hall (Hall plus backrooms) at any one time is assessed as 136, to comply with fire regulations. For maximum safety and comfort though, current capacity levels for events in the main hall are set at 120 standing or 80 seated. However, different configurations of the furniture will reduce the number of people allowed in the Hall. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure that the maximum number of people is not exceeded.

3.4 Fire Fighting

There are three fire blankets located in the kitchen; however, hirers, staff and volunteers should not put themselves at risk.

3.5 Responsible Person

The Hall is not staffed and there are no permanent fire wardens. The Hirer, or nominated event/activity lead, is responsible for the safe evacuation of themselves and anyone attending their event or class, whether adults or children. They should point out the location of the fire exits and what to do in case of fire at the start of the event or class. They should also ensure they have actively considered anyone who has specific mobility requirements and implement a personal emergency evacuation plan if required.

3.6 Alerting the Fire Service

The fire service must be called by the Hall Manager, the hirer or by an ESCH Events Lead.

3.7 Assembly Points

All occupants should go to the assembly point outside 7-10 Exeter Street. Where the hirer knows exact numbers (e.g. a register has been taken), the lead person should check that everyone is accounted for. This will not be possible if the alarm has been raised at an open public event where accurate numbers aren't known.

3.8 Vulnerable People

Anyone who has any special needs or physical disabilities and is in the Hall without a carer has a responsibility to make themselves known to the Hirer in advance and ensure that appropriate measures are implemented if required.

Hirers should actively enquire if anyone has any special needs in the event of an emergency and provide appropriate measures if required.

When under-18s are present, the Hirer must ensure a named adult is always present at the event, who will be responsible for all safety matters.

See the Safeguarding Policy for more information.

Anyone working alone should refer to the Lone Working Policy and ensure they have read the HSE publication **Working Alone** before undertaking lone working.

3.9 Signage

Fire Action signs detailing what to do in the event of a fire are displayed in the Hall.

3.10 Risk Assessments

An annual Fire Risk Assessment will be undertaken and outcomes implemented.

Fire risk is also included in the:

- Risk Assessment – All Risks, which is completed before the start of school term times, when many classes recommence
- Risk Assessment – Event/Activities, which is completed by hirers and ESCH Event Leads before the event or activity starts

Risk assessments are kept by the Hall Manager for future reference and could be supplied to the HSE if required.

3.11 Alarm Testing and Recording

A test of the fire alarm (sound only) will be completed weekly. A full test will be undertaken twice a year by Matrix.

The Hall Manager will support regular hirers to conduct fire drills on the basis of individual event/activity risk assessment, carried out by the Hall Manager and hirer and reviewed at monthly ESCH management committee meetings.

A fire log book detailing fire alarm tests, drills and checks and risk assessments as well as activations will be kept as required by the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service adjacent to the automatic fire alarm system control panel in the secondary exit lobby.

3.12 External Notice for Emergencies

An emergency contact telephone number notice will be placed in the external notice board.

3.13 Associated Procedures

Fire Action Plan
Safeguarding Policy
Health and Safety Procedures
Booking Forms