African Population and
Health Research Center

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

Policy Compliance Officer	Director of Operations
Approval Authority	APHRC Board of Directors
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Revision History	Date

INTRODUCTION

The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is committed to ensuring a safe work environment for all its staff, visitors, service providers, and others by maintaining a system to prevent and respond to potential fire hazards. The APHRC fire safety policy has been developed guided by several policy frameworks as below:

1) Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA), Kenya, (amended 2015).
2) Occupational Safety and Health Act, Kenya, 2007.
3) Public Health Act - Cap. 242, Kenya.
4) Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines: General EHS Guidelines, World Bank Group, 2007

This policy explains the measures that APHRC will take to:

- Reduce or eliminate the potential for fires to occur; and
- To protect the life of staff, visitors, partners and others within the Center's premises, as well as preserve property should fires occur.

PURPOSE

APHRC recognizes that its operations can have direct and indirect impacts on the safety of all its staff, visitors, service providers, and the communities in which it operates. The organization's objective is to responsibly manage the fire risks associated with its operations in order to minimize impacts on the environment and all the stakeholders.

The Fire Safety Policy integrates a philosophy of environmental sustainability into all the organization's activities and to establish and promote sound safety practices in our operations.

POLICY STATEMENT

APHRC is committed to ensuring a safe environment for staff health and wellbeing. In the event of fire, the safety of life will override all other considerations, such as saving property and extinguishing the fire.

DEFINITIONS AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to all APHRC staff, partners, visitors, and service providers. For the purposes of this policy, the term:

- "**Staff**" refers to all persons who have signed a contract with APHRC to work in any capacity at any given time (on regular or temporary terms, interns, volunteers, and consultants), including outsourced staff.
- "**Partners**" refers to individuals or institutions with whom APHRC has a contractual agreement to deliver all or part of a project. It does not refer to lead institutions on a grant where APHRC is a sub-awardee.
- "**Visitor**" refers to an individual(s) who comes to APHRC and spends time with, or stays with others within the premises including the offices, meeting and conference rooms, grounds, and the 'Ulwazi Place', for official purposes, capacity strengthening activities or personal social activities.

- "**Service provider**" refers to a third party organization or individual that provides services to APHRC, such as, legal, real estate, information communication technology, security, transport, storage, and processing services.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy is guided by the five fundamental fire safety Common Principles for preventing fire events and managing their impact. These Common Principles include: Prevention, Detection and Communication, Occupant Protection, Containment and Extinguishment. Other considerations are:

i. If a fire is discovered, the alarm will be raised immediately. This should be the first action taken upon discovery of any fire, however small. All employees are empowered to take this action if they believe there is a fire and no authority should be sought from any other person. The practice will always support employees who operate the fire alarm system in good faith, regardless of whether or not it is ultimately determined that a fire existed.

ii. Responsibility for summoning the fire brigade is outlined in the fire procedures. The person responsible is the facility manager or any fire marshal.

iii. APHRC does not require persons to attempt to extinguish a fire, but extinguishing action may be taken if it is safe to do so.

iv. Immediate evacuation of the building must take place as soon as the alarm sounds. All occupants, upon evacuation, should report to the predetermined assembly points.

v. Staff should remain as calm as possible and help other staff, visitors, persons with disabilities or contractors on the premises needing assistance to evacuate.

vi. Where possible and safe to do so, check all rooms (in particular toilets) to ensure no one is inside or trapped.

vii. Re-entry of the building is strictly prohibited until the fire brigade officer in charge declares it is safe to do so. Silencing of the fire alarm system should never be taken as an indication that it is safe to re-enter the building.

viii. Employees should report any concerns regarding fire procedures, so that APHRC can investigate and take remedial action if necessary.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCEDURES

Preventive Measures

Our policy is to:

- identify, in carrying out our normal risk assessment procedure, those activities that require a safe system of work;
- identify safe methods of work for these activities; where necessary, these will be written formal safe systems of work;
- implement these systems using the expertise of our employees involved in the work activities; and
- Monitor the workings of the safe systems through workplace inspections and reviewing accident/incident statistics derived from our accident reporting procedure.

The person responsible for managing our safe systems of work is the Facilities Manager or his/her representative.

The Center can only ensure the success of these safe systems with the full cooperation of all our employees.

The aims of the fire risk assessment will be to:

- Identify any fire hazards;
- Reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low a level as reasonably practicable; and
- Decide what physical fire precautions and arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the building if a fire does start.

The Health and Safety Committee is responsible for carrying out fire risk assessments. . The Facilities Manager (or their representative) overseeing APHRC premises will ensure that the alarm system is serviced on an annual basis and that the fire system and fire extinguishers are serviced based on manufacturers' recommendations.

