

GUIDELINES FOR FIRE & EMERGENCY DRILL AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE FOR APARTMENT BUILDINGS

I. INTRODUCTION

In case of fire in Apartment building, safe evacuation of its occupants may present serious problems unless a plan for orderly and systematic evacuation is prepared in advance and all occupants are well drilled in the operation of such plan. These guidelines are intended to assist them in this task.

2. PREPARATION OF FIRE SAFETY PLAN

2.1 It is essential to prepare fire safety plan according to Clause C-8 (Annex - E) of part-4 of National Building Code of India,2005 duly incorporating the following important components. The Fire safety plan format and duties of responsible inmates are enclosed at **Annexure – I**.

- i) Fire Safety Director.
- ii) Deputy Fire Safety Director.
- iii) Fire Wardens and Deputy Fire Wardens.
- iv) Building Evacuation Supervisor.
- v) Fire Party.
- vi) Occupants Instructions.
- vii) Fire Command Station
- viii) Signs

2.2 The applicable parts of the approved Fire Safety Plan shall be distributed to all occupants of the building by the building management when the Fire Safety Plan has been approved by the Fire Authority.

2.3 Where the owner of the building is also an occupant of the building, he shall be responsible for the observance of these rules and the Fire Safety Plan in the same manner as an occupant.

2.4 A floor plan, representative of the majority or the floor designs of the entire building, shall be kept at the Command Post, in the main lobby, under the authority of the Fire Safety Director. One copy of a representative floor plan shall be submitted to the Fire Department with the Fire Safety plan.

3. TABLE TOP EXERCISE:

- i) Table top exercise should be conducted before conducting actual mock drill to facilitate group analysis of an emergency situation in an informal, stress free environment.
- ii) The Table top Exercise is designed for examination of operational plans, problem identification, and in-depth problem solving.
- iii) The tabletop exercise is essentially a group brainstorming session centered on a scenario narrative and problem statements or messages that are presented to members of the group.

4. DRILLS

4.1 Fire & emergency drills shall be conducted, in accordance with the Fire Safety Plan, at least once every three months for existing buildings during the first two years. Thereafter, fire & emergency drills shall be conducted at least once every six months.

4.2 All occupants of the building shall participate in the fire & emergency drill. However, occupants of the building, other than building service employees, are not required to leave the floor or use the exits during the drill.

4.3 A written record of such drills shall be kept on the premises for a three years period and shall be readily available for fire brigade inspection.

5. FIRE ROUTINE DETAILS :

A fire routine as a general rule should be based on a sequence of events. Details will be as listed below :

- a. **Alarm Operation** : Type – single or Two stage – Audible or otherwise – total or partial – Notification to central point.
- b. **Power** : Stopping central A. C., isolating power supplies.
- c. **Call the fire brigade** : Precise instructions – watchman's or receptionists instructions.
- d. **Evacuation** : (i) Two stage instructions – closing of Doors and windows, search of toilets etc. (ii) Responsible persons for carrying out the patients by various rescue methods.
- e. **Assembly** – Away from premises – under cover – mutual arrangement with nearby premises.
- f. **Roll Call** - Registers – Responsible person – Reports to Fire Brigade Officer about any missing employees/inmates.
- g. **Attacking the Fire** - Circumstances will dictate whether fire fighting operations should be attempted.
- h. **Testing of installations and equipment** :
 - i) During the Drill, the real performance of all the available fire fighting installations and equipment, viz. Hose Reel, Wet Riser, Downcomer, Yard Hydrant system, Fire Extinguishers, Emergency Lighting, Automatic Detection and alarm system, Sprinkler system, Smoke management system, Fire Doors, Water tanks, Fire Pumps, etc. have to be tested and deficiencies if any shall be recorded in the Fire and Emergency Drill Check List.
 - ii) It is the responsibility of the building Management to rectify the deficiencies immediately to ensure fire and life safety.
- i. **Demonstrations** : It may be ensured to conduct demonstrations at periodic intervals so that all the inmates are familiarized with the usage /working of Fire Extinguishers, Hose Reel, Wet riser, Fire alarm System (manual and automatic) and Sprinkler System.

