



FIRE SAFETY IN HOUSING STOCK & COMMON AREAS (LSM) 2020

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to provide a robust fire safety framework which can be implemented to secure the safety and wellbeing of tenants, visitors and firefighters.
- 1.2 The procedures detailed within this section are intended to facilitate the effective management of fire safety, ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and all other relevant legislation.

2.0 Definitions

Common Area – *“A common area is a portion of a property that is shared and used by multiple residents. This would include areas such as the lobby, stairway and hallway.”*

Compartmentation – *“subdivision of a building by fire-resisting walls and/or floors for the purpose of limiting fire spread within the building.”*

Competent Person – *“person, suitably trained and qualified by knowledge and practical experience, and provided with the necessary instructions, to enable the required task(s) to be carried out correctly.”*

Dwelling – *“a house, flat, or other place of residence.”*

Emergency Lighting – *“lighting provided for use when the supply to normal lighting fails.”*

Fire Door – *“door or shutter provided for the passage of people, air or objects which, together with its frame and furniture as installed in a building, is intended (when closed) to resist the passage of fire and/or gaseous products of combustion, and is capable of meeting specified performance criteria to those ends.”*

Smoke Alarm – *“device containing, within one housing, all the components, necessary for detecting smoke and for giving an audible alarm.”*

Sprinkler System – *“a system comprising thermos-sensitive devices designed to react at a pre-determined temperature to automatically release a stream of water and distribute it in a specified pattern and quantity over a designated area.”*

HMO – *“a house, premises or a group of premises with shared amenities, occupied by three or more persons from three or more families as their only or main residence.”*

3.0 References

- BS 5839-6:2013
- Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Domestic Technical Handbook (as revised)
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

4.0 Fire and Smoke Alarms

4.1 The Association will provide:

- one functioning smoke alarm in the room which is frequently used by the occupants for general daytime living purposes;
- one functioning smoke alarm in every circulation space, such as hallways and landings; and
- one heat alarm in every kitchen.

4.2 All alarms will be interlinked, mains powered, and provided with an integral stand-by power supply (a minimum of class D).

4.3 The Association will ensure that fire and smoke alarms are in proper working order at the start of each tenancy.

4.4 The Association will ensure that all alarms are installed in accordance with the recommendations contained in BS5839 Part 6.

4.5 Specialised alarms will be given to tenants who have a disability, an impairment or special needs (e.g. smoke alarms with a vibrating pad, flashing light etc.).

4.6 Tenants will be advised to test alarms on a weekly basis.

5.0 Carbon Monoxide Alarms

5.1 Carbon monoxide alarms will be installed in any room containing a fossil fuel burning appliance.

6.0 Emergency Lighting

6.1 For blocks of flats and maisonettes, emergency lighting will be present in all communal areas and common escape routes.

6.2 The emergency lighting system will be designed to automatically illuminate upon the failure of the power supply.

- 6.3 The emergency lighting system will be tested on a monthly basis by a member of staff with a record of the test maintained for three years.
- 6.4 An annual discharge test will be performed by a competent person. This will involve simulating a power failure and conducting a test of the full rated duration of the emergency lights (e.g. three hours).

7.0 Fire Doors and Compartmentation

- 7.1 Buildings containing flats and maisonettes will be split into fire-resisting compartments by fire-resisting doors, walls and floors which will provide a physical barrier to fire.
- 7.2 Doors connecting shared parts of a multi-occupancy dwelling, such as the doors to individual flats or apartments will be rated fire doors.
- 7.3 For homes with an integral garage, the door that joins the garage to the main part of the house will be a fire door.
- 7.4 Doors used for plant rooms and service penetrations such as rubbish chutes will be fire rated.

8.0 Emergency Exit Doors

- 8.1 The Association will ensure all doors which are to be used in an emergency can be opened from the inside without the use of a key.

9.0 Smoke Ventilation

- 9.1 Communal areas will have adequate smoke ventilation either through natural means or by mechanical ventilation.

