

Section 13: Fire Safety - Fire Prevention

In addition to the specific areas listed under Section 26 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003, this plan will also take into considerations other relevant areas including the substantial volume of work carried out by the Fire Authority officers in fire safety and prevention areas and assessing the fire safety certificate applications under the Building Control Acts / Regulations on behalf of Kilkenny County Council Building Control Authority.

The primary role of Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service in relation to fire safety is to reduce the number of fire incidents occurring in its functional area, limit damage and prevent escalation and extinguish fires where fires occur. Under Section 18(4) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 *“A Fire Authority may give advice in relation to fire safety to the owner or occupier of any premises or to any person having control over any premises.”*

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service fire prevention personnel advise on current fire safety standards required for proposed and existing developments and Fire officers also monitor and enforce compliance with the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.

13.1 Fire Prevention

Our approach to fire risk management is through a fire prevention / protection programme. To date we have completed inspection programmes based on a risk management basis.

The Fire Prevention process is based on four key areas of intervention -

- Engagement,
- Education,
- Engineering,
- Enforcement.

The following are discretionary functions under Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 -

13.1.1 Providing advice to Kilkenny County Council Planning Authority

Under Section 13 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003, the Fire Authority provides advice on commercial and multiple housing planning applications. The number of

commercial and multiple housing applications assessed and recommendations given by the Fire Authority under Planning Acts for the past 5-years was as follows -

| Year | Number of Planning Referrals |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2017 | 90 |
| 2018 | 76 |
| 2019 | 68 |
| 2020 | 37 |
| 2021 | 19 |

**Table 13.1 Number of Planning Referrals
(Assessed and Recommendations Made)**

13.1.2 Provision of advice under Section 18 of the Fire Service Act 1981 and 2003

The Fire Authority provides advice on Fire Safety and inspection of existing public premises under Section 18 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003, and associated Regulations. Existing public premises include Places of Public Assembly, Nursing Homes, Hostels and other high-risk premises in the City and County. Inspections are prioritised, particularly nursing homes and other premises providing residential care and other residential accommodation in City and the County of Kilkenny on an ongoing cyclical basis.

To ensure that there is a sharing of information for operational readiness between fire prevention and operations, particularly for high-risk premises, there are linkages in place, e.g. *the process recently followed when dealing with new risk premises* included -

- Inspections carried out by Fire Prevention Officers,
- Visit by the local fire brigade to these new high-risk premises e.g. *extension to St Luke's General Hospital,*
- Visit by the local fire brigade to local nursing homes,
- Facilitate and promote visits to any other risk premises within the brigade's area.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service fire prevention officers hold fire safety certificate / fire prevention clinics under Section 18(5) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. These are predominantly held on a weekly basis and/or upon request in Fire Station HQ.

This process has been a huge success as it has aided greatly in reducing -

- 1) Our Fire Safety Certificate invalidation rates and,
- 2) Our Fire Safety Certificate refusal rates and,
- 3) Expand the knowledge of the professional cadre within this construction industry.

This has produced a positive culture of compliance amongst the business / commercial community and the professional bodies (Registered Architect / Chartered Engineer) in relation to fire safety in the City and County of Kilkenny.

- When developments are being developed by either owner-occupiers or speculatively – the fire authority co-utilises this to initiate requirements under Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 – this entails a focused review of all existing granted fire safety certificate applications for the risk premises and then the follow up -
- Ordering of Section 22(4) PIP (Pre-Incident Plans) and,
- Section 22 reviews of operational fire officers on the ground in and through the risk premises and,
- Section 29 fire hydrant status confirmations by local fire brigades, this consolidating 'local knowledge' and referring all fire hydrant defects to Irish Water (IW).

The fire prevention objectives in non-domestic premises are primarily addressed by way of inspection / audit and the giving of advice. There are a number of different work streams that may give rise to the need for an inspection. These work streams can be considered in two-main categories.

1) **Reactive**

These arise as a result of -

- Incidents,
- Complaints,
- Applications,
 - Directly to the Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service (*e.g. Fire Safety Certificates*),
 - Notification of Application to others (*e.g. Court Licensing*),
 - Referrals
 - From an external agency (*TULSA, HIQA, HSA, HSE etc.*)
 - From internal sections of Kilkenny County Council (*Housing, Roads (petrol storage tanks) Planning, Environment, Building Control etc.*),

- By Request,
- By Owner / Agent / Person in Control.

2) **Pro-active**

These are the inspections instigated by Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service. These have traditionally been carried out on a focused 'high-risk' target group (e.g. *Nursing homes / Hospitals / Crèches*).

It is the policy of the Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service to assess premises that come to our attention via all work streams above on the basis of risk and to target resources at the premises that present the greater risk to life.

