



Safety Note 70

Edition 2, June 2016

Information for Event Organisers on

SAFETY FOR YOUR GREAT HALL EVENT



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1 INTRODUCTION

This Safety Note is to provide essential safety information to people organising an event at the Great Hall London Road.

There must always be an event organiser and event safety coordinator who have responsibility for ensuring that all regulatory and university requirements are complied with, including risk assessment, licensing and health and safety management (see Safety Code of Practice 33 Event Management) http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/health-and-safety/CoP_33_Event_Management.pdf,

The risks of failing to follow the correct procedures are:

- Health and safety of people in the building being put at risk
- Breaches of health and safety legislation
- Conditions imposed on the premises licence being breached

2 EVENT APPROVAL

All events at the Great Hall must be booked through Venue Reading.

In addition organisers of all events at the Great Hall must obtain approval for their event as this will ensure appropriate liaison with the relevant university departments e.g. Health and Safety Services, Estates and Facilities (E&F) (for Security, Maintenance, Grounds, Catering Services etc.), and the Corporate Relations and Events Office.

Guidance for External Event Organisers

If the event is being organised by an organisation external to the University of Reading the event organiser will be expected to liaise directly with Venue Reading regarding the provision of Safety Advice, Maintenance, Portering, Security and Catering etc. External event organisers will be required to provide their own safety coordinators, fire marshals and first aiders etc.

2.1 Responsibilities

All events must have an appropriate person(s) allocated to the following roles:

Event Organiser – has overall responsibility for the event.

For all events the Event Organiser must:

- be familiar with the Great Hall and any other areas being used by the event
- appoint an Event Safety Coordinator (which could be the organiser themselves)
- ensure there are sufficient fire marshals on duty during the event. **See Guidance below for external organisations**
- liaise with the University Fire Safety Adviser (extension 8282), Event Safety Coordinator, and other University personnel before the event to ensure that all health, safety and fire safety requirements are specified and agreed. **See Guidance below for external organisations**
- ensure that satisfactory arrangements have been made with outside contractors for event services and supply aspects e.g. music, entertainers, sound systems etc.
- be continuously present and remain sober throughout the event
- be prepared and able to cancel the event at any time leading up to or during the event if:

- the agreed safety and fire safety aspects are not implemented, maintained or used properly or
- permission is refused as part of the Event Approval process
- procedures as required by the Event Safety Coordinator or by any other person acting on behalf of the University e.g. Security, Health & Safety Services are not being followed

In addition to the general responsibilities set out above, for internally organised events, the Event Organiser must:

- if required, apply for event approval from the University by completing an Event Notification Form (available from website:
<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/events-guide/evtg-event-approval.aspx>
email to event.approval@reading.ac.uk
- attend to any relevant licensing requirements, noting that by law there are limits on the number of Temporary Event Notices permitted for any single location in a year
- ensure that an adequate risk assessment has been prepared

2.2 Event Safety Coordinator

All events must have an appropriate person to act as the Event Safety Coordinator

The Event Safety Coordinator has responsibility for the health, safety (including fire safety) and welfare of the event. The Event Safety Coordinator must be a responsible member of academic/ administrative or technical staff (may be combined with the role of Event Organiser). This includes Venue Reading managers for externally organised events, except where permission has been granted by Health and Safety Services for another nominated person to act as the Event Safety Coordinator. For events organised by RUSU the Event Safety Coordinator should be a senior employee of the Union, Union President, or other sabbatical officer.

The Event Safety Coordinator should liaise with the event organiser, other University staff and outside organisations e.g. police as appropriate. For all events the Event Safety Coordinator must:

- prepare a risk assessment – see <http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/events-guide/evtg-templates.aspx>
- as required, liaise with the University Safety Office (extension 8888), other relevant University personnel (primarily Communication Office and Estates & Facilities) and the Event Organiser before the event to ensure that all health, safety and fire safety requirements are specified and agreed
- ensure that any health, safety, security, fire-safety or other licensing requirements are followed including occupancy numbers
- ensure that arrangements are made to confirm the safety of equipment brought onto the premises for the event e.g. music systems, catering equipment and portable electrical appliances – electrical cables liable to be walked on should be protected with appropriate coverings to mitigate the risks of damage and trip hazards
- be continuously present and remain sober and clear-minded throughout the event (NB a Deputy Event Safety Coordinator(s) may have to be appointed to ensure a continuous presence)
- be prepared to instruct the Event Organiser to cancel the event for serious breaches of health, safety, fire safety requirements or other unsafe conditions
- check with the Event Organiser that the premises are tidied up after the event to the satisfaction of the Venue Reading Building Manager or Campus Services.