10.0 Fire Equipment

- 10.1 Sprinklers will be installed where the Association is unable to reduce particular risks by other means.
- 10.2 Fire extinguishers will not be installed in dwellings as tenants will not be trained on the safe use of extinguishers. Accidents can occur if tenants try to use them in the event of a fire or if they are discharged through malice or horseplay.

11.0 Furniture and Furnishings

- 11.1 Where furniture and furnishings are provided, the Association will ensure they are fully compliant with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

12.0 Evacuation Policy

- 12.1 Where appropriate fire evacuation procedures and fire assembly points will be clearly contained in tenancy handbooks or tenancy start-up packs which will be issued to all tenants at the start of a tenancy.

- 12.2 Alternative methods will be available for tenants with language or learning difficulties (e.g. an interpreter will be used, a copy will be in braille, an audio version will be available etc.).

13.0 Signage

- 13.1 Fire action signs will be placed in corridors (on every level), entrance doors and common areas. Where fire safety signs are provided they will be in accordance with BS 5499 and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

14.0 Maintenance and Repairs

- 14.1 The Association will ensure premises, equipment and devices provided for fire safety are subject to a suitable system of maintenance, are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.
- 14.2 All repairs will be carried out within the timescale set in the Association's repair policy by a competent person.

15.0 Access and Facilities for the Fire Service

- 15.1 The Association will ensure:
- there is sufficient means of external access to enable fire appliances to be brought near to the building for effective use;
 - there is sufficient means of access into, and within, the building for firefighting personnel to effect search and rescue and fight fire; and that
 - the building is provided with sufficient internal fire mains and other facilities to assist firefighters in their tasks.

16.0 Fire Risk Assessment

- 16.1 The legal requirements relating to Fire Risk Assessing are complex and are often taken to exclude domestic premises.

However, the Association has a legal duty to risk assess all areas defined as 'workplaces', which will include plant rooms and other non-tenant-accessible areas.

Furthermore, the fire regulations require common areas to be maintained in a certain condition suitable for the fire authority, which can often only be ensured by carrying out a risk assessment.

(For the avoidance of doubt the Association currently has no buildings which are classified as "high rise").

The Association will devise a Fire Risk Assessment Strategy and arrange for the undertaking of fire risk assessments (and regular reviews) by competent consultants in accordance with the Strategy.

The following will be considered in developing the risk assessment strategy:

- High rise buildings pose a particular risk to tenants and often exhibit significant uncontrolled risks
- 'Workplaces' such as plant rooms come within the scope of the regulations so far as fire risk assessing is required
- Common areas of domestic premises require to be maintained in a certain condition and may benefit from a 'representative' risk assessing programme.

17.0 Tenant Responsibilities

17.1 The Association will include fire safety obligations within tenancy agreements and will issue regular fire safety information packs and leaflets to remind tenants to:

- test smoke alarms on a weekly basis;
- ensure all communal areas are not obstructed; and
- ensure fire doors are not propped open or otherwise disabled.

18.0 Licensed Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and commercial premises

18.1 All policies listed above will be applied. In addition to these, all licenced HMOs and commercial premises managed by the Association:

- Will be fire risk assessed by a competent assessor, with periodicity determined by the fire risk assessment;
- Will have doors opening in the direction of escape;
- Will be supplied with appropriate, maintained extinguishers;
- Will have the fire evacuation procedure details relayed to relevant persons via the methods detailed in section 12.1 in the case of HMOs and via staff training for commercial premises.

18.2 Within commercial premises not managed by the Association, the responsibility for the completion of the fire risk assessment will fall upon the tenant. A copy of the completed fire risk assessment will be held by both the tenant and the Association.

19.0 Review

This policy will be subject to review at least every 3 years.

George Tainsh
Chief Executive

10th November 2020

Policy Consultation and Review Process

Reviewed by Senior Management Team	24 th November 2020
Reviewed by the HSEHR Committee	16 th December 2020

APPROVED BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	28th January 2021
Date of Next Review	January 2024

Approved