

**VA NORTHEAST OHIO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
Louis Stokes Cleveland DVAMC
Medical Research Service
Subcommittee on Research Safety Policy**

Effective Date: DECEMBER 14, 2022

Policy Title: FIRE AND FIRE DRILL POLICY

Policy Number: SRS--012

Policy Version: .10

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1. PURPOSE: To identify the proper procedures to follow in the event of a fire, drill or actual, within the Medical Research Service area. It is designed to protect employees, visitors, and patients.
2. POLICY: All employees of Medical Research Service will follow the instructions given in this policy in the event of a fire. Fire drills will be treated with the same seriousness and acuity as a fire. Employees will respond to all drills specific to their work area.
3. DEFINITIONS:
 - a. Ext. 2222 – An Emergency Line tied to the VA Emergency Phone Operator.
 - b. PA System: Public Address System.
 - c. RSC/CHO – Research Safety Coordinator/Chemical Hygiene Officer.
4. ACTIVATION of the FIRE ALARM SYSTEM:
 - a. Call FIRE/EMERGENCY, extension 2222. Inform the operator:
 - (1) The type of emergency.
 - (2) Room Number.
 - (3) Service.
 - (4) Your name and extension.

If the Fire Alarm System is down, the operator will initiate the internal alert system. "Mr. RED", followed by the room number, will be announced via the PA System every two minutes until the fire has been contained.

- b. Fire Alarm Pull Box, Wade Park facility – When pulled it will activate a four-cycle alarm.

This includes:

- (1) The Fire Alarm Siren.

(2) Audio Location Identification at Wade Park:

- (a) RESEARCH, FIRST FLOOR
- (b) RESEARCH, SECOND FLOOR
- (c) RESEARCH, BASEMENT (Animal Research Facility and Animal Surgical Suite)
- (d) BASEMENT, WEST (Research Laboratory Space and Functional Electrical Stimulation “FES” Center)
- (e) BASEMENT, REHAB MEDICINE (Motion Studies Lab and “C” series rooms)

(3) Strobe Lights.

After four cycles, the fire alarm siren and audio location identification will be limited to the floor of origination. The strobe lights will remain activated throughout the entire medical center until the Cleveland Fire Department renders the situation “clear”.

(4) Hearing-impaired Pager

Hearing-impaired personnel must wear an emergency pager while on VA property. This pager will vibrate when the fire alarm system is activated; the screen will display the affected area.

The OSHA Standard on Employee Alarm Systems:

1910.165(b)(1)

The employee alarm system shall provide warning for necessary emergency action as called for in the emergency action plan, or for reaction time for safe escape of employees from the workplace or the immediate work area, or both.

1910.165(b)(2)

The employee alarm shall be capable of being perceived above ambient noise or light levels by all employees in the affected portions of the workplace. Tactile devices may be used to alert those employees who would not otherwise be able to recognize the audible or visual alarm

5. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

a. When a fire that cannot be contained occurs in a laboratory, office, etc., the **RACE** Procedure must be implemented:

- (**R**)emove yourself and others from danger.
- (**A**)ctivate an Alarm Pull Box or call extension 2222.
- (**C**)onfine the fire by closing doors.
- (**E**)vacuate personnel from the building. (See Section 6, EVACUATION)

b. When a fire that can be contained (i.e., within a paperbasket) occurs in a laboratory, office, etc., personnel must use a fire extinguisher and implement the **PASS** Procedure:

- (**P**)ull the pin.
- (**A**)im at the base of the fire.

- (S)queeze the trigger.
- (S)weep back and forth until the fire is out.

Dry Chemical Fire Extinguishers, Class A-B-C are found within the Research Building. These can be used to extinguish three basic types of fires:

- (1) Type A: Fires that consist of ordinary combustible materials (paper, wood, cloth, etc.)
- (2) Type B: Fires that consist of flammable liquids, oil grease, and flammable gases.
- (3) Type C: Fires that consist of energized Class A or Class B materials involving electrical equipment.

