

Loss Prevention Standards – Asset Classes

Smoking and the Workplace

Version: 1.4

Date: 29th October 2024

Guidance on the risk of fires from discarded smoking materials.



Introduction

Despite a decrease during recent years in the cause of fires attributed to improperly discarded smoking materials within commercial premises, especially as a result of UK legislation restricting smoking in the majority of enclosed areas and workplaces, the risks of fires from discarded smoking materials still remains. Ideally all buildings on a site should be designated smoke free, however, dependent upon the premises' fire risk assessment, smoking may be:

- Totally prohibited on site
- Restricted to designated external areas only
- Or in certain circumstances, e.g. care homes, allowed internally, subject to certain restrictions



As many fires resulting in loss of life and damage to property are caused by careless, even negligent smoking habits, organisations should consider introducing a policy in respect of smoking in the workplace.

Smoking Policy

Such a policy should be issued to all staff and address issues such as:

Policy Statement

A policy needs to be stated, to confirm and reiterate compliance with legal requirements, the company philosophy and any guidance provided by insurers. The policy should be communicated to all individuals (employees, contractor, deliveries, security, etc.) and entered into any terms and conditions of employment.

Implementation of the Policy

The implementation will need to be understood by all employees, with acknowledgement that any individual has the right to smoke outside the workplace, but as an employer, the company has the right to regulate the incidence and location on its own premises.

Enforcement of the Policy

It should be documented that breaches of the smoking policy will be subject to normal disciplinary procedures.

External Designated Smoking Areas

When providing external smoking areas such as in yards, any shelters should be

- Subject to a specific fire risk assessment
- Constructed from non-combustible materials and not wholly enclosed
- Sited well away from:
 - Other buildings, ideally at least 10 metres
 - Ventilation intakes or extracts
 - Hazardous materials
 - Waste containers
 - Vegetation or windblown debris

Any concealed or semi-open spaces beneath designated areas should be sealed to ensure that combustible debris cannot accumulate below the area.

Suitable non-combustible receptacles should be provided for the safe disposal of discarded smoking materials, with inspections carried out at the end of each shift/day to ensure that no smoking materials have been left **smouldering**. As **'smoking' waste** should not be allowed to accumulate, arrangements should be in place to regularly empty and clean such receptacles, ensuring that the contents are not stored with general site waste or in wheelie/euro bins. Provide a fire extinguisher for use in the shelter or designated smoking area.

A **'No Smoking'** policy should be established in external locations where fire hazards exist, such as in areas containing combustible materials, flammable liquids, and gas cylinders. **'No Smoking'** signs should be prominently displayed in these areas.

Smoking should not be permitted in any vehicles entering the premises including those parked within onsite car parks – this information should be clearly visible at all vehicle entrance points to the site.

Checklist

A generic Smoking and the Workplace Checklist is presented in Appendix 1 which can be tailored to your own organisation.

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Additional Information

Relevant Loss Prevention Standards include:

- Housekeeping

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Appendix 1 – Smoking and the Workplace Checklist



Location	
Date	
Completed by (name and signature)	

	Smoking Precautions Checklist	Y/N	Comments
1.	Are 'No Smoking' signs clearly displayed in a prominent position at all entrances to the site?		
2.	Is all signage regularly checked to ensure that it has not been damaged or removed?		
3.	Are all visitors to the premises made aware of the site rules regarding smoking?		
4.	Is the 'No Smoking' policy enforced with regards to individuals driving vehicles on site (this includes employees, contractors, deliveries, etc.)?		
5.	Are suitable individuals appointed to ensure compliance with the site smoking policy?		
6.	Are designated smoking areas/shelters constructed from non-combustible materials, located well away from other buildings (at least 10 metres), and not wholly enclosed?		
7.	Are designated smoking areas sited away from ventilation intakes/extracts, hazardous materials, waste containers, vegetation or windblown debris?		
8.	Are there any concealed or semi-open spaces beneath the designated smoking areas? If so, they should be sealed with non-combustible materials.		

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	Smoking Precautions Checklist Contd.	Y/N	Comments
9.	<p>Is the designated smoking area provided with proper non-combustible receptacles?</p> <p>Including separate receptacles for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discarded smoking materials? Other discarded materials/general combustible rubbish? 		
10.	<p>Is appropriate signage provided to guide individuals what receptacle to use, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discarded smoking receptacle – ‘No general waste materials/rubbish’? General waste materials/rubbish receptacle – ‘No smoking materials’? 		
11.	<p>Are such receptacles regularly emptied, at least daily, with arrangements in place to ensure that discarded smoking materials are not stored with general site waste?</p>		
12.	<p>Is the designated smoking area supplied with a fire extinguisher, which is regularly maintained?</p>		
13.	<p>Is the area around the designated smoking area kept clear of combustible materials?</p>		
14.	<p>Are designated smoking areas regularly checked, at least daily, to ensure no smoking materials are left smouldering?</p>		
15.	<p>Are regular checks undertaken, at least weekly, to ensure that no surreptitious smoking is taking place?</p>		
16.	<p>Is there a suitable ‘No Smoking’ policy in place in areas where fire hazards exist?</p>		

	Smoking Precautions Checklist Contd.	Y/N	Comments
17.	Has the company policy on smoking been communicated to all, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees? • Contractors? • Third parties? • Visitors? • Security guard services? • Delivery drivers? 		
18.	Additional comments:		

Please Note

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