2.3 University assistance

2.3.1 Maintenance Staff

Where required the maintenance staff will provide advice on the Great Hall services such as electrical power supplies and IT facilities. Maintenance are responsible for the erection of the stage wheelchair access ramp should it be required for the event. Contact them on fm@reading.ac.uk or telephone (0)118 378 8958

2.3.2 Porterage Staff

Where required University Porterage Staff will support your event by:

- Unlocking and locking of the Great Hall
- Seating layouts including the setting out of seats both in the auditorium and on the stage
- Turning on and off lighting

For contact and more details about the services that they provide go to:

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/portering-services/portering-home.aspx>

2.3.3 Security Staff

Where required University Security Staff will offer back-up support and will advise if an external security company needs to be engaged. The person making the booking is responsible for ensuring that the security company to be contracted meets all legislative requirements in accordance with the Private Security Industry Act 2001. For contact and more details about the services that they provide go to: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/security-services/sec-home.aspx>

2.3.4 Health and Safety Services

Where required Health and Safety Services will provide health and safety advice with regard to event management, location, food safety, fire safety and high risk activities. For contact and more details about the services that they provide go to:

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/health-and-safety/hs-home-2.aspx>

2.3.5 Catering Services

Catering Services must be used to supply foods to university events where High Risk foods are provided – see http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/health-and-safety/CoP_29_Food_Safety_and_Hygiene.pdf Alternatively, an approved University supplier should be used. Health and Safety Services should be contacted to seek approval for any other supplier if there is a valid reason why Catering Services or an approved supplier cannot be used. All suppliers must have a minimum score of 3 on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and be a Registered Food Business with their Local Authority. See section 1.6 for private social and charity events.

3 CAPACITY OF THE GREAT HALL

The agreed occupancy of the Great Hall must not be exceeded at any time

The Great Hall is licensed by the local authority as a place of assembly for up to 600 persons standing and 500 seated. Non licensed events such as Graduation Ceremonies are allowed to

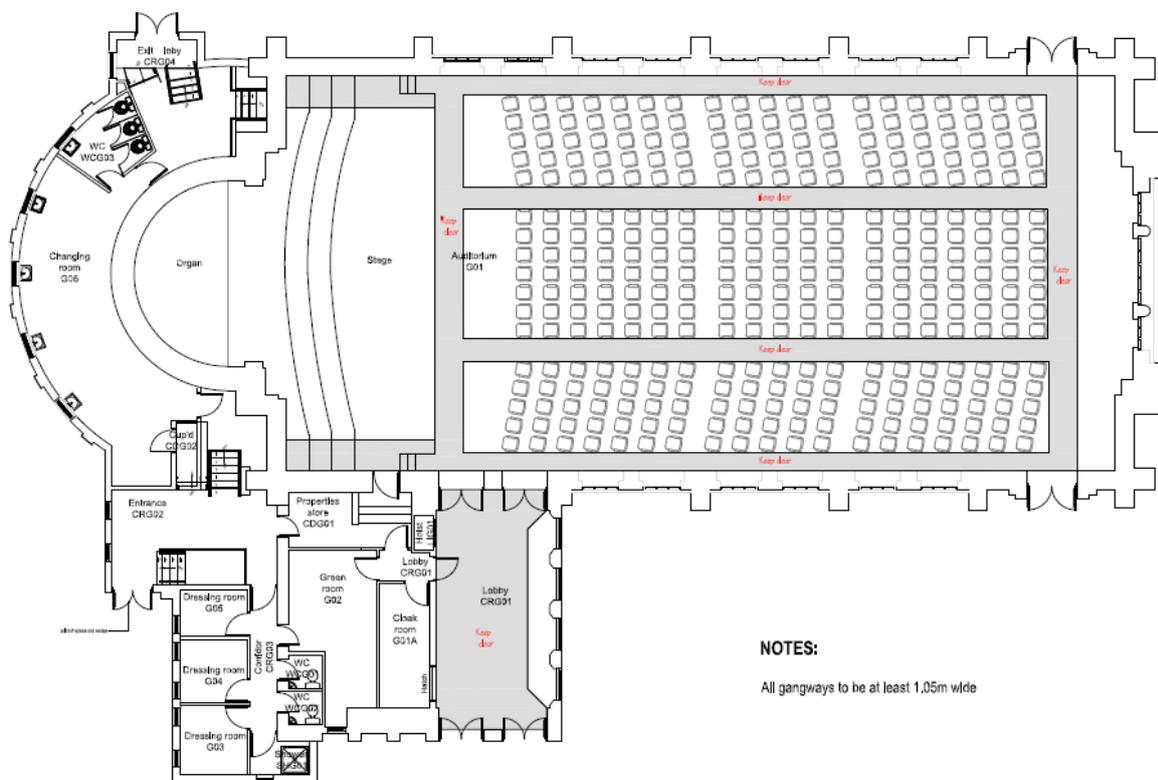
accommodate 600 seated. When the stage ramp is in place this reduces the seated figure to approximately 575.