After the fire has been extinguished, the employee must call VA Police at extension 64207. The site of the fire will be inspected by the VA Fire Marshall to ensure that the fire has been completely extinguished. Also, the employee and RSC/CHO must complete a Fire Incident Report.

NOTE: Care must be used in operating an extinguisher because the horn becomes extremely cold and can freeze flesh upon contact with the skin.

6. EVACUATION:

a. All employees must evacuate the area which the fire alarm system has indicated. Employees are instructed to exit their area horizontally* by passing through the closest set of fire doors, which automatically close when the fire alarm system is activated. Elevators are non-operational in the event of a fire.

* The second floor/research does not have horizontal evacuation into a neighboring zone. Evacuation must occur via one of two stairways on either end of the second floor down to the first floor/research.

b. Employees will remain outside the fire doors until VA Police or the Cleveland Fire Department issue further instructions.

c. If a fire occurs on the second – sixth floors, employees should evacuate horizontally into the next fire zone. If further evacuation is needed, the fire department will direct employees on how to leave the building.

7. FIRE DRILL:

a. In the event of a drill, “Mr. Red Drill” is announced via the PA System, followed by the room number. The Fire Alarm System may be activated simultaneously with the PA System announcement.

Transmitters will send an alert to pagers worn by hearing-impaired personnel. These pagers will vibrate; the screen will indicate the affected area.

b. Employees must follow the **RACE** Procedure outlined in Section 5, Emergency Procedures, excluding the activation of an alarm.

c. The Fire Alarm System will be inactivated at the conclusion of a fire drill. See Section 8.

8. INACTIVATION OF ALARM SYSTEM: The Fire Alarm System will be inactivated as follows:

a. Verbal announcement made via the PA System:

(1) "Mr. Red All Clear".

(2) "Mr. Red Drill All Clear".

b. The fire alarm siren, audio location identification, and strobe lights cease.

9. ENGINEERING CONTROLS:

a. Fire Alarm Pull Boxes – Fire alarm pull boxes are located at every stairwell entrance, at all points of egress from the hospital, and near the Research elevator on each level. Pull box activation transmits the alarm to the Cleveland Fire Department.

b. Fire Extinguishers – Fire extinguishers are located in all research laboratories, and in fire closets located throughout Medical Research Service. Employees are instructed to be familiar with the location of the closest fire extinguisher in their work area. Fire extinguishers must be easily located and remain unobstructed at all times.

c. Fire Doors – Fire Doors are located throughout Medical Research. Magnetic locks on these doors are released when a Fire Alarm Pull Box is activated. They provide two-hour fire protection with seals to prevent smoke from passing from one zone to another.

d. Fire Sprinkler System – A fire sprinkler system is an active fire protection measure, consisting of a water supply, providing adequate pressure and flow rate to a water distribution piping system, onto which fire sprinklers are connected. Sprinklers are located in all laboratories that house hazardous materials, i.e., Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulated hazardous chemicals, biological agents, radioactive materials, and select agents (used for biochemical warfare). All items on shelves must have a minimum vertical clearance of 18 inches from the sprinkler heads. This ensures maximum control/suppression of a fire.

e. Storage – The 18-inch clearance rule, noted in part d, also applies to the distance between storage and heating pipes and light fixtures. Distance from these two heat sources will help to prevent unnecessary fires.

10. ENGINEERING SERVICES:

Electrical power and the ventilation system are the responsibility of Engineering Service.

a. The emergency generator will be activated if electrical power is lost for an extended period of time due to a fire.

b. Contamination control is handled by the Environmental Management Service. This will entail the cleaning up of any smoke and/or water damage. If the air handling system is functional, all air filters in the affected areas will be changed.

11. FIRES INVOLVING RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL (RAM):

a. Refer to Radiation Emergency Response, which is posted in all RAM laboratories.

b. Notify the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) at extension 63096.

12. REFERENCES: Medical Center Policy MCP OOS-04, Fire Prevention and Management Plan.

13. RESCISSIONS: The rescission date for this policy is December 13, 2027.

14. FOLLOW UP: RSC/CHO.