Where the Fire Authority receives HAP referrals from the Housing Authority – the fire authority inspects all these requests in accordance with the nominated codes of practice and the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 – This has entailed certain premises ultimately being served by Warning Notices (under Section 18(5)) and Fire Safety Notices (under Section 20) – This vital linkage within Kilkenny County Council has served well to improve fire safety within the rented accommodation sector.

Where the Fire Authority receives TUSLA referrals regarding creche and early years risk premises - the fire authority inspects all these requests in accordance with the nominated codes of practice and the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. This has entailed certain premises being served with Warning Notices (under Section 18(5)) and Fire Safety Notices (under Section 20) – This vital inter-agency linkage has continued to serve this sector well – thus improving and enhancing fire safety within these risk premises.

Where the Fire Authority receives fire safety complaints / expressions of concern from members of the public regarding fire safety in premises – these are formally acknowledged, delegated and actioned by the Rostered Senior Fire Officer (RSFO) on-duty at that time – this reactive and responsive role has led to the implementation of our 5-E's Safety Paradigm – Engagement, Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Emergency response.

Fire Prevention officers are and will continue to engage with these premises to regularise the non-compliance and to address the fire safety deficiencies with premises specific schedule of improvement works to be undertaken over a pre-agreed timescale.

13.1.3 Inspections under Section 24 of the Fire Service Act 1981 and 2003

The Fire Authority carries out inspections of licensed premises under Section 24 of Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003, and associated Licensing Acts.

The number of licence applications dealt with by Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service in the past 5-years is as follows – these include renewal of Public Licences, Dance Licences, Transfer of Publican Licences, Club, Gaming / Lottery, Ad Interim, Occasional, Restaurant Licences -

| Year | Number of Licence Applications Received | Number of Licence Applications Dealt with |
|------|---|---|
| 2021 | 76 | 76 |
| 2020 | 87 | 87 |
| 2019 | 85 | 85 |
| 2018 | 126 | 126 |
| 2017 | 88 | 88 |

Table 13.2 Number of Licence Applications Received and Dealt with

| Year | Number of Dance Licence Applications Received | Number of Club Licence Applications Received | Number of Restaurant Licence Applications Received | Number of Public House Licence Applications Received | Number of Lottery Licence Applications Received |
|------|---|--|--|--|---|
| 2021 | 25 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 16 |
| 2020 | 22 | 12 | 9 | 4 | 21 |
| 2019 | 27 | 16 | 5 | 5 | 17 |
| 2018 | 45 | 15 | 9 | 8 | 16 |
| 2017 | 29 | 14 | 9 | 3 | 6 |

Table 13.3 Number and Type of Licence Applications Received and Dealt with

13.1.4 Inspections under Dangerous Substance Act 1972

The Fire Authority carries out inspections of petroleum installations, retail and bulk, under Dangerous Substances Act, 1972, and under S.I. No. 630 of 2019 - Dangerous Substances (Flammable Liquids and Fuels Retail Stores) Regulations and 2019 S.I. No 631 of 2019- Dangerous Substances (Flammable Liquids and Fuels Distribution and Commercial Supply Stores) Regulations, 2019 and other associated Regulations -

| Year | Number of Licence Applications Received |
|-------------|--|
| 2021 | 7 |
| 2020 | 8 |
| 2019 | 3 |
| 2018 | 0 |
| 2017 | 3 |

Table 13.4 Number of Dangerous Substance Licence Applications Received

13.1.5 During Performance Inspections on Places of Public Assembly

During Performance Inspections are carried out by Fire Service personnel under the Fire Safety in Places of Assembly (Ease of Escape) Regulations 1985, S.I 249 of 1985. During performance inspections shall be carried out in public places of assembly in Kilkenny, currently they are carried out post complaint, on a risk basis and where appropriate in consultation with An Garda Síochána (AGS).

13.1.6 Large Crowd Events

Fire Service personnel work with other agencies (An Garda Síochána, Health Services Executive, Local Authority, etc.) in pre-planning for large crowd events. In the absence of national guidance, local arrangements are in place for such meeting to take place either at An Garda Síochána HQ or at Local Authority HQ, depending generally on the type of event and numbers attending.

These events are as follows -

- National Ploughing Championships (Cuffesgrange),
- Irish Open Golf – Mount Juliet Estate (Thomastown),
- GAA - Homecoming Celebrations,

- Concerts in Nowlan Park,
- St Patrick's Day Parade,
- Iverk Show- Piltown,
- Kilkenny Arts Week,
- Savour Kilkenny Festival.

