

**Housing Standards Officer
Keven Hewitt (GIFireE)**



**Fire safety advice
for landlords**

Topics

- Legislation
- Basic principles of fire safety
- Fire risk assessment in domestic premises
- Fire safety guidance

Legislation

Fire safety within the home is an extremely important issue, especially in mixed use premises where unrelated occupiers, may live independently from one another and share the common areas of the same building.

For domestic premises the main body of legislation applies;

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005)
- Housing Act 2004
- The HMO Management Regulations (2006)
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005)

Requires any person with some level of control over a property ('Responsible Person') to: Take reasonable steps to reduce risk from fire and make sure anyone in the property can safely escape if a fire occurs.

Fire safety in the common areas of HMOs, blocks of flats or Maisonettes are controlled by the Regulatory (Fire safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO), and this lays down the legal requirements.

Housing Act 2004

Anyone who lets property to others is under a general duty in law to provide accommodation that is fit for the purpose and safe.

The Housing Act 2004 contains the powers which enable Councils to take action where a range of housing hazards, including the risk of fire. It also lays down the licensing requirements for larger HMO's and enables Councils to take control of HMO's where they seriously threaten the health, safety and well-being of occupiers or people in the locality.

HMO Management Regulations 2006

The HMO Management Regulations place duties on the manager of an HMO to keep the fabric, fixtures and fittings in good order, ensure that occupiers are protected from injury and supply and maintain gas, electricity and other services.

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 apply to all Landlords within England bar a few exceptions. Those exempt from the legislation include:

- Landlords sharing accommodation with their tenants
- Landlords granting a right of occupation for a term of 7 years or more
- Landlords who are registered providers of social housing

.

HMOs a higher risk!

National fire statistics 2017 / 2018 - fire relating to domestic premises (HMOs)

- Recorded fires in HMOs were higher than any other dwelling/tenure, as were serious injuries and fatalities as a result of fire.
- The risk of fatality as a result of fire is **six times** greater inside a HMO property in comparison to that of a single family home.
- The risk of fatality as a result of fire is **sixteen times** greater inside a HMO consisting of 3 or more stories.

When fire safety is not taken seriously it can have devastating consequences

In 2011, two tenants were killed when a fire tore through the property they rented in Walthamstow, London.

Two tenants aged 60 and 21 died in the fire which occurred around 11pm, on 27 July 2011 at a property in Woodlands Road, London.

Four fire engines and 20 firefighters were called to tackle the blaze that affected the ground floor, first floor and loft.

The house in multiple occupation (HMO) was owned by Mr Ashraf and contained five bedrooms, a shared kitchen and bathroom

The first tenant was found in the middle bedroom on the first floor and appeared to be unaware of the fire, as no attempts were made to leave.

The second tenant was found in the rear ground floor bedroom and it appears strenuous attempts to escape were made but was sadly failed.



London Fire Brigade inspectors visited the house the next day and found a number of serious fire safety breaches including:

- The front door was the only dedicated fire exit and was fitted with a mortice lock which, without use of a key, prevented it from being used in case of an emergency.
- No fire detectors or smoke alarms.
- No firefighting equipment.
- None of the doors provided 30 minutes fire resistance in the event of a fire.
- No proper fire risk assessment was in place for the property.

The Judge concluded that the fire could have easily been avoided had their landlord, Muhammad Ashraf, installed fire detectors, smoke alarms, and fire-fighting equipment, all of which could can been highlighted within a **Fire Risk Assessment.**

Landlord - was ordered to pay more than £22,000 in costs and given a six-month suspended sentence for the deaths of his tenants.

NFCC “You must carry out a Fire Risk Assessment for each property you rent out.”

- No particular system or method of fire risk assessment is mandatory; instead the Fire Safety Order concentrates on achieving satisfactory outcomes.
- The objective is to identify and evaluate all fire risks to which ‘relevant people’ are exposed and create a ‘suitable and sufficient’ fire risk assessment.
- 5 or more tenants requires a fire risk assessment to be documented.
- Suitable and sufficient



Suitable and Sufficient

Whilst the legislation does not define suitable and sufficient it is generally considered that a risk assessment should follow a step by step process.

5 Steps

1. Identify fire hazards

Source of ignition

Sources of fuel

Sources of oxygen

2. Identify the persons risk

People in and around the premises; and

People who are especially at risk

3. Evaluate the risks

Evaluate the risk of a fire starting.

