



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Buildings and Estates Policy Re: Out-of-Hours Access to Buildings

(Rev 2 Oct 2012)

Safety & Security Issues

Buildings occupied during the normal working day are relatively safe. This is due to a number of reasons including:

- Supervision by staff and faculty
- Safety in numbers

This obviously is not the case with sparsely occupied buildings out-of-hours which may have no internal supervision whatsoever. There are a number of obvious hazards in such a circumstance including intruders/unauthorized access, fire etc.

The Department of the Environment document : *Code of Practice for the Management of Fire Safety in Places of Assembly* gives, along with principles outlined in other documentation such as Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act etc. specific requirements for ensuring fire safety management of buildings. These principles can also be applied to management of general safety within buildings.

The first clause, Clause 1.1, of the document states:

“It shall be the duty of every person having control over premises to which this section applies to take all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire on such premises, and to ensure as far as its reasonably practicable the safety of persons on the premises in the event of an outbreak of fire.”

It is reasonable to extend the “duty of every person having control” to cover general safety also in accordance with the spirit and intent of Safety Health & Welfare legislation.

Accordingly, when requesting or making arrangements for out-of-hours access to buildings, it is the duty of anyone having control to any extent, (head of dept, lecturer, manager, group leader, chief technical officer etc) to ensure appropriate systems, procedures and measures are in place to ensure the safety of all occupants - ideally by means of a formal risk assessment.

Cont.

Examples of systems include:

1. Providing a presence at a strategic point inside the entrance to note who is accessing the building and to liaise with campus security etc.
2. Nomination of group leaders on a per session basis: the group nominates two or more individuals to act as leaders for the duration of the session. The leaders announce themselves to and liaise with campus security throughout the session (generally for ad-hoc type sessions).
3. Sign-in/Sign-out System:- A log is maintained in a suitable location. All users sign in and out. Security check the log at agreed intervals.

Those are examples of some relatively simple systems that can be used to improve safety and security. The ultimate solution is based on a number of factors such as : occupancy patterns, duration, nature of activity etc. It can be (but is not limited to) a combination of some or all of the above.

Buildings and Estates will meet with those wishing to arrange out-of-hours access and will advise and discuss options. Provided B&E are satisfied with the arrangements for safety, we will then put in place the necessary controls, lines of communication with security etc. to support the controls put in place by those making the arrangements.

The important point to note is that safety is the responsibility of

“every person having control”

B&E will support the activity only where we are satisfied that reasonable and practical controls have been put in place by the organisers.