13.2 Fire Safety Certificates

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service fire officers' advice on current Building Regulations including fire safety standards required for proposed developments. The statistics for fire safety certificates for the past 5-years are as follows -

| Year | Fire Safety Certificates | Deemed Invalid | Granted | Refused |
|------|--------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| 2021 | 95 | 0 | 99 | 0 |
| 2020 | 122 | 3 | 125 | 0 |
| 2019 | 105 | 1 | 106 | 0 |
| 2018 | 85 | 2 | 84 | 0 |
| 2017 | 99 | 1 | 89 | 0 |

Table 13.5 – Number of Fire Safety Certificates processed

| Year | Fire Safety Certificates Application | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|---------|--------------|----------------|
| Year | Traditional | Revised | 7-Day Notice | Regularisation |
| 2021 | 70 | 5 | 9 | 11 |
| 2020 | 87 | 12 | 15 | 8 |
| 2019 | 76 | 14 | 9 | 6 |
| 2018 | 61 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| 2017 | 64 | 5 | 11 | 19 |

Table 13.6 – Breakdown of different Fire Safety Certificates types processed by Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the Building Control Authority

- A “**fire safety certificate**” is a certificate referred to in section 6(2)(a)(ii) of the Act (No 21 of 2007);
- A “**7-day notice**” means a notice referred to in section 6(2)(a)(iv) of the Act (No 21 of 2007);
- A “**revised fire safety certificate**” means a certificate referred to in section 6(2)(a)(vi) and section 6(2)(a)(x) of the Act (No 21 of 2007);
- A “**regularisation certificate**” means a certificate referred to in section 6(2)(a)(vii) of the Act (No 21 of 2007);

13.4 Community Fire Safety (CFS)

Community Fire Safety (CFS) means promoting fire safety in the community, including in the home, whether in houses or apartments and is aimed at complementing the existing services provided by Kilkenny County Council to protect communities from fire.

Apart from the Fire Safety objectives and targets outlined in Section 11, a number of specific Community Fire Safety (CFS) Initiatives have been outlined in KCS.

The main initiative and most cost effective method of reducing fire deaths are to have working smoke alarms fitted to domestic dwellings. KCS advises that there should be a minimum of 90% of domestic dwellings fitted with working smoke alarms. Census 2022 will identify the number of smoke alarms in our communities and inform us where our limited resources can be targeted effectively.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will work with the Community and Enterprise Section and Housing Section of Kilkenny County Council to assist it in achieving this target. Ideally, there should be two smoke alarms fitted to all single storey dwellings and four fitted to two-storey dwellings. This objective will be subject to funding allocation.

Where opportunities exist, operational crews will promote checks for working smoke alarms in neighbourhoods after attending incidents. Ongoing public messaging campaigns will be maintained to encourage members of the public to install smoke alarms and to test their smoke alarms once a week to ensure that they are working.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will also respond positively to requests for presentations on fire safety from community groups along with distributing and making available fire safety promotional material in Kilkenny City and County.

The fire prevention objectives in domestic premises are primarily addressed by engagement and education in the delivery of Community Fire Safety (CFS) Initiatives across the City and County of Kilkenny.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will continue to schedule Fire Station Open Days in all seven Fire Stations. These Open Days have been well received throughout the City and County and have proved beneficial to the citizens of Kilkenny City and County and also to our fire crews.

Engagement with agencies / groups such as Age Friendly Counties Programme (Kilkenny) An Garda Síochána, Muintir Na Tíre, the Irish Farmers Association, ICA, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, Active Retirement Groups, St Vincent De Paul, HSE, Local Community Alert Groups, and Local Text Alert Groups is key to improving fire safety awareness in the community.

Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV)

Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) are a significant element of our Community Fire Safety strategy. Fire service personnel call to houses on appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A HFSV is usually carried out by two uniformed fire service personnel. They will use a checklist to ask questions, try to identify the fire safety hazards in the house and recommend solutions. Fire safety advice will be given, fire safety leaflets handed out and smoke detectors may be provided or fitted. They will also discuss the occupant's response should a fire occur in the house. They will leave the occupier with further advice and information, to also make available to other members of the household. The aim of HFSVs is to reduce the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries in the home by firstly preventing fires occurring and to ensure that when fires do occur, the occupiers are given early warning, and they know how to react quickly and safely.

Vulnerable persons / households will be targeted by using census data combined with other available data sources, such as from partner agencies and community sections of the Local Authority. Figure 12.31 shows a fire ground map with the total population greater than 65 years old and is outside the 8.5 miles from the local fire stations. This area will need to be targeted in the plan.

The householders, who come within the 'at risk' groups, similar to persons identified in the Community Smoke Alarm Scheme, are as follows -

- Older people (>65),
- Vulnerable people / households.

