

HSE Incident Report

Incident Report

Date: 25th July 2023

Location: Shopping Mall, 123 High Street, Manchester

Incident Date: 13th June 2022

Investigator: Robert Anderson, Fire Safety Investigator - Manchester Fire Brigade

Executive Summary:

On 13th June 2022, a major fire broke out at a shopping mall located at 123 High Street, Manchester. The incident resulted in several injuries and significant property damage. As the Fire Safety Investigator for the Manchester Fire Brigade, I was assigned to conduct a thorough investigation to determine the cause, origin, and contributing factors of the fire. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the investigation.

Incident Overview:

At approximately 10:00 PM on 13th June 2022, emergency services received multiple calls reporting a fire at the shopping mall in question. The building was a large commercial complex, consisting of 3 floors.

Response:

The Manchester Fire Brigade responded promptly to the incident, dispatching several fire crews, including ladder units and specialized teams, to the scene. The fire was characterized as a high-intensity blaze, and its rapid spread posed significant challenges to the firefighting efforts.

Casualties and Injuries:

During the incident, 8 individuals sustained injuries of varying degrees. Emergency medical services



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were on-site to provide immediate medical assistance to the injured, and they were subsequently transported to nearby hospitals for further treatment. Tragically, 2 fatalities were reported as a result of the fire.

Investigation Findings:

Origin and Cause:

The investigation determined that the fire originated on the 3rd floor of the building. The exact cause of the fire is yet to be definitively established, and it remains a subject of ongoing investigation. Potential ignition sources in the area of origin, including electrical equipment, heating systems, and flammable materials, have been identified and will be closely examined for any signs of malfunction or misuse.

Fire Spread:

The fire quickly escalated due to the presence of combustible materials, inadequate fire compartmentalization, and a lack of fire-resistant barriers in the building's structure. The building's ventilation system, while designed to maintain air circulation, inadvertently aided the rapid spread of smoke and flames to lower floors.

Fire Safety Systems and Equipment:

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Preliminary observations suggest that some of the building's fire safety systems and equipment were not functioning optimally. Fire alarms on certain floors failed to activate, impeding early detection of the fire. Additionally, there were reports of malfunctioning fire extinguishers, which hindered firefighting efforts.

Evacuation Procedures:

The evacuation procedures in place at the shopping mall were not efficiently executed. Some occupants were unsure of the designated evacuation routes, leading to delays and confusion during the evacuation process. Proper fire drills and regular safety training for building occupants could have improved their response and facilitated a more organized evacuation.

Building Maintenance and Compliance:

A thorough examination of building maintenance records and compliance documents revealed several discrepancies related to fire safety measures. It was evident that the building had not undergone regular fire safety audits, and some fire safety installations, such as fire doors and fire suppression equipment, were not up to standard.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the investigation, the following recommendations are made to prevent similar incidents and enhance fire safety:

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Conduct a detailed investigation into the cause of the fire, involving specialists and relevant authorities, to ascertain the ignition source definitively.

Conduct a comprehensive review of the building's fire safety systems, including fire alarms, sprinkler systems, and fire suppression equipment, to ensure they are fully functional and well-maintained.

Implement regular fire safety drills and training for all building occupants to familiarize them with evacuation procedures and enhance their preparedness during emergencies.

Review and enhance the building's fire compartmentalization and fire-resistant barriers to prevent the rapid spread of fire between floors.

Perform a thorough inspection of fire doors, fire extinguishers, and other fire safety installations to ensure compliance with safety regulations.

Establish a maintenance schedule for all fire safety equipment and systems, conducting regular audits to ensure compliance with fire safety standards.

Collaborate with building management to improve communication and dissemination of emergency information to all occupants.

Conclusion:

The major fire incident at the shopping mall in Manchester on 13th June 2022 resulted in numerous injuries and significant property damage. The investigation has shed light on several factors contributing to the severity of the incident, including potential fire safety system malfunctions, inadequate evacuation procedures, and a lack of regular maintenance and compliance checks.

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As the Fire Safety Investigator for the Manchester Fire Brigade, I recommend implementing the aforementioned measures to enhance fire safety and prevent similar incidents in the future. The collaboration of all relevant stakeholders, including building management, regulatory authorities, and fire safety professionals, is essential to ensuring the safety of occupants and properties in high-rise buildings throughout the city.

Investigator's Name:

Robert Anderson

Fire Safety Investigator - Manchester Fire Brigade

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