



National
Operational
Learning

Action note

Action note - 20181115-1446 - A

Issued on 25/07/2019



NFCC

Fire Central
Programme Office

Developed and maintained by the NFCC



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Overview of event

It was identified at an incident that the magnetic door locks at a care home were wired into the fire alarm sounder circuit, which resulted in the magnetic locks re-energising when the alarm was silenced. As the care home had residents with dementia, the staff silenced the alarm once the location of the fire was identified to reduce the distress caused to these residents. This resulted in one of the final fire exit doors out of part of the building reenergising (locking) and resulted in a resident having to be evacuated past the fire. A further final fire exit door in the premises that was initially opened on the activation of the alarm and used as a means of escape was subsequently blown shut by the wind after the alarm was silenced. This resulted in staff being unable to re-enter the building to continue with the evacuation of residents.

Summary of learning

The possibility of other systems being wired into the sounder circuit of some older fire alarms.

The impact that silencing the alarm can have on operations, if other systems are wired into the sounder circuit.

NOLUG Recommendations

NOLUG has worked closely with the NFCC prevention and protection committee to formulate the following actions:

National Operational Guidance is being amended to recognise the potential for this to occur and associated control measures.

Recommendations for Fire and Rescue Services are detailed below.

Recommended actions

- Recommend Fire and Rescue Services consider appropriate communication, informing their relevant Fire Protection staff of the potential for deactivation of magnetic door locks, where these are connected to the sounder system of fire alarm systems.



- Recommend Fire & Rescue Services carry out any relevant actions that assure the correct operation of magnetic door locks, particularly in premises where there are identified vulnerable residents, such as residential care homes.
- Recommend Fire and Rescue Service's Protection departments share this information with their partner agencies via an appropriate means, such as Local Resilience Forums.
- Recommend Fire and Rescue Services consider appropriate communication to their operational crews, to make them aware of the potential risks associated with silencing a fire alarm system, in relation to the operation of magnetic door locking systems.

Contact information

NOL would be keen to hear of any further associated learning identified by fire and rescue services as a result of this Action Note. Please contact: NOLmail@ukfrs.com