



# Fire Safety Policy

Board Approved: 24 May 2023

Next Review: May 2026

## 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 thermosensitive 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 5839-6:2019+A1:2020
- 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
- Scottish Government Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High-Rise Domestic Buildings

### 4.0 Fire and Smoke Alarms

#### 4.1 HfL 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;
- one heat alarm in every kitchen.

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

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

4.4 HfL will ensure that all smoke alarms are installed in accordance with the recommendations contained in BS EN14604:2005 and heat alarms comply with BS 5446-2:2003.

NB: All smoke alarms will be required to meet this standard by February 2022.

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.). These will be installed in addition to smoke alarms, heat alarms or carbon monoxide detectors.

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

4.7 Where a property is held in shared ownership, responsibilities for compliance with this standard will be set out in the occupancy agreement. Proportion owners will be

informed of the requirement to comply with this standard and all reasonable steps taken to achieve compliance.

NB: The Nest Protect System will not be sufficient to comply with the relevant standards and, as such, will not be used.

## 5.0 Carbon Monoxide Alarms

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

5.2 Carbon Monoxide alarms will comply with British Kitemark EN 50291-1:2018.

## 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. Where the emergency lighting provision is under the control of a third party (e.g. Local Authority), all reasonable steps will be taken to communicate with the third party in an attempt to ensure compliance with the procedures below.

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 3 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. 3 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 HfL will ensure all doors which are to be used in an emergency can be

## 9.0 Smoke Ventilation

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

9.2 Any ventilation ducts supplying or removing air from a protected stairway or entrance hall will not serve any other areas.

9.3 All buildings will have adequate means for venting heat and smoke from a fire in the basement.

## 10.0 Fire Equipment

10.1 Sprinklers will be installed where HfL 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.

10.3 To assist the Fire and Rescue Service:

- Dry risers will be installed in any building that is over 18 metres in height.
- Wet risers will be installed in buildings over 50 metres in height.
- Outlets will be present on each floor and located in a fire escape staircase or similar protected location.

10.4 Both dry and wet risers will be subject to a recorded visual inspection every 6 months.

10.5 Both dry and wet risers will be subject to a recorded visual inspection every 6 months.

## 11.0 Furniture and Furnishings

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

## 12.0 Evacuation Policy

- 12.1 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 If there are any complaints from Tenants or others affected by work covered by the Gas Safety Policy, a complaint can be made in accordance with HfL's Complaints Handling Policy. All external contractors will notify HFL of any complaints so that they can be logged.

## 14.0 Equal Opportunities

- 14.1 In line with HfL's commitment to equal opportunities, this policy can be made available in a variety of formats upon request.
- 14.2 All repairs will be carried out within the timescale set in HfL's Repairs Policy by a competent person.
- 14.3 Clear records will be maintained of the processes in place and actions carried out.

## 15.0 Access and Facilities for the Fire Service

- 15.1 HfL 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, HfL 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. Still further, the deaths which occurred at Lakanal and Grenfell have brought into sharp focus the importance of risk assessing high rise buildings and, indeed, all housing 'blocks.' Therefore, HfL 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.
- Particular risks may be posed by external wall systems, e.g. cladding (recognising that specialised intrusive inspection and fire performance testing may be required in some circumstances).

## 17.0 Tenant Responsibilities and Communication

- 17.1 HfL 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.
- 17.2 Tenants will be provided with information on the fire detection system and evacuation procedures / assembly points.
- 17.3 Tenancy agreements will specifically state that front doors cannot be changed without the express permission of HfL.
- 17.4 Communication methods will take account of tenants with language or learning difficulties (e.g. braille, audio, different language, etc.).

## 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 HfL:

- 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 HfL, 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 HfL.

## 19.0 Review

19.1 This policy will be reviewed at every 3 years or where there has been new legislation, or a change in regulatory requirements or policy guidance.