

What is a Floor Warden?

It is the person designated with responsibility for life safety for a floor.

(On multi-tenant floors, we appoint one floor warden per unit since the floor warden needs to have access to all areas on the floor and have a certain level of authority).

Legal framework: National Fire Code of Canada, B.C. Fire Services Act. Under this legislation, we are required to appoint Floor Wardens.

The Floor Warden should be a person that is present during most regular business hours.

The Deputy Floor Warden:

1. Will assist the Floor Warden, as noted below.
2. If the Floor Warden is not present in case of a fire, the Deputy Floor Warden assumes the duties of the Floor Warden.

This information package contains information on the following topics:

- a. **General** duties of a Floor Warden
- b. **Specific** duties during a Fire Alarm
- c. Fire Drills

General duties of a Floor Warden (proactive – pre-emergency role)

FIRE PREVENTION

Identify and prevent potential fire hazards, such as:

- Overloaded electrical circuits (i.e. vending machine);
- Worn extension cords, or multiple extension cords used in series;
- Overheating equipment;
- Kitchen appliances (all kitchen appliances should be equipped with automatic shut off);
- Unsafe electrical installations.

Ensure your office conducts its business operations in a safe manner:

- Make sure fire exit routes remain clear of obstructions (ensure there are no file boxes blocking exit doors, or furniture placed in narrow corridors).
- Avoid accumulation of combustible materials (i.e. chemicals, flammable liquids).
- Avoid ignition sources (extension cords, overheating equipment).
- Ensure any fire fighting equipment (i.e. fire extinguishers) are easily accessible and in good condition.
- Ensure the First Aid Kit is easily accessible and regularly replenished.
- Ensure that suite entrance doors (which act as smoke separation) or stairwell doors (which act as fire separation) are not wedged open at any time.

Report any building maintenance issues to the building management office

- Report burnt out exit signs, emergency lights, stairwell lights.
- Report malfunctioning door closers on entrance doors, stairwell doors.
- Report missing fire extinguishers or fire hoses that have become unracked.

INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Communicate to all staff members to your floor:

- Make sure they know what to do if they discover a fire.
- Make sure they know the fire exit routes and the designated assembly area.
- Make sure they know what to do if they hear the fire alarm.

Ensure the building's Fire Safety Plan is kept in a central location accessible to all staff.

Encourage fire prevention practices

Specific duties of Floor Warden in case of a Fire Alarm

EVACUATION

The floor Warden is responsible for the orderly evacuation of all persons from a floor.

This means:

- Upon hearing the fire alarm, go to the elevator lobby immediately.
- Meet the Deputy Fire Warden or, if not present, appoint someone else.
- Check if exit stairwells are clear of fire and smoke (choose alternate route if necessary).
- Direct occupants to use the stairwells only (do not use the elevators). Direct all people to the assembly area and instruct them to stay there.
- Ensure both stairwells are used equally to ensure a balanced loading of the stairwells.
- Direct the Deputy Floor Warden to systematically check all rooms on your floor to ensure that all people have left the floor. Make sure to knock on locked doors.
 - close all doors, but do not lock doors,
 - remember to check the washrooms.
- Monitor the stairwell doors to ensure no-one comes back in.
- Stay near the firefighter's telephone and answer it if called.
- After everyone has left, evacuate yourself via the stairwell. Note the Floor Warden is the last person off the floor.
- Report to the Fire Safety Director in the main lobby to advise your floor has been evacuated
- Go to the assembly area to conduct head count.
- Liaise with Fire Safety Director in the main lobby as necessary.

ASSISTANCE

Control the fire. If there is a fire on your floor, attempt to fight the fire only if the fire is small.

- Use fire extinguishers. Aim at the base of the fire.
- Close doors to control the spread of fire and smoke (but do not lock doors).

Provide assistance

- Mobility impaired persons (i.e. wheelchair or on crutches):
 - Stay with handicapped or injured persons – Report their presence to the Fire Safety Director (FSD) via the fire fighters telephone in the elevator lobby.
- Injured persons
 - Provide First Aid to injured persons
 - Report their presence and condition to the FSD via the fire fighters telephone in the elevator lobby.
 - If possible, help evacuate injured persons
- Assist the Fire Department with information and provide access to all parts of your floor.

INFORMATION FOR FLOOR WARDENS

COMMUNICATION

The Floor Warden is the point of contact with Fire Safety Director (FSD) stationed in main lobby.

Communicate by way of the fire fighters telephone system. Provide only vital information.

Keep the communication brief and to the point:

- If your floor is the fire floor, report your findings and the conditions on your floor.
- Report if there are any handicapped or injured persons present on your floor and their exact whereabouts
- Once your floor is evacuated, inform the FSD stationed in the main lobby.

Other communication:

- Listen for instructions and updates via the PA system
- Confirm false alarms only if the entire floor has been checked and you are absolutely positive that the alarm is false (i.e. vandals activating pull station).

Fire Drills

A fire drill is a practice run of a building evacuation. Fire drills are scheduled and announced in advance, so that occupants are aware it is a practice run, and not a real emergency.

Conducting a fire drill has the following objectives:

- Make occupants familiar with the sound of the fire bells (first stage, second stage)
- It forces them to consider their actions in the event the fire was real
- Practice the evacuation (use the stairwells, exit doors) for those willing to participate
- Test procedures and readiness for floor wardens and fire safety directors.

We are required to conduct a fire drill (practice evacuation) once a year. Participation in a fire drill is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged. Previous fire drills have shown that they can be completed rather quickly, with everyone getting back up to their floors within approximately 20 minutes from the start of the drill.

Floor wardens will meet before the fire drill to review practices. We will also meet after a fire drill to debrief, share our observations, and, if necessary, identify corrective measures.

Previous fire drills have resulted in the following observations:

1. Unequal loading of the two stairwells. People tend to gravitate to the north stairwell, resulting in some congestion.
2. Some people descending beyond the ground floor and continuing down to the basement level. *
3. Some people exiting through the main lobby (instead of going straight out to the street) or tracking back through the building. *
4. Some people wandering off, going for coffee, instead of staying at the dedicated gathering point.

*In response to items 2 and 3 above, large red signs have been posted in the stairwells at the ground floor level to direct occupants to the exits.

Further information

Further information is available from the following sources:

1. **Fire Safety Plan** for 900 West Hastings, a copy will be available in your office
2. Call the building management office at 604-688-7900.