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ADMIRALTY FLEET ORDER

FIRE PREVENTION IN ADMIRALTY ESTABLISHMENTS AT HOME—THE FIRE GUARD PLAN

ADMIRALTY, S.W.1,
8th July, 1943.

The following Order having been approved by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty is hereby promulgated for information and guidance and necessary action.

By Command of their Lordships,

J. V. Markham

Distribution Limited

<p><i>To all Commanders-in-Chief, (Not C.-in-C., H.F.) Flag Officers, Senior Naval Officers, Superintendents or Officers in Charge of H.M. Naval Establishments, and Admiralty Overseers concerned.</i></p>	}	<p>Shore Commands at Home.</p>
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NOTE:—The scale of distribution is approximately half that shown in the Admiralty Fleet Order Volume, 1941, Instructions, paragraph 10.

Head of "P" Branch

3123.—Fire Prevention in Admiralty Establishments at Home—The Fire Guard Plan
(C.E. 54258/43.—8 Jul. 1943.)

The Minister of Home Security has announced by a memorandum (Annex to H.S.C. No. 29/43) for the guidance of Local Authorities and appropriate authorities and Departments in England and Wales, details of revised working arrangements which he has authorised to secure the most effective use of the resources of the Fire Guard and National Fire Service in areas that have been prescribed under the Fire Prevention Orders. This memorandum has been reprinted as F.P. Leaflet No. 6, and copies will be forwarded to Commanders-in-Chief, Flag Officers and Senior Naval Officers of Shore Commands in England and Wales. An equivalent publication has been issued by the Scottish Home Department for the guidance of appropriate authorities and departments in Scotland, and copies of these will be obtained for issue similarly to the Commanders-in-Chief, F.O.I.Cs. and N.O.I.Cs. concerned. For the information of Heads of Establishments, a summary of F.P. Leaflet No. 6, showing the details of the Fire Guard Plan with which Admiralty establishments will be chiefly concerned, is given as an appendix to this Order.

2. The intention of the plan is to establish close working arrangements between the Fire Guard and the N.F.S. and to transfer to the Fire Guard the main responsibility for reporting night-time fires. The date on which the plan will become operative in any area will be decided by the Regional Commissioner and until that date, the existing arrangements will be maintained, subject to any minor local modifications. It is contemplated, however, that preliminary consultations will be necessary and Heads of Establishments are authorised to co-operate with Local Authorities when approached by the latter in regard to the plan. Only when, after such consultations, serious practical difficulties to the acceptance of any proposals made by the Local Authority are anticipated (e.g. on security grounds), a report should be made through the usual channels to the Secretary of the Admiralty (C.E. Br. I).

3. In the case of large establishments, such as dockyards, oil fuel depots and Fleet shore establishments, which have a self-contained organisation (*see* paragraph 5 (a) below) with means of calling both their own fire brigade and the N.F.S., the fire watching arrangements are to be planned on the new fire guard system in close liaison with the Local Authorities and the N.F.S., and the actual arrangements for calling in the N.F.S. must be suited to the circumstances.

4. When joint fire-prevention arrangements are already in force under the provisions of A.F.Os. 2195/42 and 2339/42 either with other Government Departments or business premises, such arrangements will not be superseded by the Fire Guard Plan, but premises (whether business premises or Government premises or both) may be grouped by the Local Authority into blocks for the purposes of the plan, and a block may contain either one large building where single arrangements under the Business or Government Premises Orders are in force, or several premises covered by joint arrangements under these Orders, or a group of premises for which separate arrangements are in force but which are linked for operational purposes.

5. Problems may arise over the division of Fire Station grounds into sectors and with the view to avoiding such difficulties, the Minister of Home Security has issued the following instructions to Local Authorities in England and Wales :—

(a) Premises for which a Government department is responsible as the appropriate authority or as an occupier should normally be constituted as a separate sector, whenever the size, lay-out and environment of the premises make it reasonable to do so, *even when this means that the sector so constituted is smaller than would otherwise have been considered appropriate.*

(b) Where a Local Authority in consultation with the N.F.S. considers that any Government premises are not likely, by reason of their size or situation to be made a whole sector, the appropriate department for the premises should be brought into consultation at once, in order that agreement may be obtained to the lay-out decided on. According to circumstances, this may be done direct by the Local Authority with the local representative of the Government department concerned or through the Regional Commissioner's office. The former method, being speedier, should usually be adopted when the Government department concerned is the appropriate authority or the appropriate department for the premises in question, but in the event of failure to reach agreement in this manner, the matter should be put before the Regional Commissioner who may refer it to the Minister of Home Security.