Evaluate the risk to people from a fire.

Remove or reduce fire hazards.

Remove or reduce the risk to people from fire.

Protect people by introducing

4. Record findings and action taken:

Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

Record any major findings and action.

Discuss and work with other responsible people.

Prepare an emergency plan.

Inform and instruct relevant people.

Provide training.

Step 5: Review the risk assessment.

Review your fire risk assessment regularly.

Make changes where necessary.

Institute of fire engineers - Domestic Property FRA

“An organised and methodical look at the premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises. Most domestic premises covered will be relatively small and little fire safety expertise is required to carry out the fire risk assessment.”

Where do we draw the line??

- Single family dwelling
- Non-licensable HMO
- Licenced HMO

- Larger HMO

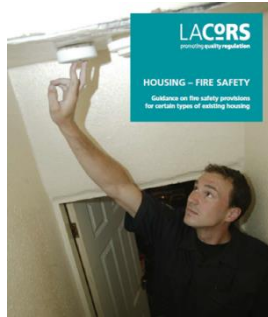
- Block of flats
- High Rise flats
- Housing people at particular risk
- Hotels / B&Bs
- Care homes
- Supported Living



Fire Safety Guidance available for non Fire Safety Experts



LACoRS



Fire safety provision and application to certain types of existing housing' which applies to:

- owner-occupied
- social housing or private rented sector (single household properties, shared houses, bedsit HMOs)
- purpose-built flats not in compliance with Building Regulations 1991 sheltered accommodation without care
- small hostels

LACoRS doesn't apply to:

- Post - Building Regulations 1991
- guest houses,
- bed and breakfast,
- hotels,
- large hostels,
- family accommodation centres,
- student halls of residence,
- holiday chalets and other for which the Fire Risk Assessment guide applies.

A Guide to Fire and Security Protection in Multi-Occupied Residential Properties



Revision 2015

Advice for Property Owners,
Managers and Contractors

Introduction	4-7
Chapter 1: Fire precautions	8-12
Chapter 2: A Guide to carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment in Multi-Occupied Residential Property	13-16
Detailed Fire Precautions Key Symbols	17
Chapter 3: Typical shared house accommodation layouts	18-29
Plan 1: Pre-1919 two storey shared house with stairway off living room	18
Plan 2: Pre-1919 two storey shared house with stairway off living room (alternative)	21
Plan 3: Pre-1919 two storey shared house with stairway off hall	24
Plan 4: Typical three storey shared type Victorian house	27
Chapter 4: Typical bedsit accommodation layouts	30 – 47
Plan 5: Typical pre-1919 two storey bedsit house with stairway off living room	30
Plan 6: Typical pre-1919 two storey bedsit house with stairway off living room (alternative)	33
Plan 7: Typical two storey bedsit type Victorian house	36
Plan 8: Typical two storey bedsit type Victorian house (alternative)	39
Plan 9: Typical three storey bedsit type Victorian house	42
Plan 10: Typical three storey bedsit type Victorian house (with cooking facilities in lets)	45

Chapter 4: Typical bedsit accommodation layouts
PLAN 9



In three storey bedsit type properties, a fire control panel is required as part of the fire detection / warning system.

**SCHEDULE TO PLAN No. 9: Typical three storey bedsit type Victorian house
with shared cooking facilities**

Detection/Warning	<p>Fire warning and detection system to be provided conforming to GRADE A of the current BS 5859 Part 6 (or equivalent).</p> <p>Automatic detection must provide LD2 coverage.</p> <p>In kitchens, a heat detector rather than a smoke detector must be installed.</p> <p>There are two types of smoke detector, 'ionisation' and 'optical'. Optical detectors are better in most situations, because they are less likely to give false alarms. See Appendix 1: Automatic fire detection and alarm systems, for further details.</p>
Control Panel	<p>To be sited close to the normal entrance to the dwelling.</p>

**Emergency
Lighting**

Subject to a fire risk assessment emergency lighting should not be necessary, provided that the escape route is not long or complex and there is effective artificial or borrowed lighting.

Where emergency lighting is considered to be necessary, it should be provided in accordance with the current BS 5266 Part 1 (or equivalent) to cover the protected escape route.

The location of light fittings is to be determined by the design / installing engineer. See Appendix 2 for further information.

