

FIRE ALARMS

Activations and Evacuations

Here's what you need to know

Every year false fire activations and evacuations cost the Gatwick Airport Community a significant amount of time and money and impact negatively on the operational performance and reputation of the business.

In the lead up to what is again predicted to be Gatwick's busiest summer on record, we as a Gatwick Family, have a crucial role to play in supporting our fellow colleagues, minimising the potential for disruption and delivering a positive experience for passengers. Reducing the number of false fire alarm activations and evacuations is an important element in helping to achieve this goal.

Why do we need to reduce activations?

Safety of staff and passengers is a top priority for Gatwick and our focus needs to be on prevention and detection of real fires, not false ones.

Fire alarm activations, if not dealt with appropriately, will result in a full staff and passenger evacuation. This can bring airport operations to a halt and the effects can last hours and sometimes even days.

One 30 minute evacuation has the potential to result in any or all of the following:

- £30,000 in lost revenue for the airport and businesses
- Thousands of hours lost in staff and passenger time
- Up to 30 flights delayed, redirected or cancelled
- Up to 6,000 passengers being evacuated
- Up to 1,900 bags being offloaded
- Hundreds of kilograms of wasted food
- Additional workloads and pressure on staff
- Lost On Time Performance for the remainder of the day
- Up to 10,000 unhappy passengers who may look to fly from another airport next time
- Crowding in check-in areas, at security and in departure lounges.

Why are activations and evacuations happening?

Human behaviour is the cause of 85% of all activations across the airport. On over 150 occasions last year a fire alarm was falsely triggered which either caused or could have caused a full staff or passenger evacuation.

Smoke is not the only cause of fire activations - dust, steam, fumes, vibrations and heat also activate alarms. There are approximately 30,000 fire detection devices located all over the airport to ensure your safety, many of which are not visible.

Some of the most common and easily prevented causes of activations are as follows:

- Vaping/e-cigarettes being used indoors
- Working without isolating a fire detection device or isolating the wrong device
- Excess steam from cleaning hot surfaces or leaving hot taps running
- Staff and passengers mistaking a fire alarm for a door release button
- Fumes from idling vehicles parked near entry/exit doors
- Air fresheners, deodorants and fly sprays being used in close proximity to fire detection devices
- Kitchen appliances being used in unapproved areas
- Kitchen appliances being switch on and left unattended.

What we need you to do!

Next year, the Airport's target is to reduce activations and evacuations by 20% and 30% respectively.

As a member of the Gatwick Family and someone who is impacted either directly or indirectly every time an evacuation occurs we need your help to do the following:

- Think about what you are doing daily at the airport and identify any actions or activities which may set off a fire alarm.
- Use the information in this document to make your teams, colleagues and stakeholders aware of the issue and think about how you can play a role in helping to fix this problem.
- Share and promote any communications on this issue through your internal channels.
- Ensure you and your teams have completed your Fire Safety Training.

Where to find out more?

If you have any questions about fire activations and evacuations, please get in touch with your EHS or Gatwick representative.

We're all responsible.