



Fire Safety Policy

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Date Issued: 2018

Last Review: 2022

Next Review: 2024

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Introduction

Harrogate Housing Association (HHA) have a duty to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any other relevant legislation and guidance in the management of its properties, including the Fire Safety Bill 2021. This policy will follow the outcomes of the Fire Risk Assessments that the Association has carried out and the subsequent annual reviews of these documents will ensure that HHA continue to meet its obligations under current legislation.

Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the Fire Safety Policy is to minimise the risk of fires starting and spreading in properties that are managed by HHA and to ensure the safety of customers, staff and contractors who reside, visit or work in these properties.

The specific objectives of the policy are: -

- To ensure that a clear and consistent approach is set out in respect of the fire risk assessment and inspections of internal communal areas.
- To ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to the removal of belongings in communal areas.
- To set out the maintenance and servicing regime for fire equipment in internal communal areas.
- To ensure that customers have a clear message about fire evacuation procedures for their building.
- Identifying those particularly vulnerable customers who may require a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), or a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA) which will be in addition to the Fire Risk Assessments.

Fire Risk Assessments (FRA)

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies only to the internal common areas and shared common areas and excludes dwellings and customers' accommodation where there is no provision of personal care. Customers in houses will be protected by the level of structural fire precautions implemented in the construction of the building for newer properties. HHA have a number of older buildings and the Association has supplied and fitted smoke detectors in these properties and maintain these for the protection of all customers.

A Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is a method of identifying fire hazards and it assesses the likelihood and potential safety issues, so that general precautions can be implemented to reduce the risks of fires starting.

HHA have appointed a competent and qualified person to carry out the FRAs in the blocks of flats where there is an internal communal area.

The FRAs will be carried out every 2 years to all owned and managed schemes with internal communal/common areas by a Fire Risk Consultant. Actions that are required/identified from the FRAs will be delivered to ensure HHA maintains the properties in line with the Act.

The FRAs may be reviewed if improvement works have been carried out and the fire safety of the building requires it to be reassessed. The FRAs are stored at our office and available on request.

Responsible Person

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order the Chief Executive is the “responsible person” and has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the policy and must provide sufficient resources to enable appropriate fire safety outcomes. Roles and responsibilities can be delegated and within HHA this is delegated to the Operations Manager.

The Operations Manager will be responsible for the compliance and implementation of statutory requirements. They will also ensure that qualified and competent contractors are employed to manage and maintain fire alarm systems and carry out inspections to the communal areas and maintain accurate and appropriate Fire Logbooks.

The Operations Manager will also ensure that all staff are aware of their role and responsibilities including the day-to-day management of general fire precautions and in the review of PEEPs and PCFRAs.

Evacuation Plans

All customers who reside in a property with internal common/ communal areas have been issued with an Evacuation plan as advised by the Fire Risk Consultant and these plans are also displayed within the communal areas. (Appendix1). Customers are asked to familiarise themselves with the policy and the location of the emergency fire exits.

All customers will be issued with a copy of the Evacuation Plan and advised that in the case of a fire to evacuate the building/ or their home in accordance with the plan.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) and Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA)

A PEEP is a bespoke 'escape plan' for individuals who may not be able to reach an ultimate place of safety unaided or within a satisfactory period of time in the event of any emergency. The Association will identify customers who fall into this category and provide a PEEP for them. These will be reviewed on a regular basis, this is every 6 months, to monitor whether there are any changes required to their plan.

A PCFRA helps identify residents who are at higher risk from fire in their own accommodation – whether this is due to their behaviours or their ability to respond and escape from a fire. This is located on our internal management system, (Fire Risk Assessments> PCFRA) and a copy is left with the customer. The Association will identify customers who fall into this category and provide a PCFRA for them. These will be reviewed on a regular basis, this is every 6 months, to monitor whether there are any changes required to the plan.

Items stored in the Communal areas

Any items that are stored in the communal area, laundry facilities or cupboards/ sheds and are highlighted in the fire risk assessments will be removed.

Items should not prohibit the safe evacuation of the building and HHA will not tolerate any breach of this. This approach will be communicated to customers and will include areas such as, but not limited to, stairwells, corridors, landings, laundry facilities and under stairs. In particular the following items will not be allowed to be stored:-

- Mobility Scooters.
- Patio Heaters/Barbeques.
- Paints or solvents.
- Gas heaters or pressurised cylinders.
- Mopeds/Motorcycles/bicycles.
- Petrol/Diesel gardening equipment.
- Any other flammable items
- Plant pots/tables or any other furniture in Communal area/ landings.
- Any items that have been identified to be removed through an inspection or FRA.

The above list is not exhaustive

If items are repeatedly left in areas that have been identified as being “sterile” i.e. without any items that are an obstruction to leaving your home in

case of an emergency, such as plant pots and holders, tables, prams, doormats etc. If the owner of these items cannot be identified, then HHA will reserve the right to invoice all properties in the block for the cost of the removal.

Fire Equipment

In the FRAs commissioned by HHA recommendations have been made to remove certain items of fire equipment, i.e. fire extinguishers and fire blankets. Customers have been notified of this and these items will either be removed or gifted to the customers as long as they accept responsibility for the maintenance of these items. In addition, customers are advised that they **MUST** report any none closing flat fire doors immediately to our office and HHA will arrange a repair. Customers are advised not to place rugs or other impediments to the closure of these fire doors (Appendix 2).

Where fire equipment is provided HHA will ensure that these are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and legal requirements. This equipment includes

- Emergency Lighting.
- Fire Alarm Systems.
- Smoke Ventilation Windows.
- Smoke detectors.
- Fire signage.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years in line with the FRA cycle, unless a change in legislation requires HHA to review this sooner

Appendix 1 – Evacuation Plan

Dear

RE FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE FOR XXXXXX

Please read very carefully the information contained below that we are instructing customers to follow in the event of a fire in the building and the fire alarms are activated:

- **LEAVE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY and go to the Assembly point.**
- **The Assembly point is located**
- **Call the Fire Brigade Out – DIAL 999 AND ASK FOR FIRE SERVICE AND PROVIDE THE ADDRESS.**
- **DO NOT RE ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL THE FIRE SERVICE TELL YOU THAT IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.**

These instructions are for your own safety, please ensure you read them and if you have any further queries, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2 – Letter to Customers

RE: FLAT FRONT DOOR TESTING

Following the Fire Risk Assessment that was carried out in August 2021, I need to remind you of the following process to help keep you safe in your home.

Customers should ensure that their flat front door is closing properly and is not impeded by either carpet, doormats, or any other restrictions. All flat front doors are fire doors, and they are fitted with a self-closing device. You must make sure that you check that your door always closes independently and always ensure that you don't place anything in front of it to prevent its closure. Should you find that your door is not closing properly please contact us on **tel: 01423 884018** or email repairs@hhal.org.uk and we will repair the door for you.

As you will be aware the Association has an Evacuation Procedure for the building and attached to this letter is another copy for you as a reminder of what to do in case of a fire alarm being activated.

The Association takes your safety very seriously and we will always send out reminders so that you are aware of what to do in case of something happening. It will really assist us in keeping you safe if you notice anything on your scheme, such as belongings in the communal stair ways, that you contact us straight away and we will deal with this.

Please be assured that your building is inspected every week by a qualified and competent Fire Risk Assessor and fire alarm systems are serviced annually to ensure your safety is maintained and that the systems continue to provide you with the safest possible protection.

If you have any further queries or you have any concerns, then please contact me.

Yours sincerely