Up to 125 persons may be allowed on the stage during performances and Graduation Ceremonies. This figure can be increased by extending the size of the stage. It is recognised that children under the age of three may be carried into the hall by their parents. All children over the ages of three must occupy booked seats. All children under the age of 16 must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times.

3.1.1 Seating

It is imperative that the seating is arranged to allow free and ready access to the exits and that gangways shown as shaded areas are at least 1.05m wide

A typical seating plan is shown below:



Alternative seating layouts are allowed but the following rules apply in all cases:

- No seat should be more than seven seats away from a gangway
- Seating must be secured together in lengths not less than four seats and not more than twelve seats
- There must be a clear space of at least 305mm between the back of one seat and the front of the seat behind it
- Gangways must be adequate for the number of seats served and at least 1.05m wide
- There must not be any loose seating introduced into the shaded areas and indicated as 'KEEP CLEAR'

4 SAFETY IN THE BUILDING

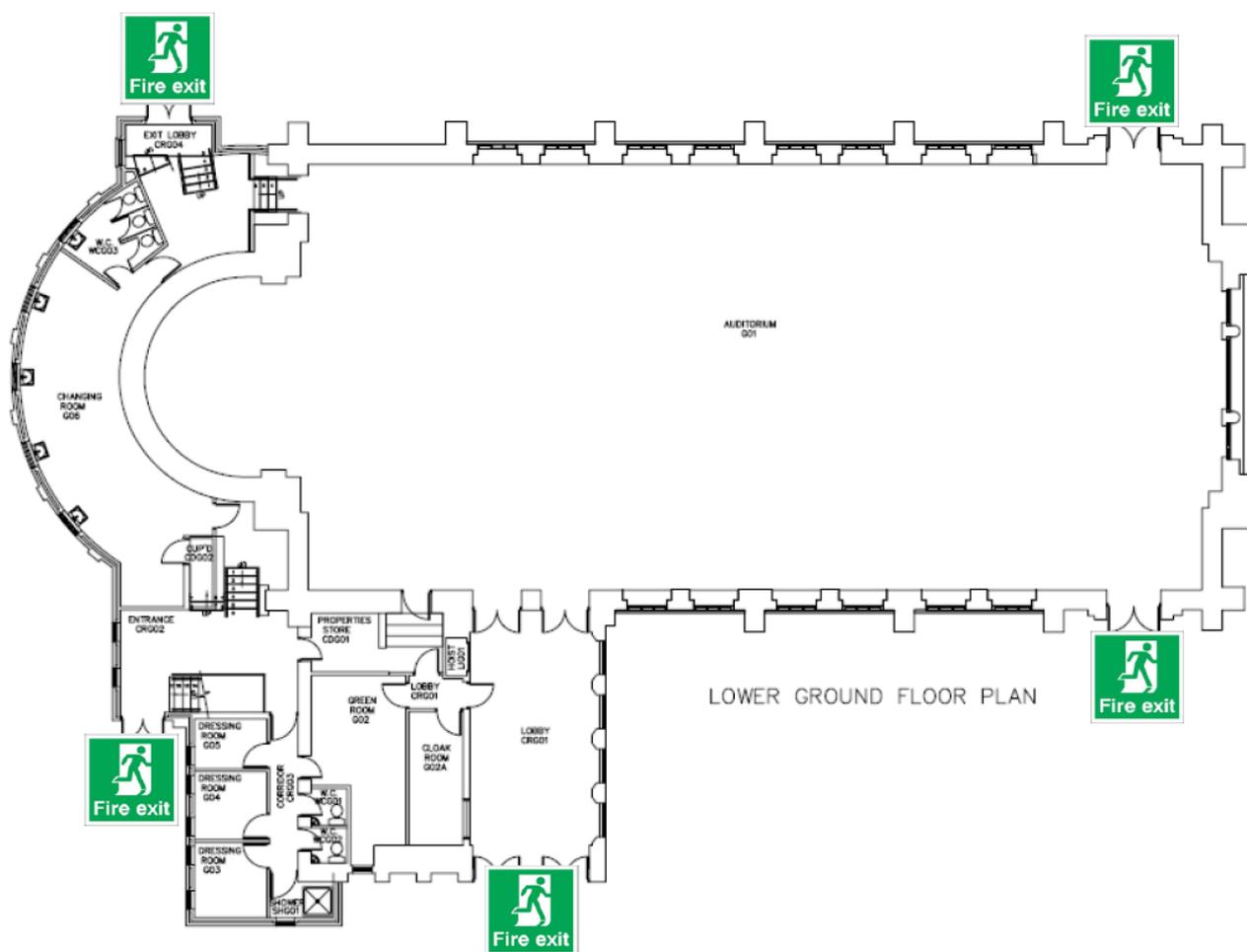
It is an imperative to ensure that all events taking place at The Great Hall are safe for everyone involved

