

Checklist for fire safety in purpose-built flats

No.	Action	✓
1	<p>Risk assessment</p> <p>Ensure that you have carried out and implemented a full fire safety risk assessment as required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). These assessments have to be reviewed regularly and updated as and when necessary, particularly when major changes have occurred. Failure to carry out an adequate assessment and to implement it could result in prosecution or other legal action.</p>	
2	<p>The assessment required by the FSO relates only to the common areas of the building, but you would be well advised to carry out an assessment of other parts of the building too. Do not forget that the common ways are affected by other areas, (for example, are flat entrance doors fire resisting?) and you need to consider them anyway. The common areas under the Housing Act and the FSO also include the exterior of the property and any associated cladding.</p>	
3	<p>Emergency actions and information for residents</p> <p>Establish the design criteria and the planned emergency actions for the building; for example are residents intended to stay-put in their flats or to evacuate in the event of a fire? (NB Whichever is decided the risk assessment should confirm that it is a viable option. In the case of a stay-put policy the assessment should confirm that the structural compartmentation is suitable). Ensure that residents and any staff know what to do in the event of a fire. Do not forget to tell new residents and new staff. This needs to be checked with the Fire service, who can assist you with details of delayed evacuations.</p>	
4	<p>Keeping escape routes clear</p> <p>Ensure that all staircase enclosures and escape routes are kept free from obstructions, combustible materials (including curtains) and other items that could be a potential ignition source, propagate a fire or hinder escape in an emergency. Such areas should not be used for the storage of any items (including recycling bins, refuse bins, furniture, bicycles, motor cycles, plant pots etc). Care should also be taken with the decoration of these areas to ensure that the surface spread of flame Class 0 is maintained.</p>	
5	<p>The fire and rescue service have experienced a number of fires originating from mobility scooters, which not only cause an obstruction but are also a potential source of ignition. Careful consideration needs to be given to the storage of mobility scooters to ensure that they do not present an unacceptable hazard to fire safety.</p>	
6	<p>Protection of escape routes</p> <p>Ensure that all doors, fanlights, partitions, etc, forming staircase enclosures, lobbies, escape routes, etc, have at least 30 minutes fire resistance; are in good order; and that doors are self-closing without excessive gaps around them.</p>	

	All fire doors should also be fitted with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals.	
7	<p>Smoke venting</p> <p>Ensure that openable vents, automatic opening vents and any ancillary equipment designed to remove smoke in the event of a fire are in good order. (Experience suggests that these are often sealed shut or removed). This will include vents at the head of staircases, which might be operated by localised smoke detection, remotely by the operation of a break glass device or manually. A programme of routine checking and maintenance is vital.</p>	
8	<p>Fire separation</p> <p>Ensure that there is adequate fire separation between individual flats and between each flat and the common areas. For example, floors between flats should be imperforate and fire resisting in order to prevent the spread of smoke and fire. Unfortunately, experience nationally and locally suggests that these areas are often breached, for example by electrical, television or computer wiring or by plumbing. Where this has occurred remedial action is vital. You should also take steps to ensure that in future appropriate making-good is carried out after maintenance works such as rewiring, plumbing, etc.</p>	
9	<p>Emergency lighting and signs</p> <p>Ensure that emergency lighting and signs, where needed, are appropriate and in good order. A programme of routine checking and maintenance is vital.</p>	
10	<p>Electrical safety</p> <p>Ensure that electrical installations are in good order and do not pose a fire risk. If there is no current electrical safety certificate you are advised to arrange for a "Periodic Inspection Report" from a competent electrical engineer having regard to the current regulations of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.</p> <p>Combustible material should not be stored in close proximity to electrical intakes. Where intakes are in common areas they should be contained with suitable fire resistant construction and kept secure.</p>	
11	<p>Cable safety</p> <p>Ensure that fire alarm and other cables are adequately fixed to prevent them falling and becoming an obstruction in the event of a fire. Nationally there have been fatalities related to people becoming entangled in cables that fell from above during fires.</p>	
12	<p>Sources of ignition</p> <p>Ensure that potential sources of ignition or fuel, such as boiler rooms and gas installations, are safe and contained within suitable fire resisting construction. Where possible eliminate unnecessary potential ignition sources by replacing with something less dangerous.</p>	
13	<p>Firefighting equipment</p> <p>Ensure that any firefighting equipment provided is in good order and that</p>	

	<p>staff such as caretakers have had adequate training for using it. Dry risers provided for use by the fire and rescue service must also be kept accessible and in good order. A programme of routine checking and maintenance is vital.</p>	
14	<p>Automatic fire detection and warning</p> <p>Where automatic fire detection and warning systems are provided these must be appropriate and kept in good order. A programme of routine checking and maintenance is vital.</p> <p>Careful consideration should be given as to what is needed and appropriate for the building bearing in mind its design and the intended emergency procedures.</p> <p>Unwanted fire signals should be appropriately managed and recorded so as to comply with the requirements of BS5839 Part 3. (This is important to prevent complacency from residents who would eventually expect an actuation to be a false alarm and would therefore not react appropriately). The causes of unwanted signals should be investigated and, where possible, eliminated.</p>	
15	<p>Fire safety awareness training & information</p> <p>Ensure that all residents and any staff such as caretakers are given adequate fire safety information specific to the building. They should know what to do in the event of a fire and staff should know what to do to maintain fire precautions, eg how to deal with faults and what maintenance is their responsibility. Consideration should be given to sending staff on appropriate recognised fire training courses to help them to carry out their duties.</p>	
16	<p>Door locks</p> <p>Ideally where mortice locks are provided on the entrance doors to individual flats they should be fitted with a thumb turn device internally, so that a key is not needed to open the door at any stage. Where emergency escape is likely to be a problem this must be addressed with the occupier. Also, the residents' ability to operate all door locks must be assessed and where appropriate the internal lever fitted to the locks may need to be changed to ensure that people with debilitating medical conditions, such as arthritis, can operate the lock(s) easily. Where the residents are owner-occupiers responsible for their own flats you should pass this advice on to them. Doors which provide the final exit from the building must be easily openable from the inside without the use of a key, card or code.</p>	
17	<p>Routine checks, maintenance and records</p> <p>Establish a process for carrying out routine checks, dealing with problems and recording the action taken.</p>	
18	<p>Lifts</p> <p>Generally lifts should not be used during a fire (or when the alarm sounds). This should be considered as part of the fire safety risk assessment and appropriate clear and prominent notices should be placed at all lifts.</p>	
19	<p>Storage of refuse and other materials</p>	

	<p>Ensure that refuse (including materials intended for recycling) is appropriately stored so as not to be a fire risk. Where refuse chutes are provided (even if disused) they must be designed and maintained so as not to be fire risk. Ensure that other materials (eg cleaning and maintenance materials and equipment, spare furniture, residents' possessions, etc) are stored so as not to be a fire risk.</p>	
20	<p>Service areas</p> <p>Ensure that any boiler-rooms, lift motor rooms, store cupboards, service cupboards, internal car parks and other service areas are in good order, fire safe and are not being used inappropriately.</p>	
21	<p>Records</p> <p>Ensure that you keep adequate records of the maintenance and testing of fire safety systems, equipment and other relevant matters, reviews of the fire safety risk assessment, decisions made about specific issues, training and information given to residents and staff.</p> <p>The fire and rescue service and the city council can ask to inspect your records at any time.</p>	