



## Automatic Fire Alarms

### General rules

Many unwanted fire signals are the result of ignorance on the part of employees or contractors who may not be aware that an automatic fire system is in operation.

A few simple rules along with normal good house-keeping practices can help to keep these unwanted nuisance signals to a minimum.

### Rule 1

Staff and contractors should always be made aware that the building is protected by an automatic detection system.

Display permanent notices at the entrances to all areas equipped with automatic fire detection, to read:

'This area is protected by automatic fire detectors. Before undertaking any work involving heat, smoke, flame or sparks, please obtain clearance to proceed from the Plant Manager or Security Officer'

### Rule 2

Staff or visiting contractors to be instructed that no activity generating heat, smoke, flame or sparks is to be carried without prior authorisation from the fire safety officer or other responsible member of the managerial staff.

Ensure instructions are in staff contracts and operating manuals, and contracts for subcontractors include a clause requiring them to acknowledge in writing their responsibility for ensuring that their on-site staff follow the rules.

### Rule 3

No renovation work involving the generation of dust or paint spray to should be carried out in any area protected by automatic smoke detectors, unless proper precautions have been taken to protect the automatic fire detectors against the entry of dust. Transfer contractual liability to the subcontractor as for Rule 2.

Establish a named person in your own organisation to be responsible for engaging qualified persons to remove smoke detectors and replace with heat detectors when necessary. If removal is not possible arrange for detectors to be covered whilst dust raising work is carried out.

**Warning:** The operation of detectors covered with plastic or paper covers will be impaired, if not disabled, by this action. Alternative manual surveillance must be arranged whilst the system is disabled.

A named, senior member of the occupier's staff should be made responsible for ensuring that the covers are removed and the system reinstated, as soon as all residual dust has been removed. An operational test of the system by a qualified person is recommended following any redecorating or building work in a protected area.

Compliance with these simple rules will help to release the fire service for more essential duties, They may also help to save you from the permanent loss of business so frequently associated with a major fire.