# Introduction

Fire marshals play a critical role in ensuring fire safety within university premises. They are responsible for preventing fire risks, aiding in fire evacuations, and ensuring that all fire safety protocols are followed. This guidance note outlines the recommended number of fire marshals and their duties both during a fire and on a daily basis.

# Number of Fire Marshals Required

The number of fire marshals needed in a university setting will vary depending on several factors:

* **Building Size and Layout**: Larger and more complex buildings may require more fire marshals.
* **Occupancy Levels**: Higher student and staff numbers require more fire marshals to cover each area effectively.
* **Risk Level**: Laboratories and workshops may need a higher number of fire marshals compared to offices or classrooms due to the presence of flammable materials and equipment.

A typical guideline is:

* **1 fire marshal per 50 occupants** for low-risk areas such as offices and classrooms.
* **1 fire marshal per 20-25 occupants** for higher-risk areas like laboratories, kitchens, or workshops.
* **1 fire marshal per floor or building section** to ensure coverage across different areas of the university.

**Note**: Additional fire marshals should be appointed to cover for absences (such as sick leave or vacations). It is imperative that sufficient fire marshals are in place to assist with the timely and safe evacuation of the building in the event of a fire. The figures indicated above are for guidance only.

# Duties of Fire Marshals

**During a Fire**

1. **Raise the Alarm**:
   * Immediately activate the nearest fire alarm call point if they notice a fire or are informed about it.
2. **Evacuation Supervision:**
   * Direct people to the nearest fire exits.
   * Ensure a calm and orderly evacuation of all occupants, especially directing attention to high-traffic areas.
   * Assist individuals with disabilities or those needing help, ensuring they reach designated safe areas or are assisted out of the building.
3. **Check All Areas:**
   * Ensure that all rooms, including classrooms, lecture halls, and toilets, are evacuated.
   * Conduct a quick sweep of their assigned area to confirm nobody is left behind.
4. **Close Doors and Windows:**
   * Once rooms have been evacuated, close doors and windows to help contain the fire and slow its spread.
5. **Assembly Point Coordination:**
   * Guide evacuated persons to designated assembly points and ensure they remain there until further instructions are provided.
6. **Reporting to Emergency Services:**
   * Inform the senior fire marshal /security or emergency services if any individuals are trapped or if areas were not fully evacuated.

**Daily Duties**

1. **Regular Fire Safety Checks:**
   * Conduct regular visual checks of fire alarms panels, extinguishers, and emergency exit routes to ensure they are functioning and unobstructed.
   * Report any fire hazards, such as blocked exits or malfunctioning fire safety equipment, to the appropriate department.
2. **Fire Drill Participation:**
   * Actively participate in fire drills and assist in coordinating practice evacuations.
   * Provide feedback on drill performance and suggest improvements where necessary.
   * A QA122 form should be completed and kept on file for review post drill.
   * Any issues encountered during a fire drill should be reported to the relevant department.
3. **Training and Awareness:**
   * Stay up-to-date on fire safety training and ensure they understand university policies regarding fire emergencies.
   * Be a point of contact for fire safety queries in their assigned area and help educate students and staff on fire safety procedures.
4. **First Aid Assistance:**
   * If trained, provide first aid assistance to individuals injured during an evacuation or fire emergency.

# Fire Marshal Training Requirements

Fire marshals should undergo specific training to carry out their duties effectively, including:

* **Fire risk awareness**: Recognizing fire hazards in the university environment.
* **Use of fire extinguishers**: Knowing when and how to use fire extinguishers.
* **Evacuation procedures**: Understanding the best routes and methods for safe evacuations.
* **Evacuation chair training**: How to assist those with disabilities or requiring extra support during evacuations.

# Conclusion

Having an adequate number of trained fire marshals in a university is essential for the safety of staff, students, and visitors. Fire marshals play a critical role in both preventing fire risks and managing evacuations. Regular fire safety checks, consistent training, and clear evacuation procedures are vital for maintaining fire safety across the campus.