6.6 Fire Prevention

As an employee of the NEAT Veterinary Hospital, you share a duty to help prevent fire. Always be aware of the danger of fire.

The practice manager will arrange to have the fire extinguishers checked at regular intervals.

Important points to remember:

- **No smoking** inside the building.
- Note the position of all fire extinguishers in the building.
- Ensure that small fans or single bar heaters are switched off when you leave a room.
- When leaving work each day, take the time to check your work area. **Turn off lights and any electrical equipment.**
- **Label and report** any faulty electrical problems to our practice manager.
- **Never** use damaged electrical cords or cables.
- Handle and store chemicals according to Material Safety Data Sheets, as some are explosive.

6.6.1 Fire training — Drills

Training sessions will cover the following subjects:

- Fire prevention
- Fire and evacuation procedures.
- Use of portable extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets as appropriate.

A fire drill and/or evacuation exercise should be carried out at least once a year.

The drill need not necessarily be on a large scale. Irrespective of the scope of the drill/exercise it should simulate a fire emergency situation to test the following:

- **Action taken by staff**  Communication system  Existing fire and evacuation procedures

6.6.2 Exits

It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure that all exits from any point within the hospital building to a place of safety are not restricted in any way.

Should any impediment be noticed in exits or corridors to exits, immediate steps should be taken to clear the exits and prevent a recurrence.
Such inspections should check that all fire fighting equipment is accessible. A floor plan of the veterinary hospital will be displayed in each area of the clinic, showing nearest exit and position of fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets.

**NO PERSONS SHOULD ENTER THE HOSPITAL DURING ALARM STATUS**

### 6.6.3 In case of fire

**REMEMBER R — A — C — E**

- **R** - REMOVE clients/visitors, patients and fellow staff from any immediate danger.
- **A** - ALARM — alert the fire brigade — dial 000.
  - Give: Your name, and the name and address of the hospital. The exact location of the fire in the hospital and the hospital itself. The type of material burning and the extent of the fire.
- **C** - CONTAIN the fire but do not take any unnecessary risks.
- **E** - EXTINGUISH — if trained and it is safe to do so.

### 6.6.4 Evacuation procedures

There are three types of evacuation:

- outside the affected room
- beyond the fire doors
- to the outside of the hospital

If in doubt — **EVACUATE** - do not take the slightest risk with human or animal life.

- The decision to evacuate is the responsibility of the person in charge at that time, usually the veterinarian.
- The evacuation assembly areas are the back lawn and the car park. Be familiar with all exits.
- Human lives are the priority
- Animals will only be evacuated if this is considered safe to do so by the person in charge usually the veterinarian or practice manager.
- The patients are most likely to be frightened by the smoke and noise, so will need very careful handling. Security is very important.
- If patients have any visitors present they should NOT be allowed to evacuate the patient. The visitors should be asked to go to the evacuation assembly area.
- Impress on the visitors the importance of staying in the assembly area until everyone who was in the building has been accounted for.
- If it is safe to do so, the person in charge will check all rooms and confined spaces for people/animals seeking refuge.
- The person in charge will also turn off the power, anaesthetic, oxygen and other medical gases but leave the lights on.
- Do not go home.
6.6.5 Important points to remember

If you suspect fire, or smell burning, report it immediately. Never assume that someone else has done so.

- Try to keep calm and act quickly. Remember your drill.
- If you are required to give directions do so calmly and in your normal voice, but be firm.
- Advise the veterinarian/practice manager/senior nurse. Notify the appropriate emergency service and
  necessary hospital personnel immediately.
- Remove all clients/visitors and patients from the immediate danger.
- Ambulatory patients are to be escorted by a staff member to a safe area. Restraint using leads or carry
  cages ensures patients can be escorted safely.
- Non-ambulatory patients will be carried/assisted to safety or, alternatively, dragged to safety on towels or
  blankets. The loaded towels are to be grasped and pulled from behind the patient’s head. These patients
  should be suitably restrained also.
- Keep a list of patients and staff to check that all are evacuated.
- A member of staff (or visitor) should be appointed to wait at the front driveway to direct emergency
  services. Memorise location of the extinguishers. Where practicable, close doors and windows to
  confine fire and smoke. A wet blanket may be used at
  the base of a door to keep smoke contained, eliminate draughts and thus counter the rapid spread of
  smoke and fire.

Remember: Only the fire brigade can determine whether it is safe to reoccupy the building.