

What is a Floor Warden?

It is the person designated with responsibility for life safety for a floor.

(On multi-tenant floors, one floor warden should be designated per suite, as the position requires full access to the suite and sufficient authority to manage and direct occupants during an emergency.)

Legal framework: National Fire Code of Canada, B.C. Fire Services Act. Under this legislation, we are required to appoint Floor Wardens.

The Floor Warden should be a person that is present during most regular business hours.

The Deputy Floor Warden:

1. Will assist the Floor Warden, as noted below.
2. If the Floor Warden is not present in case of a fire, the Deputy Floor Warden assumes the duties of the Floor Warden.

This information package contains information on the following topics:

- A. **General** duties of a Floor Warden
- B. **Specific** duties during a Fire Alarm
- C. **Fire Drills**

A. General duties of a Floor Warden (proactive – pre-emergency role)

FIRE PREVENTION

Identify and prevent potential fire hazards, such as:

- Overloaded electrical circuits (i.e. vending machine);
- Worn extension cords, or multiple extension cords used in series;
- Overheating equipment;
- Kitchen appliances (all kitchen appliances should be equipped with automatic shut off);
- Unsafe electrical installations.

Ensure your office conducts its business operations in a safe manner:

- Make sure fire exit routes remain clear of obstructions (ensure there are no file boxes blocking exit doors, or furniture placed in narrow corridors).
- Avoid accumulation of combustible materials (i.e. chemicals, flammable liquids).
- Avoid ignition sources (extension cords, overheating equipment).
- Ensure firefighting equipment (i.e. fire extinguishers) is easily accessible and in good condition.
- Ensure the First Aid Kit is easily accessible and regularly replenished.
- Ensure that suite entrance doors (which act as smoke separation) or stairwell doors (which act as fire separation) are not wedged open at any time.

Report any building maintenance issues to the building management office:

- Report burnt out exit signs, emergency lights, stairwell lights.
- Report malfunctioning door closers on entrance doors, stairwell doors.
- Report missing fire extinguishers or fire hoses that have become unracked.

INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Maintain an ongoing awareness of who is present in the office:

- Establish a simple system for tracking who is regularly working in the space.
- Encourage teams to notify you when visitors are expected or when team members are working remotely or off-site.
- Maintain a list of employees who may need evacuation assistance and review it regularly for accuracy.

Communicate with all staff members to your floor:

- Make sure they know what to do if they discover a fire.
- Make sure they know the fire exit routes and the designated assembly area.
- Make sure they know what to do if they hear the fire alarm.

Ensure the building's Fire Safety Plan is kept in a central location accessible to all staff.

Encourage fire prevention practices.

B. Specific duties of Floor Warden in case of a Fire Alarm

EVACUATION

The floor Warden is responsible for the orderly evacuation of all persons from a floor. This means:

- Upon hearing the fire alarm, go to the elevator lobby immediately.
- Meet the Deputy Fire Warden or, if not present, appoint someone else.
- Check if exit stairwells are clear of fire and smoke and choose alternate route if necessary.
- Begin evacuations:
 - Direct occupants to use the stairwells **only** (do not use the elevators).
 - Ensure both stairwells are used equally to ensure a balanced loading of the stairwells.
 - Direct all people to the assembly area, located to the left of the main entrance across the alley on West Hastings (Northwest side of the building) and instruct them to stay there.
- Direct the Deputy Floor Warden to systematically check all rooms on your floor to ensure that all people have left the floor. Make sure to knock on locked doors.
 - Close all doors, but do not lock doors
 - Remember to check the washrooms.
- Monitor the stairwell doors to ensure no-one comes back in.
- After everyone has left, evacuate yourself via the stairwell.
Note: The Floor Warden is the last person off the floor.
- Report to the Fire Safety Director (FSD) and confirm your evacuation has been fully completed and all persons are accounted for.
- Remain at the assembly area to provide updates as necessary.
- Liaise with Fire Safety Director in the main lobby as necessary.

ASSISTANCE

Control the fire. If there is a fire on your floor, attempt to fight the fire only if the fire is small.

- Use fire extinguishers. Aim at the base of the fire.
- Close doors to control the spread of fire and smoke (but do not lock doors).

Provide assistance to:

- Mobility impaired persons (i.e. wheelchair or on crutches):
- Injured persons
 - i. Provide First Aid to injured persons as needed
 - ii. If possible, help evacuate injured persons
- Direct all mobility impaired persons to your designated area of refuge (typically the stairwell landing) and remain with them until safely evacuated **or** instructed to leave by emergency personnel or the Fire Safety Director.
- Communicate your location by either:
 - i. Directing the deputy Fire Warden to communicate your location to the Fire Safety Director, located in the lobby - OR -
 - ii. Using the emergency fire telephone to call the main fire panel station.

COMMUNICATION

The Floor Warden is the first point of contact with the Fire Safety Director (FSD). The FSD will be stationed in the lobby, unless it is unsafe to do so.

Communicate clearly, calmly, and concisely to ensure messages are understood.

The Floor Warden should communicate the following information to the FSD:

- Evacuation Status
 - Confirm whether the floor is fully evacuated or if anyone remains inside.
- Persons Requiring Assistance
 - Identify the number and exact location of any mobility-impaired or injured individuals waiting in the Area of Refuge or elsewhere.
- Hazards or Obstacles
 - Report any fire, blocked exits, smoke, fire, or other safety concerns encountered on the floor.

When in-person communication with the FSD is not possible, Fire Wardens should use the **emergency telephone** (located in the elevator lobby of your floor) to communicate their location and status to the Fire Crew or the FSD:

- Keep the communication brief and to the point.
- Avoid using the fire phone for routine updates or non-urgent information to keep lines open for critical communication.
- Only trained personnel, such as Floor Wardens or designated emergency team members, should use the fire phone.
- It should be used **only during an actual emergency**, and **only when necessary**

Do not use the fire phone for drills, general communication, or non-urgent situations.

OTHER COMMUNICATION:

- Listen for instructions and updates via the PA system
- Confirm false alarms only if the entire floor has been checked and you are absolutely positive that the alarm is false (i.e. vandals activating pull station).

C. Fire Drills

A fire drill is a practice run of a building evacuation. Fire drills are scheduled and announced in advance, so that occupants are aware it is a practice run, and not a real emergency.

Conducting a fire drill has the following objectives:

- Make occupants familiar with the sound of the fire bells (first stage, second stage).
- It forces them to consider their actions in the event the fire was real.
- Practice the evacuation (use the stairwells, exit doors) for those willing to participate.
- Test procedures and readiness for floor wardens and fire safety directors.

Participation in a fire drill is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged. Previous fire drills have shown that they can be completed rather quickly, with everyone getting back up to their floors within approximately 20 minutes from the start of the drill.

After the fire drill we will debrief, share our observations, and, if necessary, identify corrective measures.

Previous fire drills have resulted in the following observations:

1. Unequal loading of the two stairwells. People tend to gravitate to the north stairwell, resulting in some congestion.
2. Some people exiting through the main lobby (instead of going straight out to the street) or tracking back through the building.
3. Some people wandering off, going for coffee, instead of staying at the dedicated gathering point.

Further information

Further information is available from the following sources:

1. **Fire Safety Plan** digital copy for 900 West Hastings is available per request.
2. Contact the building management office at 604-688-7900.