

# Pole houses and sliding pole safety

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Owner: **Assistant Director, Health Safety and Wellbeing**  
Responsible work team: **Health Safety and Wellbeing**

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## **1 Scope**

- 1.1 This policy advises on matters to ensure the safe use of pole houses and sliding poles.

## **2 References**

- 2.1 Policy number 510 – Brigade premises health, safety and environment inspections, defines routine safety checks for pole houses.
- 2.2 Policy number 505 – Safety of visitors to LFB premises procedure.
- 2.3 Policy number 464 – Safety signs and signals procedure.

## **3 Pole house lighting**

- 3.1 Following a review of station lighting provision, pole house lighting will operate when the station call out system is activated; it will not remain 'on' 24 hours a day. The changes to the current arrangements will be made during station refurbishment or rewiring.
- 3.2 Station pole house lighting provision will, as a precaution, include 100% redundancy. At least two lamps will be fitted at each level of each pole house, and individual fittings shall be fed by separate circuits to minimise the possibility of total lighting failure.
- 3.3 Sliding poles are not considered an adequate means of escape from the premises; therefore they have no emergency lighting provision.

## **4 Use of sliding poles**

- 4.1 Sliding poles are only to be used by operational personnel when responding to an emergency call. They are not to be used as an alternative to stairs at any other time.
- 4.2 Sliding poles are only to be used by operational personnel. Visitors to a fire station are not permitted to use sliding poles under any circumstances (reference 2.2 above).
- 4.3 Personnel must ensure that their hands and clothing are dry before attempting to descend the pole. If this is not possible they are to use the stairs.
- 4.4 Before entering the pole house personnel must ensure the pole house lighting is on, if it is not, the stairs must be used.
- 4.5 Personnel are not to carry anything when descending a sliding pole.
- 4.6 Before descending a sliding pole, the descent route should be checked to ensure it is clear of obstructions or people.

## **5 Daily checks of pole house doors, lights and mats**

- 5.1 Inspection of pole houses is to be carried out daily, using checklists provided in Policy number 510 - Brigade premises health, safety and environment inspections, defines routine safety checks for pole houses and should include:
- The doors, latches and drop bolts are functioning correctly.
  - The lights are working (either are 'on' 24 hours a day or operate when the call lighting is energised).
  - A pole mat, in good condition, is at the foot of each sliding pole.

- 5.2 At all other times the area around the sliding pole landing area is to be kept clear. Nothing is to be stored in the landing area. Appliances are to be parked to ensure that when the doors are open, they do not encroach the landing area above the pole mat.

## 6 Dealing with defects in pole houses

- 6.1 Whenever a defect is found with the pole house, the pole house is to be taken off the run immediately, the pole house doors are to be locked, all personnel are to be informed, and these actions recorded in the Health and Safety recording form.
- 6.2 Defective doors are to be locked shut and self adhesive "off the run" tape is to be placed across both pole house doors at eye level, including both observation panels.
- 6.3 Additionally, the tape should be placed across the housing of the door release mechanism to prevent the door being opened.
- 6.4 The results of the daily checks are to be recorded online in the Health and Safety inspection portal.
- 6.5 The defect should be reported in accordance with standard defect reporting procedures.

## 7 Safety signage at pole houses

- 7.1 A safety sign is to be prominently displayed in the most suitable position for each sliding pole: 'Sliding pole – dangerous'. This sign is normally in two parts and one part should be fitted to each of the two pole house doors.
- 7.2 In order to comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 the following sign is to be fixed to each pole house door in accordance with Brigade procedures (reference 2.3 above). This signage can be ordered from Property Services as outlined in Policy number 464 – Safety signs and signals procedure.



**No access for unauthorised persons**

## Document history

### Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	17/09/08	SDIA	L - 25/08/11	HSWIA	25/10/17	RA	n/a
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### Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current. No changes made to content. Policies affected section removed as obsolete.	17/06/2011
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current. No changes made to content. Hyperlinks added to other policies for ease of access.	10/09/2014
Page 4	'Subjects list' table - template updated.	02/02/2015
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current. No changes made to content.	27/10/2017
Throughout	Amendments have been made due to changes in organisational structure and governance due to the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, now replaced with the London Fire Commissioner.	19/02/2019
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current. No changes made to content.	04/01/2021
Throughout	Removal of Hyperlinks and updates to department names. Some reformatting of section 6 – Dealing with defects in pole houses.	09/03/2026

### Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Pole house	Sliding poles

### Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification