

## ***Appendix E***

### **Effects of fire on people and behaviour of people in fire situations**

It is not expected that the fire risk assessor will have the skills of a behavioural psychologist. However, whilst most other aspects of fire safety are concerned with physical or system based issues, understanding human behaviour in the event of a fire is an essential part of the knowledge of a fire risk assessor's role.

Accordingly, the fire risk assessor should be able to;

- Anticipate the way people will generally behave in fire situations.
- Identify potential problems arising from the likely behaviour of people in the premises for which a fire risk assessment is being carried out.
- Within the action plan of the fire risk assessment, taking account of the likely behaviour of people in the premises in the event of fire, make recommendations for managerial or other measures considered necessary..

To enable the fire risk assessor to carry out the above, the fire risk assessor should;

- Be aware of hazards to people from fire, namely loss of visibility, elevated temperature, toxic gases and oxygen depletion.
- Be aware of current professional thinking and practical guidance on human behaviour in fire, including case studies.
- Be able to anticipate the likely behaviour of people in fire for those premises being assessed.
- Be aware of the effect of splitting of family groups.
- Be aware of the likely response of people to discovery of a fire.
- Be aware of the likely response of people to a fire alarm signal.
- Understand the effect of frequent false alarms on willingness to evacuate.
- Understand the importance of the actions of those in charge at the time of a fire.
- Understand the importance of staff training and the influence of training and drills on occupant behaviour in the event of fire.
- Understand the importance of a structured emergency plan.
- Understand the effect of different cultures on fire and evacuation behaviour.
- Understand the effect of escape route design on evacuation behaviour, including the tendency to use familiar egress routes.