Protective measures

APHRC will, in consultation with employees and their representatives:

i. Ensure any deaf or hearing impaired persons on the premises are aware of the activation of the fire alarm, and that persons with disabilities are given assistance to evacuate the building.
ii. Appoint persons to be responsible for specific procedures in the event of fire, including:
  a. The person responsible for summoning the fire brigade
  b. Fire marshals
  c. Those responsible for carrying out roll calls or supervising evacuation assembly points
  d. Fire incident controllers responsible for liaising with the fire brigade upon arrival.
iii. Regularly stage fire evacuation drills.
iv. Inspect the means of escape.
v. Test and inspect fire-fighting equipment and fire warning systems.
vi. Provide adequate fire safety training to employees, plus specialist training to those with special responsibilities.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

The following procedure shall be followed in the event of fire:

i. Any person who discovers a fire, however small, should activate the nearest and/or safest fire alarm.
ii. Do not rely on automatic fire warning systems. Anyone who discovers a fire should immediately alert the person responsible for summoning the fire brigade. In addition they should summon the fire brigade without delay by the usual method as automatic methods of transmission can fail.

iii. Only attempt to extinguish a fire if it is safe to do so. Guidance on the circumstances under which firefighting should be avoided or discontinued is included in staff fire safety training.

iv. Evacuate the building as soon as the alarm sounds. Employees should be familiar with the procedure through the staging of regular fire evacuation drills. Do not wait to conclude meetings or telephone calls or to collect belongings.

v. Switch off any equipment which, if left unattended, may itself constitute a fire hazard such as printers etc.

vi. As you make your escape, close doors, particularly those designated as fire-resisting doors.

vii. Report to the predetermined assembly points. Do not re-enter the building unless the fire brigade officer in charge declares it is safe to.

viii. Fire wardens must check that each area of the building has been evacuated and report this to the nominated persons at the designated evacuation assembly points.

ix. The fire incident controller needs to liaise with the fire brigade on attendance and arrange such assistance as the fire brigade may require.

In summary, in the event of fire, the three most important actions are the following:

- To raise the alarm.
- To summon the fire brigade.
- To evacuate the building — attempts to extinguish the fire should only be made if it is safe to do so.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

Full records of fire precautions should be kept in the fire log. This information should be entered by the Facilities Manager or their representative and should include records for:

- Fire drills: the times and dates of drills and the time between sounding the alarm and the last person leaving the building.
- Fire alarm tests: the times and dates of tests.
- Fire-fighting equipment, alarms and fittings such as emergency lighting: the times and dates of inspections, of replacements and of servicing.
- Training: times and dates of training events, who attended and what was covered.

The person responsible for ensuring that the staff nominal rolls are kept up to date is the Facilities Manager or their representative.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

All staff should be encouraged to read the policy on fire safety and for new staff it will form part of their induction process. All members of staff should be aware of the procedures in case of a fire. External participants in meetings hosted at the APHRC Campus / Ulwazi place will be informed of fire arrangements before the meeting gets underway..

The Safety and Health Committee is responsible for organizing and coordinating fire training.

All new and existing staff should know:

- Who is responsible for ensuring the correct fire procedure is carried out;

- Who the fire marshals are;
- The location and usage of all fire extinguishers and where special extinguishers (e.g. those suitable for use on electrical equipment) are located;
- The location of "break glass" fire alarm points;
- The emergency fire evacuation procedures;
- How to use the practice communication systems to make announcements; and
- How to use the internal telephone systems to call for the fire brigade.

In-house training sessions for existing staff shall be conducted annually. The fire safety training should include instruction on fire prevention, on what to do in the event of a fire and on firefighting. Records should be kept in the fire log of who attended each session. Additional training should be available for fire safety wardens. Fire drills will be held annually.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following individuals have specific roles in relation to the Policy as below:

1) The Board of Directors
   a. Approval of this policy and any revisions.
   b. Ensure that relevant operational guidelines are developed and maintained.

2) Executive Leadership Team
   a. Regularly review and further develop the policy.
   b. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that APHRC exercises duty of care for the sustainability of the environment, in line with the policy.

3) Director of Operations
   a. Disseminate the policy to all APHRC staff, volunteers, consultants, collaborators, and other service providers. The policy will also be included in the APHRC new starter induction kit, and links to the same will be available, through the APHRC Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.
   b. Send annual reminders to all concerned parties, emphasizing the importance of compliance with this policy.

4) Facilities Manager
   a. Ensure staff are trained on fire safety annually.
   b. Ensure there is a regular audit for fire safety.
   c. ensure fire safety equipment is serviced regularly.

5) All APHRC staff
   a. Keep abreast and comply with the principles outlined in this policy.
   b. Report any breaches to the policy to the Director of Operations within 24 hours of being aware.

NON-COMPLIANCE

Any individual who identifies a lack of compliance with this policy should report the same to the Director of Operations through the channels outlined in the Whistle Blowing Policy. The

Director of Operations will assess the situation and take the necessary action, including resolving the situation at hand and taking disciplinary actions against any perpetrators, if necessary.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Director of Operations will monitor the implementation of this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

The fire policy will be reviewed after any fire-related incident or change in guidelines. All fire-related incidents, including false alarms and "near misses", should be investigated thoroughly by the Facilities Manager and the fire risk assessment amended as necessary. Professional fire safety advice should be obtained for this review where required.

Changes arising from the results of any review should be communicated to staff and all persons concerned at the earliest opportunity.

This policy is also subject to revision whenever legal, pragmatic, or technological developments make revision necessary. In any case, the policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

RELATED POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

This policy will be appended to the "Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual" and will be enforced alongside the following related policy documents:

1) APHRC Policy on Safety and Health.
2) APHRC Safeguarding Policy.
3) APHRC Travel Policy guidelines.
4) APHRC Whistle Blowing Policy.