

**UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER.****FIRE SAFETY ADVICE NOTE NO 6.****Means of Escape Prevention Guidance on Maintaining Clearways.****1. Introduction.**

The safety of our occupants and University buildings is paramount. A well-managed means of escape leading to a fire exit allows occupants to reach a place of safety in the event of a fire or other emergency. Such arrangements are dependent upon ensuring these are well lit with emergency lighting in case the mains power fails and well signed so that they are easy to see.

All such routes are so important and need to be always kept clear of obstacles and available for use. For those who need help and guidance on the periodic checking of read FSAN 3 Means of Escape and Fire Exit Operation / Clearway checks. This FSAN is aimed at giving preventative fire safety guidance on maintaining clearways on fire protected routes.

**2. How can you tell if it is a designated Means of Escape/ Fire Exit?**

A designated Means of Escape should have fire directional signage, they usually have a fire point with a break glass point and fire extinguishers in place and provide a safe route to fire exits which should be kept clear and functional, this also applies to protected stairways and fire protected lobbies. It is worth mentioning that Fire exits should have a sign on them and should be kept as a clearway on both sides of the door allowing people to pass clearly in the event of a fire.

**3. Why has this Fire Safety Preventative Guidance been produced?**

Persons need to be aware that once a fire has started, been detected and a warning given, everyone in your premises should be able to escape to a place of total safety unaided and without the help of the fire and rescue service. However, some people with disabilities and others with special needs may need help from staff who will need to be designated for the purpose.

Escape routes should be designed to ensure, as far as possible, that any person confronted by fire anywhere in the building should be able to turn away from it and escape to a place of reasonable safety, e.g., a protected stairway. From there they will be able to go directly to a place of total safety away from the building. It is especially important that a designated means of escape is **kept clear** and **free from combustible items**, such areas are designed to comply with this requirement. Please note that from time-to-time certain buildings may wish to have an event or display temporarily in the foyer of a building as an example, for guidance on this please see FSAN 5 "The General Fire Safety Management of University of Manchester Events and Displays in Buildings"

#### **4. Items placed in Corridors, Stairways and Protected Lobbies.**

Corridors and stairways that form part of escape routes should be always kept clear and hazard free. Items that may be a source of fuel or pose an ignition risk should never be located on any corridor, stairway or protected lobby that will be used as an escape route.

This would include notice boards which may be in such areas, such boards should be carefully managed and ideally have a glass fronted or transparent fascia to ensure any notices cannot be easily ignited or subject to any possible arson attack. Naturally, when contemplating introducing anything to such areas (even if non-combustible), they should only be done if it does not hinder, obstruct, or narrow the route which may compromise the safe and speedy evacuation of occupants in case of a fire.

If for any reason a means of escape is blocked, or if a fire exit cannot be opened upon operation, then this is a serious matter that needs to be reported and remedied straight away, helpdesk should be rang as a priority so that remedial action can occur, no delay should ensue as it places occupants in danger. (See FSAN 4 "Helpdesk use for Fire Safety Repairs" for more help on this)

#### **5. Conclusions**

This preventive Fire Safety Guidance note is aimed at clarifying what needs to occur to keep out buildings and occupants safe, it does not intend to be burdensome on the roles or responsibilities of occupants, rather, it aims to ensure that all persons are aware of the necessities to keep everyone safe in the event of a fire.