HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXHIBITIONS

Introduction
When planning exhibitions and displays of work, both staff and students must ensure that the health and safety of all users of School premises, including visitors, is not compromised. This guidance note seeks to identify the important areas where attention needs to be paid in order that these aims are met.

Planning Exhibitions
A great deal of thought needs to be taken in planning the positions of students' exhibits, having regard to materials used, flammability, size, electrical requirements and hazards of structures. Attention must also be given to the maintenance of safety during the erection of exhibits, for example avoiding temporary blockage of escape routes and exits. Detailed planning, which should include the provision of drawings illustrating layouts, exits and means of escape, will help prevent problems arising at a later stage. Jeopardising safety could result in the removal or re-location of exhibits.

Fire Precautions
*Under no circumstances may the standards of fire precautions be lowered, altered or ignored for exhibitions.*
It should also be remembered that an influx of visitors, who could be unfamiliar with the building, may require additional precautions to be taken.

Escape Routes
Protected escape routes, such as staircases, foyers, landings, etc., must not be blocked by exhibits and must not contain flammable material.

Some non-flammable exhibits may be displayed on walls, provided that they do not protrude into these areas and do not create either a tripping hazard or the danger of injury.

Escape routes must also be safely maintained during the erection of displays.

Smoke stop fire doors must not be fastened back on these routes.

Escape Exits
Exits from buildings must not be blocked while erection of work is taking place nor by temporary partitions and displays.

Escape doors must not be secured other than by an approved means, such as crash bars or break glass latches. They must never be secured with a chain and padlock or a dead lock.
Corridors
The width of corridors will depend on the number of people present in a building. In general, an unobstructed route of 2m is required for main corridors in a School. Corridors between exhibits, for example in a hall or gallery space, should be a minimum of 1.1m.

Exhibits may be placed in a main corridor or large entrance area, provided that they occupy only one wall and that a straight path remains for the whole of its length. They must not cause a tripping hazard or other risk of injury.

Flammable materials should be avoided, as far as possible. Some materials falling into this category include oil and water colour paintings. These may be displayed, provided they have a horizontal length of no more than 3m and that there is a gap of at least 1m between each painting. A 1m gap must also be left either side of door openings.

Temporary Partitions
It may be necessary to erect temporary partitions in a room or studio to separate exhibits or provide support for displays. Care must be taken to ensure that they do not interfere with escape routes or exits (see below Safe System of Work, and Ex1 and Ex2 documents).

Fire Exit Signs
Exhibits and displays should not cover fire exit and direction signs. Where this is unavoidable, additional signs must be provided as close as possible to the locations of the original signs.

Fire Extinguishers
Fire extinguishers must neither be obstructed by exhibits nor removed.

Additionally, where a room contains a flammable exhibit, e.g. a wax sculpture or candle lit display, extra fire extinguishers must be provided. Water/carbon dioxide types are suitable for wood and paper, carbon dioxide and electrical hazards and dry powder for flammable liquid and wax fires. Buckets of sand should also be considered for the latter.

Changing the Use of Rooms
Consideration must be given to the type of room used for exhibits. Some rooms, for example painting studios, require less fire protection than others, e.g. workshops. Placing a potentially hazardous display in a room which is not protected to a required standard is illegal and must not be allowed.

Storage
At exhibition times, the re-location of furniture and equipment to other places is unavoidable. Nevertheless, care must be taken to ensure that precautions are taken during the movement and storage of furniture so that safety standards are maintained. In particular, corridors, escape routes and exits must be kept clear, in accordance with the advice given above.
Electrical and Lighting Hazards
Some exhibits may require special lighting or a temporary source of electricity. The provision of this may only be made under the supervision and guidance of a qualified electrician or technician.

Any external cabling, for example in courtyards, must be protected from the elements, with the supply through a residual current device (RCD).

To create special effects, exhibitors may wish to alter the level of lighting for their displays. This should only be permissible where adequate lighting remains for emergency escape purposes within rooms. Lighting levels may not be altered on escape routes, staircases or above emergency exits.

Any electrical work, or the introduction of special electrical equipment, may only be made with the written consent of the Head of School, Estates Management Team or Health and Safety Officer.

All existing electrical power sockets used must be accessible at all times with either an access hole or hinged panel made in the partition walls to enable immediate isolation at source of any electrical equipment being used in the room/studio.

Potentially Hazardous Exhibits
Some exhibits, by their nature, may be potentially hazardous. These include sculptures with sharp or protruding edges, wax sculptures and displays lit with candles. They may not be placed in corridors, foyers or on landings and staircases. Such exhibits should only be placed in suitable protected halls or studios and should be cordoned off to prevent visitors getting too close.

Smoking
Smoking is not permitted in any building by law.
**Safe System of Work**

**EXIBITION MOUNTING – DISPLAY PANELS AND LIGHTING**

In planning the exhibition layout, the organiser should ensure that:

- Escape routes are kept clear
- Fire extinguishers are provided in accessible locations
- Fire alarm points are accessible
- All safety signs are visible

When erecting or demounting panels, ensure that:

- Panels are stored flat or sideways, not end on
- Insecure panels are not left unattended
- Safe lifting and moving techniques are used, appropriate to the weight of the panels
- Finished runs of panelling are checked for stability
- Low hazard cleaning materials are used, not solvents

When fitting temporary lighting or other electrical effects, ensure that:

- Equipment is inspected before use for electrical safety
- Equipment is fixed securely
- The installation is fitted with an RCD and checked for electrical safety
- Cables do not pose a tripping hazard, tape over or highlight if necessary

Further advice and information could be sought from the Estates Manager ext. 4549 who will advise on Fire/Evacuation matters and Electrical Safety.
Primary structural elements for exhibition construction

90°

105°

120°

135°

150°
Typical examples of exhibition structures