- (c) The size of a sector as laid down in F.P. Leaflet No. 6 (i.e. one-sixteenth of a square mile) is not to be regarded as rigid and invariable but as a maximum, and should be settled in regard to such factors as the presence of important or vital premises, the extent of fire hazards, the height of the buildings and the position of natural fire breaks (i.e. in industrial areas or where important buildings are involved, the area of a sector might well be one-half or one-third of the maximum laid down).
- (d) A Local Authority, when deciding the lay-out of its area, will bear in mind that the precision with which N.F.S. assistance can be summoned to any given premises is related to the size of the block in which the building is included, and also that the amount of Fire Guard reinforcement available to any premises is related to the size of the sector in which the building is situated.
- (e) If in any sector comprising industrial premises for which a Government Department is the appropriate authority or the appropriate Department, any occupier of such premises is dissatisfied with the site chosen for the Sector Point, the matter will be settled under a similar procedure to that shown in (b) above.
- (f) The Sector Captain is to be appointed by the occupier or Government Department in occupation when a sector comprises a single building or group of premises for which arrangements are in force under the Business or Government Premises Orders, and in other instances the Sector Captain will be appointed by the Local Authority. When a sector comprises premises for which more than one appropriate authority or appropriate Department is responsible, the occupier of such business or Government premises may make representations to the Local Authority if the person appointed is regarded as unsuitable, at the same time nominating any person(s) judged to be more suitable. If the Local Authority is unable to accede to such representations, the matter is to be referred to the Regional Commissioner. When, however, such a sector also comprises industrial premises for which a Government Department is the appropriate authority or appropriate Department, the Local Authority will follow a similar procedure to that shown in (b) above, when dealing with any representations against the appointment of the person chosen as Sector Captain.
- (g) The whole of the area of a Local Authority to which the Fire Guard Plan is applicable, must be covered by the Plan irrespective of the nature of particular premises situated there, as it is essential to the successful operation of the scheme that there are no "islands" in the area to which the old unco-ordinated method of summoning N.F.S. assistance remains unchanged.
- (h) When moving Fire Guard reinforcements, Sector Captains must ensure that no block or street party area is denuded of fire guards so that there is no longer a reasonable nucleus left for the protection of those areas. When deciding what is a reasonable nucleus, the fire risk and importance of the buildings from which the fire guards are to be taken should be considered and to avoid any excessive diversion of fire guards, the Captain of a sector comprising business or Government premises should consult with the occupiers of those premises so as to determine in advance the maximum number of fire guards who in an emergency could be moved to assist at other premises in the sector or nearby in an adjoining sector.
- (i) Where there is a private fire brigade at any premises, the Chief Officer of that brigade should be the Sector Captain, and as in a number of instances a direct telephone line to a N.F.S. station has already been installed, calls by telephone for N.F.S. assistance can be made instead of by runner, but the necessary information should be dictated in the form laid down for messages. In some instances, the direct telephone lines may not be routed to the N.F.S. station in whose ground the sector will be situated, and in these cases the occupiers of the premises should discuss with the N.F.S. the possibility of re-routing the lines in question.

(j) In some larger premises not equipped with private fire brigades, arrangements have been in force for calls for N.F.S. assistance to be made by telephone to a particular N.F.S. station. If a sector point is located on such premises, the procedure shown in (h) above should be followed. As regards other business or Government premises which may be selected as sector points, any Sector Captain who considers that it would be preferable to summon N.F.S. assistance by telephone rather than by runner should consult with the N.F.S. If after discussion agreement to use the telephone from the sector point in question is not forthcoming, the occupier of the premises can consult the appropriate authority or appropriate Department for the premises, in which case the procedure shown under (b) above will apply for obtaining an authoritative ruling.

6. The question of special responsibilities of Government Departments in Scotland as appropriate authorities or appropriate Departments is at present under consideration by the Scottish Home Department and any conclusions reached which differ from the arrangements shown in paragraph 5 above will be promulgated by A.F.O.

APPENDIX

Summary of Memorandum on the Working Arrangements for the Fire Guard and National Fire Service (F.P. Leaflet No. 6)

The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security have decided that the duties of detecting and combating outbreaks of fire caused by enemy attacks and summoning of any necessary assistance with which the fire guard is at present charged shall be made the basis of a new plan to secure the most effective use of the resources of the fire guard and the N.F.S. in areas prescribed under the Fire Prevention Orders. Under this plan, closer working arrangements will be established and the main responsibility for reporting fires due to enemy action and summoning N.F.S. assistance from half an hour before until half an hour after each blackout period, will be transferred to the fire guard. The Regional Commissioners will decide in what areas the preparations for the plan will be first put in hand and the date on which it will become operative. In due course it will be introduced into all areas prescribed under the Fire Prevention Orders.

