



Fire safety in high rise apartments

Important information



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If you live in a high rise apartment, there are things you should know about how to prevent fires and what to do if fire breaks out. Please read this factsheet carefully and keep it handy.

Built-in safety features

Your building has been designed and built with fire safety in mind.

- Walls and doors between apartments, stairs and corridors are specially designed to resist fire and stop the spread of smoke. When not in use all corridor and apartment entrance doors must always be kept closed.
- The lift system has been designed to enable firefighters to use it in a fire emergency situation. They are not available in emergency fire evacuations.
- Where dry risers are provided in your building, these will be used by members of the fire service to fight a fire if one breaks out in your building, you must not tamper or interfere with these outlets as this will compromise yours and others safety should a fire break out.

- Roads and other areas outside are designed to enable emergency vehicles to get as near as possible to the building and the dry riser inlet. Do not block or stand on the access road to the main entrance in an emergency situation.
- If you do not have a phone, there will be a public phone not far away, which can be used to call the fire brigade, do not assume someone else has reported it.

Don't block your escape route

- Remember, when you share a building with other families, your safety and theirs depends on everyone co-operating.
- In your own home, do not block your hall or put portable heaters or anything that catches fire easily there. It is the only escape route for you and your family.
- Do not place any personal items including mobility scooters into common areas; this includes bin rooms and meter cupboards or stairways. WDH have a responsibility to ensure these areas are free of combustible materials.

What to do if fire breaks out in your apartment

- Alert any other people in the apartment.
- Leave the room at once, and close all windows and the door behind you if it is safe to do so, make sure you close the entrance door to your apartment. Don't tackle the fire yourself, unless you are sure it is safe to do so.
- Don't use balconies which are not part of an escape route.
- Call the fire brigade by dialling 999 on the nearest phone. This is a free service, even from your mobile, you won't need to pay money if you have to use call box.
- If you have to leave the building, use the staircase, not the lift.
- Leave the building and wait for the fire service near the entrance, you can then advise them where the fire is in your block.

If fire breaks out elsewhere in your building

- It will normally be safe for you to stay in your own apartment. If your apartment is affected by heat or smoke from elsewhere in the block, leave at once, closing all windows and doors behind you.
- Keep low to the floor as there will be less smoke and visibility will be better.

- If you are unable to leave your apartment due to smoke in the corridors, you should block the bottom of your door with wet cloths, move to a window furthest away from the door and try to raise the alarm.

Smoke alarms save lives!

Smoke alarms are fitted in your home.

- You should test the alarm each week to make sure it is working properly. Never remove the batteries, unless you are replacing them. Hoovering the smoke alarm every six months will help to make sure dust does not affect its ability to warn you should a fire occur.
- A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stages of a fire. If there is a fire in your home it sounds a piercing alarm to warn you. Many people killed in house fires are asleep at the time.
- A smoke alarm will wake you up and give you vital extra time to escape.
- Remember your actions can affect the safety of others in the building. Please follow the advice and instructions in this factsheet.

How to prevent fires

- Never leave children alone. Keep matches and lighters out of reach and don't let children near cooking or heating appliances when in use.
- Look out for older people and make sure they take sensible precautions.
- Don't smoke in bed. This is a major cause of fires in the home. Always finish your cigarette before going to bed, and make sure that they are stubbed out properly.
- Never leave candles unattended. Candles are naked flames, make sure you put candles and incense sticks right out at night.
- Chip pans are another major source of fires in the home. Do not fill them more than a third full of fat. Never leave the pan without turning off the heat. If the pan does catch fire, turn off the heat, if safe to do so. Do not throw water on it or put wet towels over the pan. Turn off the heat and leave for at least half an hour. Avoid the use of chip pans if you can. If yours and the safety of others is at risk, leave the apartment and close doors and windows as you leave, then call the fire brigade on 999.
- Have your heaters serviced every year. Make sure they can't be knocked over, and keep them away from furniture and furnishings, also make sure nothing can fall on to the heater.
- Before going to bed, switch off all electrical appliances, except those which are designed to be left on such as DVD recorders. Carefully remove plugs from electrical sockets. Check ashtrays for burning cigarette ends and pipes. Close all internal doors. Check there is nothing blocking the hallway or front door.
- Do not place hot or burning items into the waste disposal chutes or rubbish bins.
- Do not place any large items of furniture or rubbish outside your apartment or outside the bin rooms. Removal of large or bulky items can be arranged through the local authority refuse collection service. Phone Wakefield Council's Contact Centre on 0345 8 506 506.

For a free Home Fire Safety Check you can ring freephone 0800 587 45 36.

The advice contained in this leaflet is only appropriate to high rise apartments in blocks built to the requirements laid down in British Standard Code of Practice 3: BS5588: Part 1: 1990. If you are in doubt, phone OneCALL 0345 8 507 507.

We are committed to providing equal access to information. If you would like this information in another format, please phone us on 0345 8 507 507.