

Fire Safety Complaints Procedures

Standard Operating Procedure No. TFS - 010

Document Overview: -

This document details the procedure to follow if a fire safety related complaint is made about premises.

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Issue Date:	June 2006
Policy/Review Date:	June 2008
Policy/Revision Date:	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Complaints about premises are sometimes made by members of the public, partner organisations or employees. This document sets out the procedure to ensure that a speedy, consistent and professional response is made in relation to these complaints.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 Current legislation allows Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service rights of entry and enforcement in most premises that are not a single private dwelling.
- 2.2 With regard to some types of premises, the Fire & Rescue Service are not necessarily the primary enforcing agency and as such it may be appropriate to inform the relevant enforcing body (local authority housing, HSE etc.).
- 2.3 If prohibition is considered, it may be appropriate to use the Fire and Rescue Service legislation, as the right of appeal does not affect the immediate serving of a prohibition notice. The Local Authority housing legislation, for example, requires the appeal time to be spent before action can be taken.
- 2.4 If the result of the audit indicates prohibition action, the Inspector should refer to Community Safety - [Prohibition Procedures](#).

3.0 Confidentiality

- 3.1 Most complainants will be reluctant to divulge their name or contact details for fear of reprisal or disciplinary action. In order to gain as much information about the complaint, the complainant should be re-assured that the information requested will remain confidential.
- 3.2 It is good practice to feed back to the complainant once an investigation or audit has taken place, however, the Fire Authority has the duty of confidentiality towards the premises or company that is being investigated. The complainant should only be given sufficient basic details to satisfy their complaint without divulging sensitive or confidential information. The Information/Data Protection Officer will be able to give guidance as required.

4.0 Procedure

- 4.1 The procedure detailed on [Appendix 'A'](#) should be followed to resolve a complaint.
- 4.2 If deemed appropriate to visit a premises, the audit process detailed in An [Inspectors Guide To The Fire Safety Audit](#) should be used.
- 4.3 A pocket notebook must be used to take contemporaneous notes during a visit following a complaint. Permanent Reference - Use of [Pocket Notebook](#)
- 4.4 The term urgent, as used in the flowchart is defined, as – A serious and immediate risk to persons in the event of fire appears to exist. This should prompt an immediate response by a suitably qualified inspector, and at least within 24 hours.

Examples could include allegations of locked or blocked fire exits in an occupied building, report of defective fire alarm in a sleeping risk.

- 4.5 The term non-urgent is defined as – less serious risk to persons in the event of fire. This should prompt a visit from a suitable qualified inspector within 7 working days.
- 4.6 A note for file should be written to record the complaint and any action taken. Details of the information given to the complainant should also be listed.