2. The area served by every N.F.S. fire station regularly manned at night will be divided into a number of fire guard sectors, each under the control of a Fire Guard Sector Captain (replacing the present street captain). Each sector will be sub-divided into street party areas under party leaders in residential districts and into blocks under block leaders in business premises districts. The maximum area of a fire guard sector will be about one-sixteenth of a square mile (one-quarter of a mile square) and no point in it should be more than 800 yards from any other point. The headquarters of the sector will be the sector point, which must not be set up as a permanently manned post and should for the sake of operational efficiency be normally a room on the ground floor of conveniently situated premises in the sector. If the sector includes a N.F.S. fire station, the sector point should be sited as close as possible to it, but not in the station itself. Each sector point should be equipped with a large scale plan of the sector showing roads, assembly points, block points, wardens' posts, buildings of special importance or high fire risk, positions of hydrants and static water supplies, telephone facilities and routes from assembly and block points to the sector point. It should have displayed outside a prominent notice properly illuminated at night, with the words "Fire Guard Sector Point" in 3-in. red block letters on a white ground and also bearing the sector number.

3. The sector point should be manned during an alert or on the fall of bombs or gunfire during the period from half-an-hour before until half-an-hour after blackout by :—

- (i) The Sector Captain or his deputy ;
- (ii) a Message Clerk ; and
- (iii) sufficient Fire-guards to act as runners.

The Sector Captain's duties will be primarily to ensure that all messages to the N.F.S. are forwarded to the fire station with the utmost despatch and to obtain fire-guard reinforcements where needed in his sector from fire-guard parties in unaffected portions of his sector, or from an adjacent sector, or a fire-guard depot if

there is one at his call. He will be responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the prescribed system of communications throughout his sector and ensure that a log book is maintained by the sector clerk in the form prescribed. A specimen sheet from such a log book and the prescribed form of message for summoning N.F.S. assistance are as follows :—

SECTOR POINT : 138.

DATE : 17.9.44.

LOG SHEET SERIAL NUMBER : 47.

SECTOR CAPTAIN : Mrs. Hunt. SECTOR CLERK : Miss Jones.

Block No. or Street Party No.	Time Message received.	Are Fire Guard reinforcements required.	Fire Guard Teams sent from Blocks or Parties.	Is N.F.S. Assistance required.	Time Message despatched to N.F.S. Station.	Notes.
F	20.04	Yes	A B	—	—	—
H	20.06	—	—	Yes	20.07	—
P	20.07	Yes	E K	—	—	—
G	20.10	—	—	Yes	20.15	—
H	20.32	—	—	Yes	20.33	Repeat call.
G	20.25	—	—	Yes	20.27	N.F.S. ask station to make pumps 3.
G	21.10	—	—	—	—	Fires out.

Call from Fire Guard for N.F.S. Assistance to N.F.S. Station
70.1.2.X. at 10, East Street.

1. BLOCK NUMBER OR STREET PARTY NUMBER : 138F.
2. BLOCK POINT ADDRESS OR ASSEMBLY POINT ADDRESS :
219, London Road.
3. SECTOR POINT ADDRESS : 6, Acacia Avenue.
4. INITIALS OF BLOCK OR STREET PARTY LEADER : A.B.

For use in Repeat Calls only.

5. FIRE SITUATION : Food Store on Fire.

For use at Sector Point only.

6. DATE : 17.9.44.
7. TIME RECEIVED : 20.02.
8. TIME DESPATCHED : 20.05.
9. INITIALS OF SECTOR CLERK : C.D.

For use at N.F.S. Station only.

10. TIME OF RECEIPT : 20.12.
11. INITIALS OF MOBILISING OFFICER : E.F.

Note.—Items 1, 2 and 3 should be completed by the Block or Street Party Leader in advance, so that for first calls only initials need be added. Item 5 should be completed for Repeat Calls or special situation reports.