Protected Route

The protected escape route is designed to allow for tenants from all parts of the building to reach the outside without passing through a higher fire risk area. The protected route **MUST** be kept clear of obstructions and combustible materials. The walls and ceilings of all parts of the protected route **MUST** be free of highly flammable materials i.e. polystyrene tiles or heavy flock wallpaper.

Subject to the findings of a fire risk assessment, electric meters within the protected route may need to be housed within a fire-resisting cupboard. Where gas meters are contained within the protected route see Appendix 9.

**SCHEDULE TO PLAN No. 9: Typical three storey bedsit type Victorian house
with shared cooking facilities**

<p>Protected Route <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>See Appendix 3 for further information regarding fire resisting construction of walls/partitions.</p>
<p>Fire Doors</p>	<p>A fire door (FS30S) must be installed in each doorway leading onto the protected escape route except bathrooms / WCs containing no fire risk. See Appendix 6 on fire doors.</p>
<p>Security of Doors</p>	<p>Locks on individual bedsit and final exit doors must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of keys. In addition, to improve the overall security of the property and to comply with advice from the Association of British Insurers, it is recommended that BS8621 mortice locks fitted with thumb turns are used on the exit doors; this is a mortice lock (sometimes called a sashlock) which conforms to British Standard BS8621 fitted with a 6 pin cylinder thumb turn.</p> <p>The final exit doors should also be solid and at least 44mm (1³/₄") thick and certified to British Standard PAS 24-1 'Doors of Enhanced Security'. For more information about BS8621 mortice thumb turn locks and PAS 24-1 doors please refer to the relevant section in Appendix 7: Door security.</p>
<p>Fire Separation</p>	<p>Floor/ ceiling construction including the under-stairs store and cellars must achieve a nominal 30 minute fire resistance. See Appendix 8 on how to achieve this.</p>

Fire Separation	Floor/ ceiling construction including the under-stairs store and cellars must achieve a nominal 30 minute fire resistance. See Appendix 8 on how to achieve this.
Fire Blankets	A fire blanket to BS 6575 (or equivalent) is to be provided in each kitchen. The blanket must be mounted on the wall 1.5m high adjacent to an exit door away from the cooking facility.
Extinguishers	For further guidance see page 11.
Other recommendations	<p>Polystyrene ceiling tiles should not be used within the premises.</p> <p>Heaters – portable heaters using gas cylinders or flammable liquids should not be used or stored in the premises.</p>

Appendices

1. Fire Alarm Systems
2. Emergencies lighting
3. Fire resistance of walls and partitions
4. Escape Windows
5. Window Security
6. Fire Doors & Frames
7. Door Security
8. Upgrading Floor and Ceilings
9. Gas Meters within a Protected Escape route
10. Automatic Fire Suppression Systems
11. Perimeter Security
12. Basement fire precautions
13. Samples

Recording of Significant Findings from the Fire Risk Assessment

(Homestamp form H2)

Record of Significant Findings from the Fire Risk Assessment			
Risk Assessment for:		Assessment undertaken by:	
Address:		Completed by:	
		Signature:	
Postcode:		Date:	
Floor unit (for large multi-unit properties)		Property type:	
Step 1: Identify fire hazards			
Sources of ignition:			
Sources of fuel:			
Step 2: People at risk:			
Step 3: Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk			
3.1 Evaluate the risk of the fire occurring			
3.2 Evaluate the risk to people from a fire starting at the premises			
3.3 Remove or reduce the hazards that may cause a fire			
3.4 Remove and reduce the remaining risks to people from a fire			
Assessment Review			
Next review date:			
Risk assessment completed by:			
Signature:			
Review outcome (where substantial changes have occurred a new record sheet should be used)			
Notes:			
1. This risk assessment record of significant findings should refer to other plans, records or documents as necessary.			
2. The information in this record should assist you to develop an emergency plan, co-ordinate measures with any other 'responsible persons' in the building, train any staff and inform residents.			
© Homestamp 2009 supplied with A Guide to Fire and Security Protection in Multi-Occupied Residential Premises. To download go to www.homestamp.com Form H2			

Final messages

- Ensure that you have a fire risk assessment in place if required
- Satisfy yourself that your fire risk assessment is suitable and sufficient (Review in line with the Home Stamp Guide)
- If you don't feel comfortable conducting a fire risk assessment seek assistance from a fire safety professional