Unwanted Fire Calls

Every year Kilkenny Fire and Rescue sends its fire engines to premises after receiving a call for an automatic fire alarm activation from a fire alarm within a premises.

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) provide an effective means of giving early warning of a potential fire within a premises and are especially effective and useful when the premises are unoccupied. However, these systems are not fool proof and the vast majority of actuations from these systems require no action by the fire service. Automatic fire detection can be actuated by, such as lack of maintenance, many common airborne materials dust, insects, steam, aerosol products and also by faults with the system. When an actuation of a fire alarm is automatically sent to the fire service and they mobilise their resources to the premises when they are not needed, this is deemed to be an Unwanted Fire Call.

On average one-hundred and twenty (120no) fire calls annually (17%) of all our incidents are attributed to Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA's) Activations.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is therefore reviewing attendance levels to calls from AFAs and is working with the premises who generate these calls to reduce the number of false alarm activations and their subsequent transmission to the fire service, which makes them Unwanted Fire Calls.

Domestic and Commercial premises are advised as follows –

- 1) It is important that their automatic fire detection and alarm system is maintained properly at all times,
- 2) Ensure that nominated key holders and/or security firm check out the alarm activation prior to calling out the fire brigade,
- 3) Ensure that the correct address including the EIRCODE be given to the National Fire Control Centre when they request our assistance, Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service may issue an invoice for the callout and any future automatic fire alarm activation(s) will be billed for the full cost incurred by first responding Fire Brigade(s).

Primary School Programme (PSP)

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service shall continue to deliver the NDFEM Primary Schools Programme. It is targeted at all 3rd Class Primary School children. The fire authority has delivered this programme from inception in 2006 and every year subsequently. The fire authority has provided training and refresher training for a number of firefighters in each

brigade to assist them to deliver this Programme to all school children in 3rd classes in Kilkenny City and County where the school management accept our invitation to visit their schools.

| Year | Number of schools accepted | Number of schools programme delivered | % | Number of Children - Fire Safety Programmed Delivered |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|---|
| 2006 | 72 | 58 | 80% | 1,437 |
| 2007 | 69 | 41 | 59% | 1,113 |
| 2008 | 66 | 59 | 89% | 1,582 |
| 2009 | 59 | 56 | 95% | 1,554 |
| 2010 | 63 | 59 | 94% | 1,614 |
| 2011 | 51 | 42 | 83% | 1,055 |
| 2012 | 51 | 51 | 100% | 1,370 |
| 2013 | 63 | 58 | 92% | 1,374 |
| 2014 | 53 | 56 | 106% | 1,291 |
| 2015 | 52 | 57 | 110% | 1,422 |
| 2016 | 62 | 68 | 110% | 1,940 |
| 2017 | 54 | 62 | 115% | 1,768 |
| 2018 | 65 | 65 | 100% | 2,079 |
| 2019 | 61 | 4* | - | 0 |
| 2020 | 0* | 0* | - | 0 |
| Running Total | | | | 19,599 |
| Note 1 - Total number of primary schools in Kilkenny City and County is reduced to 75no from recent school amalgations. | | | | |
| * Covid-19 impacts on delivery of the PSP programme with school closures and restricted access. | | | | |

Table 13.7 Primary School Programme Statistics

BfireSafe@School

This programme is funded by Erasmus+. It is a newly developed teacher led fire safety education resource for post-primary students particularly aimed at transition year (TY) students. This resource has been developed to place student wellbeing and personal safety at the centre of learning. The resource aims to ensure students learn the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to keep themselves and others from fire.

The learning experienced while participating in this programme will be of use to students in their everyday lives. It will enhance students' wellbeing throughout their lives and empower students with the necessary skills to be responsible and safe citizens. It is the intention that this programme would be rolled out in all our post-primary schools in the City and County of Kilkenny.

Objectives for the Period of this Plan:

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service intends to comply with all relevant Fire Prevention Legislation and Regulations during the life of this Plan. There is a sharing of information between Fire Prevention and Operations, particularly for high-risk premises.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will continue to introduce initiatives to reduce the Fire Fatality Rate in the City and County of Kilkenny. It is intended that Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service would develop initiatives to work with premises to reduce unwanted fire calls in Kilkenny City and County.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will continue to schedule Fire Station Open Days in all seven Fire Stations. Ongoing public messaging campaigns will be maintained to encourage members of the public to install smoke alarms and to test their smoke alarms once a week to ensure that they are working.

Vulnerable persons / households will be targeted by using census data combined with other available data sources, such as from partner agencies and community sections of the Local Authority to increase their fire safety awareness.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will also work with the Community Section of Kilkenny County Council with the aim of having a working smoking alarm fitted subject to funding allocation.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will continue to deliver its Fire Safety Plan 2021-2026.