4. In districts which consist predominantly of important business or Government premises, fire-guard sectors will be sub-divided into blocks. It will be the duty of the Local Authority to decide the limits of blocks which, wherever possible, will be bounded by roads, spaces between buildings or other obstacles to the spread of fire and normally will comprise premises which would be guarded by 20-30 fire-guards per turn of duty. The block point will be a room where the Block Leader (or his deputy) will be found at all times when the point is manned, and should be situated in the most convenient position in the block for transmission of messages to the

sector point. It should be equipped with a large scale plan of the block, showing similar details as those to be shown on the plan of the sector kept at the sector point (cf. paragraph 2 above). It should have displayed outside a prominent notice properly illuminated at night, bearing the words "Fire-Guard Block Point" in red capital letters, 3 in. high on a white ground and showing the block point code letter.

5. The Fire-guard Block Leader's duties include :—

- (a) Supervision and control of party leaders and fire-guards on duty in the block and the allocation of duties.
- (b) In action, the direction of operations, particularly :—
 - (i) The handling of fire-guard reinforcements, either those available in his own block or sent to his assistance by the Sector Captain. Requests for reinforcements should be made by sending by runner, tallies consisting of wood, metal or other material, 6 in. square, painted white and bearing the code sign of the block to which it refers. Each tally sent will indicate that two teams are required. It will be open to the leader to despatch a written message with the tallies giving details of help required.
 - (ii) The summoning of N.F.S. assistance in the prescribed manner by completing the first portion of the standard form of message (cf. paragraph 3 above) and despatching it by runner to the sector point. If after a call has been despatched, no N.F.S. appliance arrives at the block point or assembly point within 20 minutes, the block leader will send to the sector point another message with the words "Repeat Call" in block letters at the top and Sections 1 and 2 completed. After despatching a call for N.F.S. assistance, a block leader may wish to report a big change in the fire situation such as the spread of fire to an important building or a direct threat of fire thereto. In such a case he will send a message on the prescribed form to the sector point, heading it "SITUATION REPORT" in capitals and completing items 1 to 5.
 - (iii) Complying with directions given by the Sector Captain or other senior officers of the fire-guard, or by a member of the N.F.S. on a fire ground in his block.

(The block leader will be appointed by the occupier or occupiers concerned and will be responsible to them for the duties in 5 (a) above. He will be responsible to the Local Authority for the duties shown in 5 (b)).

6. The fire-guards in each block will be divided into parties, each under the charge of a party leader, who will be responsible to the block leader. Each party will have a specific assembly point where during action, the party leader (or his deputy) will be found and where reinforcements sent by the Sector Captain will proceed. The party leader will be appointed by the occupier, but will not be a member of a fire-guard team, as he will be responsible for :—

- (i) Deciding the order in which fires started by an enemy raid shall be attacked and if there is more than one team of three fire-guards, which teams shall take part.
- (ii) Calling for fire guard reinforcements or N.F.S. assistance as may be necessary by sending an oral message to the block point.
- (iii) Taking charge and ensuring that N.F.S. assistance is summoned as quickly as possible to deal with any non-enemy fire detected when the fire-guard party is on duty whether in daytime or at night. In such cases he will be free to use any means of communication, including telephone or fire alarm.

7. Under the plan, apart from fighting fires with their own equipment, the duties of fire-guards will include :—

- (a) Conveying messages from fire grounds to block leaders or street party leaders, thence to the sector point and from the sector point to the N.F.S. station. Such messages will be conveyed by runners, cyclists or despatch riders, and the telephone will not be used to summon N.F.S. assistance, except by pre-arrangement in special circumstances, e.g. to cover unusually long distances.

- (b) Acting as reinforcements to fire-guards attacking fires in other blocks or street party areas, and in certain cases in other sectors.
- (c) Showing the N.F.S. crews the best way into buildings on fire, the points from which the extent of the fire or fires can be best seen, and the positions of party walls capable of checking the spread of fire.
- (d) Supplying information as to water supplies, e.g. the position of the most suitable hydrants or the nearest supplementary supplies, and to act as guides whenever necessary, especially to reinforcing crews who are not familiar with the district.
- (e) Assisting generally with the handling of hose, hose ramps, etc.
- (f) Relieving N.F.S. crews at fires which have been brought under control by the N.F.S. by damping down the fires and preventing them from breaking out again, thus permitting N.F.S. crews to proceed to other fires at which they are needed for active fire-fighting.

These additional duties, particularly items (e) and (f) will entail fire-guard officers and men undergoing additional training and exercises in collaboration with the N.F.S.

(A.F.Os. 599/42, 1616/42, 2195/42, 2196/42, 2339/42, 4071/42, 6236/42 and 107/43.)
(C.A.F.Os. 1323/42, 2034/42, 2197/42 and 204/43.)

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