

## G14-G Temporary Accommodation Units (TAU's)

### 1. Published Guidance

Fire and emergency arrangements for temporary offices are very similar to those for permanent offices and establishments.

**Section 5 of CIP** Construction Health & Safety Manual gives excellent guidance on escape travel distances and numbers of extinguishers.

**The Joint Code of Practice 'Fire Prevention on Construction Sites'** is published by Construction Confederation, FPA and Association of British Insurers and forms the basis for Fire Prevention Checklist [App. 14E](#).

#### **HSG 168 - Fire Safety in Construction Work**

### 2. Location of Offices on Site

Where possible, TAUs should be erected at least 10 m from any new or existing building. If TAUs must be less than 6m away, they should be as far as possible from existing buildings and an assessment made as to the fire rating to be used to minimise the high risk of collateral damage.

If TAUs are erected less than 6m from buildings, the following must apply:

- a. External walls metal clad and cabin structure min. 30 min fire rated
- b. Vertically stacked offices – floors, roofs and supports to achieve 30 min fire resistance supported by relevant certification
- c. Spaces / voids below offices/cabins closed off with wire mesh or similar to allow ventilation.
- d. Fire detection systems must be fitted e.g. smoke alarms.
- e. On large projects, the fire detection system should be linked to a central station unless there is 24hr site security.

If TAUs have to be located inside a structure, all the above apply and additionally the ease of access for the emergency services and the evacuation of personnel must be considered when locating the TAUs.

Fire rated cabins are built to a higher standard and will have a longer life as well as offering better insulation values and lower running costs.

### 3. Summary of Means of Escape

For more detail on escape routes, refer to CIP 'Construction Health & Safety Manual'

For TAUs located outside of buildings, vertically stacked (3 max) or up to 4 units linked horizontally, the following should apply:

- a. Doors min. 750mm x 1.96m high, opening in direction of escape/access.
- b. Corridors must be minimum 1.1m wide x 2m high.
- c. Metal stairs must be min. 1.1m wide with 2m headroom plus 1.5m horizontal clearance.

- d. Landings outside exit doors must be a minimum 1.1m wide.
- e. When occupied, all potential escape doors must remain unlocked.
- f. External doors must open outward with panic bars/latches fitted. Potential conflict with security concerns may require consideration of local alarms or CCTV coverage, but safety must take precedence.
- g. Where there are alternative exits at 45° or more from each other, the travel distance to nearest exit on that level must not exceed 45m.
- h. Where there is only one exit, the travel distance should not exceed 18m.
- i. Where there are offices within offices, escape from an inner office must only be through a maximum of one other office.
- j. Windows adjacent to and within 1.8m of fire escapes must be fire rated either wired glass or covered internally with 2 layers of plaster board.

#### **4. Emergency Alarms**

- a. Hand operated alarm bells are usually adequate for office set ups with less than 20 occupants or where there are less than 10 occupants on the top floor of double stacked offices.
- b. For larger office complexes or sites, and high rise developments, an alarm system will be required.
- c. An emergency alarm installation certificate to BS 5839 is required if offices occupied by 20 or more persons or more than 9 persons on upper levels.

#### **5. Emergency Lighting**

- a. Provide 1 emergency light for every 3 lights in corridors and stairs where it may be necessary to use these in the dark. These should be checked monthly.
- b. Installation certificates to BS 5266 are required if offices are occupied by 20 or more persons or more than 10 on upper levels where no spill lighting from a separate source enters the office or there are internal corridors.

#### **6. Canteens & Mess Rooms**

- a. If possible, canteens should not be located underneath large occupied offices due to an inherently greater fire risk.
- b. Fire blankets are required if LPG is used in kitchens or deep fat fryers used.
- c. Heat rise detectors are used in canteen kitchens instead of smoke detectors.

#### **7. Fire Fighting Equipment**

- a. To ensure that the correct firefighting equipment is obtained for your establishment you must first ensure that a fire assessment is carried out by a competent person/company. This can be undertaken by either your designated HS&E Adviser or by contacting Select Plant, St, Neots (01480 402580) who will arrange for CHUBB fire to carry out a survey.

- b. Once the assessment is complete the required fire fighting equipment can be obtained via COINS or through hire from Select plant at St, Neots.
- c. All fire fighting equipment must be inspected every 12 months and this can be carried out by CHUBB who are contacted via Select Plant.
- d. Ensure fire action notices are placed at all entry and exits. As a guide, provide one CO<sub>2</sub> and one water extinguisher for every other office.

## 8. Fire Emergency Plan

- a. The Fire Safety Co-ordinator is to ensure a site Fire Plan is drawn up and the emergency services are informed of location, any hazardous substances stored and sites entry points. [Template App. 17 A \(Site\)](#) or [App 17B \(Office\)](#).
- b. Procedures for dealing with Bomb Alerts are contained in [App 17C](#).
- c. A Workplace Fire Risk Assessment Sheet is in [App 17D](#).

## 9. Emergency Action Cards

- a. All supervisors or managers with responsibility for a place of work must have a clear understanding of the emergency procedures. They must know the key contacts and the actions to be followed in the event of an incident or possess an Emergency Action Card or pack summarising these contacts and actions. ([App 12A](#)).
- b. Due to the lower risk within business and satellite offices, as an alternative, these emergency actions may be prominently displayed on a notice board.

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