



Policy:	Fire Safety in Common Areas Policy
Health & Safety	
Approval:	07/11/23
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1. 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. 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. References (see also Section 8.6 - Guidance)

- 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. Fire and Smoke alarms

4.1 The Association 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; and
- 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 We will ensure that fire and smoke alarms are in proper working order at the start of each tenancy.

4.4 The Organisation 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.

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.

5. 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.

6. Emergency Lighting

- 6.1 Properties, within Blochairn Place only, have been installed with emergency lighting in all communal areas and common escape routes. This is designed to automatically illuminate upon the failure of the power supply.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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. Fire Doors and Compartmentation

- 7.1 Buildings containing flats will be split into fire-resisting compartments by doors, walls and floors, which will provide a physical barrier to fire. All components will adhere to fire standards as at the point of installation.

8. Emergency Exit Doors

- 8.1 Blochairn Housing Association will ensure all doors that are to be used in an emergency can be opened from the inside without the use of a key.

9. Smoke Ventilation

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

10. Fire Equipment

- 10.1 Sprinklers will be installed where the Organisation is unable to reduce particular risks by other means. At the moment, no sprinkler systems are installed.

- 10.2 Fire extinguishers will not be installed in dwellings as residents 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 a requirement at time of construction. The Association has dry risers in communal blocks at Blochairn Place.
- 10.4 Dry risers are subject to a recorded pressure test every year by a competent person and a recorded visual inspection every 6 months.

11. Furniture and Furnishings

- 11.1 The Association does not currently provide any furniture or furnishings to any tenancies. In the event of ever doing so, we will ensure they are fully compliant with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

12. Evacuation Policy

- 12.1 Through our newsletter, we will direct our tenants to Scottish Fire & Rescue website for advice on what to do in the event of a fire.

13. Signage

- 13.1 Fire action signs will be placed in corridors, where it is a requirement to do so.

14. Maintenance and Repairs

- 14.1 The Association will ensure premises, equipment and devices provided for fire safety are subject to a suitable system of maintenance, are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.
- 14.2 All repairs will be carried out within the timescale set in the Associations repair policy by a competent person.
- 14.3 Clear records will be maintained of the processes in place and actions carried out.

15. Fire Risk Assessment Strategy

- 15.1 At time of writing in 2023, all properties in Blochairn Place are due enhanced fire detection measures as determined by the development architect. The Association will consider annually, any programme of fire risk assessments which will be undertaken by a competent person.
- 15.2 We will adopt a managed approach to fire safety in common areas based on the following principals, which will be clearly communicated to residents. We;
- Permit the use of doormats.
 - Never allow items to be left awaiting disposal, even short term.
 - Do not allow upholstered seating.
 - Never allow motorcycles and other equipment containing petrol and other fuels.
 - Never allow charging of mobility scooters, batteries or other electrical equipment in common areas.
 - Only allow scooters, bicycles and prams, if there are suitable storage areas, where they will not pose an obstruction.
 - Ensure the legal requirement to keep common areas clear of combustibles and obstruction is achieved.
- 15.3 We will communicate to residents that the current legal position is: *It shall be the duty of the **occupier** to keep the common property free of any combustible substances; and anything which might obstruct egress from and access to the property in the event of fire.* (Civic Government (Scotland) Act (CGA) 1982, Section 93 (subsection 2))
- 15.4 We will inspect all common areas on a monthly basis to ensure compliance with the above policy. Inspection outcomes will be recorded and relevant photographs taken as evidence of breaches.
- 15.5 Our assessment during inspections (including cellars) should consider whether the:
- Area is common property
 - Materials are combustible
 - Materials could potentially block access to, or escape from, a flat in the event of fire
- 15.6 High risk items are those, which can be ignited with ease for example upholstered furniture, bags of rubbish, motorbikes or petrol lawnmowers. Lower risk items may include prams, broken household appliances or small wooden tables etc. This list is not exhaustive and consideration should be given to any items on a case-by-case basis. Where it is unclear if an item is deemed as combustible, advice will be taken from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- 15.7 For high-risk items it is important that such items are appropriately dealt with as soon as possible. Where the items are assessed as low risk, it may be most

appropriate to try to identify the owner and ask them, in person or by writing, to remove the material in a reasonable time frame. If an owner cannot be identified, one course of action is to place a notice on the material requesting it be moved in a reasonable timeframe. This notice will give information on action to be taken if the material is not removed (namely, it may be uplifted and stored).

- 15.8 The Association has no properties with plant rooms, unlocked store rooms or internal rubbish stores or any other rooms that might be classified as “workplaces”

16. Tenant Responsibilities and Communication

16.1 The Association 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.

16.2 Tenants will be provided with information on the fire detection system.

16.3 Tenancy agreements will specifically state that front doors cannot be changed without the express permission of Blochairn.

16.4 Communication methods will take account of tenants with language or learning difficulties (e.g. braille, audio, different language, etc.).

17. Licenced Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and commercial premises

17.1 The Association currently has no responsibilities for HMO’s or commercial premises.