



# FIRE SAFETY IN MULTI-STOREY TOWER BLOCKS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There are several fundamental differences between how fire safety should be managed in blocks of flats compared to other types of building. Variations in both construction type and fire safety systems within buildings will influence whether a stay put or an evacuation policy is selected for a particular building.
- 1.2 The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 places a responsibility on duty holders to carry out a risk assessment of the fire risk present in premises under their control, including multi-storey tower blocks – this is for non domestic areas only, such as plant rooms, utility cupboards and risers.
- 1.3 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is the authority responsible for enforcing this regulation.
- 1.4 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) England and Wales specifically deals with common parts of blocks of flats bringing them within the scope of mainstream fire safety legislation in England and Wales, as well as providing guidance for good practice throughout the United Kingdom.
- 1.5 Further, the Scottish Government have produced a document “Practical fire safety - existing high rise domestic buildings: guidance” which recommends that the common areas of high-rise buildings are subject to a Fire Risk Assessment.
- 1.6 ng homes and others responsible for fire safety have limited control over the activities of tenants within their flats; this is compounded by other parts of the building perhaps being under different ownership.

- 1.7 Varying levels of knowledge regarding fire safety will exist among tenants. It is important, therefore, that tenants are fully informed regarding their responsibilities in Fire Safety within the building.
- 1.8 The purpose of this document is to ensure that ng homes complies with all current Legislation, Regulations and Health and Safety Executive Guidance Notes. The purpose of the document is also to engender "best practice" within ng homes.

## **2.0 FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

### **2.1 Statement of Intent**

It is the policy of ng homes to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, no persons are exposed to risks to their health from smoke or fire in any of the tower blocks it owns or occupies.

### **2.2 Policy Statement**

The organisations Fire Safety Policy conforms to the Health and Safety Legislation, Regulations, Approved Code of Practice and Guidance Note referred to in Section 1. The Policy and Procedures will apply to all tower blocks and all individuals employed by the Housing Organisation, and to contractors/subcontractors engaged by the Organisation **without exception**.

### **2.3 The Organisations Policy on Fire Safety in Tower Blocks is:**

- i. To conduct Fire Safety risk assessments within each tower block owned by ng homes to identify what fire hazards exist and what measures have (or will be) taken to comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidance and to minimise the risk. Fire Safety risk assessments will be conducted by competent persons and the findings, and any recommended actions, will be given all due consideration.

- ii. From the results of the Fire Safety risk assessment, a fire action plan will be implemented for each tower block detailing whether an evacuation or stay put policy is enacted.
- iii. From the results of the Fire Safety risk assessment, a policy will be formulated for tenants on the use of common areas for each tower block.
- iv. To ensure all fire safety equipment within each tower block, including fire detection systems, fire extinguishers, safety signage, and escape equipment are compliant with relevant standards and the actions identified in risk assessments and are maintained in a safe condition.
- v. To ensure safety checks on all fire safety equipment are carried out in accordance with British Standards, guidance procedures and/or manufacturers instructions.
- vi. To keep a record of all safety checks carried out for at least two years.
- vii. Provide information to tenants on take up of tenancy to adequately protect them against the risk from fire.
- viii. Liaise with emergency services regarding the layout of the building, access for fire services, hydrant locations, wet and dry risers, suitability of lifts for fire-fighters and their equipment and the demographic of tenants within the building.
- ix. Ensure staff and any contractors are provided with basic fire awareness training.
- x. Manage the risks from any building works carried out. In particular, putting in place processes for scrutinising planned alterations in order to consider their impact on fire safety.
- xi. To ensure any overcladding on our buildings are not high risk, by obtaining advice from a qualified and competent specialist on the nature of, and fire

risks associated with, any external wall construction, including any external cladding systems.

- xii. To ensure there are regular inspections on any third party electrical equipment which are sited in our loft areas or roof spaces.