It is the responsibility of the University of Reading to provide a safe, secure and well maintained building. Everyone associated with the organisation of a Great Hall event has a responsibility to ensure that their event is planned with safety in mind.

5 FIRE EXITS

All fire exits must be kept clear and immediately available for use should the need arise.

Event organisers must familiarise themselves with the locations of the Great Hall Fire Exits prior to the event. The location of the fire exits for the building is shown on the drawing below:



The fire exits, areas in front and lobbies leading to final fire exit doors must be kept clear of stored material, tables and chairs or any other form of obstruction.

The Event Safety Co-Ordinator must check that all fire exits open easily and fully and a check for obstructions on the outside of the door must be made.

6 FIRE DOORS

All doors displaying signs “FIRE DOOR KEEP SHUT” or “FIRE DOOR KEEP LOCKED” must not be wedged open.

There are a number of fire doors in the building and these can be identified by means of the safety signs that are fixed to the doors. The signs will look like the ones shown below:



7 FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT

The Fire Assembly Point for the Great Hall is located in the car park – see picture below:

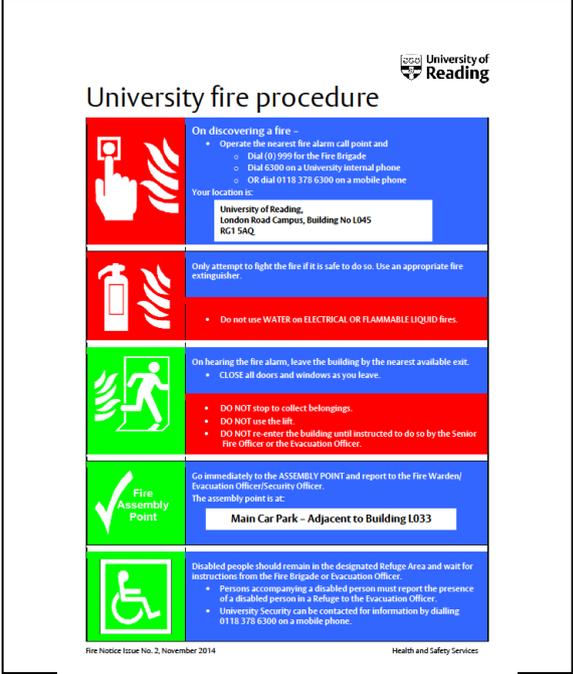


8 ACTION IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE OR ON HEARING THE FIRE ALARM

If a fire is discovered or the fire alarm sounds the fire procedures as displayed in the Great Hall must be followed:

The Event Safety Co-Ordinator and all Fire Marshals must acquaint themselves with the content of the Great Hall Fire Action Notices. As a general rule these will be located at or close to final fire exit doors.

Opposite is an example of the Great Hall Fire Action Poster



The poster is titled 'University fire procedure' and features the University of Reading logo. It is divided into five horizontal sections, each with a colored background and a specific icon:

- Red section:** 'On discovering a fire -' with a hand icon. Instructions: Operate the nearest fire alarm call point and dial (0) 999 for the Fire Brigade, dial 6300 on a University internal phone, or dial 0118 378 6300 on a mobile phone. Location: University of Reading, London Road Campus, Building No L045, RG1 5AQ.
- Red section:** 'Only attempt to fight the fire if it is safe to do so. Use an appropriate fire extinguisher.' Instruction: Do not use WATER on ELECTRICAL OR FLAMMABLE LIQUID fires.
- Green section:** 'On hearing the fire alarm, leave the building by the nearest available exit.' Instruction: CLOSE all doors and windows as you leave. Warnings: DO NOT stop to collect belongings; DO NOT use the lift; DO NOT re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the Senior Fire Officer or the Evacuation Officer.
- Green section:** 'Go immediately to the ASSEMBLY POINT and report to the Fire Warden/ Evacuation Officer/Security Officer. The assembly point is at: Main Car Park - Adjacent to Building L033'
- Green section:** 'Disabled people should remain in the designated Refuge Area and wait for instructions from the Fire Brigade or Evacuation Officer.' Instruction: Persons accompanying a disabled person must report the presence of a disabled person in a Refuge to the Evacuation Officer. Contact: University Security can be contacted for information by dialling 0118 378 6300 on a mobile phone.