6. SIGNS AND PLANS

6.1 Signs at Lift Landings

- i) A sign "IN CASE OF FIRE, USE STAIRS" shall be posted and maintained in a conspicuous place on every floor at or near the lift landing in accordance with the requirements, indicating that in case of fire, occupants shall use the stairs unless instructed otherwise. The sign shall contain a diagram showing the location of the stairways except that such diagram may be omitted, provided signs containing such diagram are posted in conspicuous places on the respective floor.

6.2 FLOOR NUMBERING SIGNS : A sign shall be posted and maintained within each stair enclosure on every floor, indicating the number of the floor.

6.3 STAIR AND ELEVATOR IDENTIFICATION SIGNS : Each stairway and each elevator shall be identified by an alphabetical letter. A sign indicating the letter of identification shall be posted and maintained at each elevator landing and on the side of the stairway door from which egress is to be made.

7. FIRE COMMAND STATION

A Fire Command Station shall be established in the lobby of the building on the entrance floor. Such command station shall be adequately illuminated.

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND FIRE ALARM

A means of communication and fire alarm for use during fire emergencies shall be provided and maintained by the owner or person in charge of the building. It is advisable to procure battery operated portable loud speakers to assist in crowd control during evacuation.

9. PERSONAL FIRE INSTRUCTION CARD

All the occupants of the building shall be given a Personal Fire Instruction Card giving the details of the floor plan and exit routes along with the instruction to be followed in the event of fire. A typical Personal Fire Instruction Card shall be as follows:

PERSONAL FIRE INSTRUCTION CARD SEAL
NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION ADDRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

NAME:.....
DESIGNATION:.....
FLOOR NO.:.....
DATE:.....

FIRE WARDEN

10. FIRE & EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS NOTICES

(a) At conspicuous positions in all parts of the building printed notices should be exhibited stating, in concise terms, the essentials of the action to be taken upon discovering a fire and on hearing the fire alarm. The fire instruction notices should be brief, clear, prominent, legible, appealing. **A model of a fire instruction Notice is as follows:**

I. FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY YOU SHOULD KNOW

- i) Two push button fire alarm boxes are provided per floor. You should read the operating instructions.
- ii) You should read the operating instructions on the body of the fire extinguishers provided on your floor.
- iii) The nearest exit is _____
- iv) Your assembly point at _____ (check with your Fire/Deputy Fire Warden).

II. FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION YOU SHOULD REPORT TO YOUR FIRE/ DEPUTY FIRE WARDEN

- i) If any exit door/route is obstructed by loose materials, goods, boxes, etc.
- ii) If any staircase door, lift lobby door does not close automatically, or does not close completely.
- iii) If any push button fire alarm point, or fire extinguisher is obstructed, damaged or apparently out of order.

III. IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE

- i) Break the glass of the nearest push button fire alarm and push the button.
- ii) Attack the fire with extinguishers provided on your floor. Take guidance from your Wardens.

- iii) Evacuate if your Warden asks you to do so.

IV. IF YOU HEAR EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS

- i) Leave the floor immediately by the south/ north staircase.
- ii) Report to your Warden, at your predetermined assembly point outside the building.
- iii) Do not try to use lifts.
- iv) Do not go to cloakroom.
- v) Do not run or shout.
- vi) Do not stop to collect personal belongings.
- vii) Keep the lift lobby and staircase doors shut.
- viii) Your assembly point at _____ (check with your Fire/Deputy Fire Warden).

12. EVALUATING FIRE & EMERGENCY DRILL PLANS

(a) The ultimate evaluation of fire & emergency drill and emergency plans has two factors.

- i) Performance of the staff in a fire incident in an Apartment Building.
- ii) Effectiveness of the behavior in accordance with the fire & emergency drills or the fire emergency plan.

(b) The successful evacuation of the inmates to reach a place of safety within the floor viz., protected staircase, protected lift lobby, Refuge area or Assembly point outside the building within reasonable time (2 ½ minutes) before the spread of smoke, fire and heat is the essence of evaluating the fire & emergency drill.

(c) Fire safety education and practice of evacuation procedures by the employees/inmates will determine the success of a fire & emergency drill in an Apartment Building.