Small text at the bottom: 'Fire Notice Issue No. 2, November 2014' and 'Health and Safety Services'.

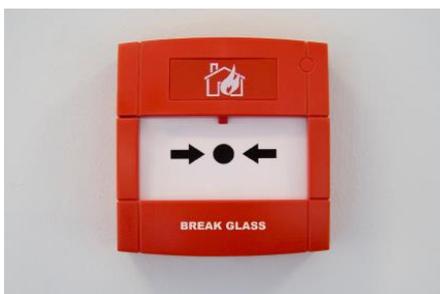
9 FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

On hearing the fire alarm sound continuously the building must be fully evacuated immediately.

The building is fitted out with automatic detection which on sensing smoke or excessive heat will automatically set off the fire alarms.

In addition the fire alarm can be sounded by pressing on a Manual Call Point which are generally located at all exit doors from the building.

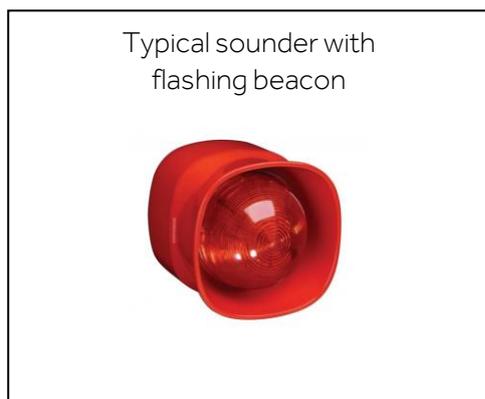
This is what a manual fire alarm call point looks like:



This is the sign used to indicate the location of a manual fire alarm call point:



The sound of the fire alarm is a klaxon interspersed with a voice alarm warning. In addition there are also visual alarm signals for the benefit of hearing impaired people.



False fire alarms will disrupt your event and waste the time of University Security Services and the Fire Service, so these must be prevented.

The possible causes of false alarms include:

- Deliberately breaking or carelessly knocking into a manual call point
- Setting off the automatic detectors by using a theatrical smoke/haze machine
- Using kettles or water boilers in close proximity to ceiling mounted fire detectors

10 FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Fire extinguishers are located at or close to all fire exits from the building.

The Event Safety Co-Ordinator should ensure that he/she and any fire marshals familiarise themselves with the location, type and operating instructions of the fire extinguishers.

Fire extinguishers must not be obstructed, covered over or moved from their locations to wedge doors open.

11 GENERAL FIRE HAZARDS

Fire hazards must not be introduced into the Great Hall including:

- No cooking or heating of food to take place inside the Great Hall
- All 'plug-in' electrical equipment must be in good condition and display an in-date Portable Appliance Test Certificate (PAT)
- Excessive amounts of hand outs, other literature or packaging material will not be allowed – only sufficient for ready use is permitted. Spare material must be stored elsewhere.
- Heat and ignition sources such as electrical equipment and lighting must be kept well clear of any combustible material
- No smoking (including 'e' cigarettes), candles or any other naked flames.

12 FIRE MARSHALS

All events at the Great Hall must have suitably briefed/trained fire marshals who can manage an orderly safe evacuation if the fire alarm sounds. The event organiser is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient marshals in attendance during the event. Health and Safety Services may be asked to provide briefing/training if it is required.

As a general rule the number of fire marshals should not be less than two for the first 100 people plus one for each additional 100 people. Fire marshals must:

- Have a complete understanding of all the fire/safety procedures and communications aspects, including the fire evacuation routes from the Great Hall itself and from the back stage areas
- Wear (or have to hand) a Hi-Viz vest
- Ensure that no overcrowding occurs and use crowd monitoring equipment such as counters if required
- Keep all gangway and exits clear
- Ensure all available fire exit doors are opened and that people are directed to the nearest, safe available fire exit.

Fire marshals can be University staff, event staff or personnel from external companies or agencies.

Health and Safety Services

Extension 8888

Email: safety@reading.ac.uk - Contact: Moira Simpson - Health & Safety Services, Director