

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

ISHA as a responsible and caring landlord is committed to ensuring that all residents, employees, visitors and contractors affected by our activities are safe and protected from Fire Safety hazards. To this end ISHA will ensure that, there are appropriate measures in place for the prevention of fire and adequate arrangements in place for managing cause and effect of fires.

2. AIMS

This document applies wherever there are fire hazards that it may create a foreseeable risk to Fire Safety management and particularly to the following responsibilities: -

- a) Prevent fires from starting in the first place by ensuring good standards of housekeeping.
- b) Provide and maintain appropriate detection and warning systems.
- c) Ensure adequate systems are in place for fighting fire.
- d) Ensure fire spread is minimised through suitable compartmentation and provision of fire-retardant furniture and furnishings.
- e) Carry out fire risk assessments and review them regularly.
- f) Ensure that emergency procedures are in place and employees, residents and visitors are made aware of such procedures.
- g) Ensure that suitable training is provided to all employees with delegated responsibility for the management of fire safety.
- h) Carry out regular inspections to ensure that fire safety management provisions are in place and working.
- i) Relevant Line managers shall ensure that all vulnerable residents have been assessed and where appropriate a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) has been developed and implemented. Details on the requirements for a PEEP and how to arrange for an assessment can be obtained from the Compliance Team.

3. DETAILS

Responsible Persons

The responsible person on whom the duty falls to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation will be the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood in respect of all ISHA housing stock and schemes, including all such areas within those buildings that are occupied by

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ISHA residents. The Business Manager in respect of all office buildings occupied by ISHA employees. The Director of Development and New Business in respect of new development and housing stock prior to handover. Where ISHA is occupying a space in a building controlled by a third party (e.g. one floor of a multi-tenanted building) many of the duties imposed by fire legislation will be the responsibility of the third party. However, it will be the duty of the responsible person to liaise with the third party to co-operate on matters of fire safety. It will be acceptable for the responsible person in each case to delegate roles and responsibilities for fire safety management to a named person or persons with the appropriate competencies to undertake the role.

On-going Fire Safety Management

In all cases it will be for the responsible person to ensure that they have in place within the organisation a suitable structure to ensure effective fire safety management within the buildings for which they are responsible. Each building should have one individual nominated for this purpose (one person may be nominated for multiple buildings). It will be their responsibility to ensure the following:

- A current fire risk assessment is in place.
- The actions from the assessment report are prioritised and implemented.
- A process is in place to review risk assessments.
- Regular inspections are carried out to ensure the efficacy of fire safety measures (e.g. integrity of fire doors, clear means of escape) and these inspections are recorded.
- Regular testing and maintenance for fire safety systems (e.g. fire alarm system, emergency lighting) is carried out and records of such maintenance are kept up to date.
- An emergency plan is drawn up and the details of such plan are communicated to all relevant persons.
- Individuals are nominated to fulfil key roles in the event of an emergency. Each building used regularly for work purposes (such as offices) should have a nominated fire officer to assume authority in the event of a fire condition. In certain circumstances it will be appropriate for fire marshals to be appointed to aid the evacuation process. For residential buildings, the requirements of this paragraph will not apply to general needs blocks or to sheltered schemes etc. during times when staff are not present.
- Routine bell testing and evacuation drills are carried out where appropriate. The fire risk assessment should become the key tool in managing fire safety and the responsible person should use this in conjunction with this policy, guidance and procedures contained within Health and Safety Management System to manage the fire safety process.

Fire Risk Assessments

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment will be carried out at all premises for which ISHA has control for the purpose of identifying fire precautions that need to be put into place. The responsible person, in consultation with a competent source of advice must determine, in each circumstance, whether this should be carried out in-house or by an outside agency with the required expertise. The purpose of the risk assessment is to:

- a) Identify potential fire hazards.
- b) Identify who could be at risk in the event of a fire.
- c) Evaluate the level of risk from the fire hazards and decide on the effectiveness of existing controls.

Control measures include:

- Emergency plan
- Fire detection and warning systems
- Firefighting measures
- Fire containment measures

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- Maintenance of means of escape.
 - Fire safety training
- d) Determine what measures are required to further reduce the risk. The significant findings of the risk assessment are to be recorded and an action plan drawn up to implement recommendations contained within the risk assessment report.

Fire Precautions

Building regulations and fire risk assessments will determine fire precaution measures that are to be put in place in any situation.

The following is a list of common measures that are in place in ISHA buildings:

Passive Fire Protection:

This relates to structural elements of the building such as walls, doors, floors and ceilings which are designed to contain the spread of fire. It is essential that where such elements are provided that they are maintained.

Damaged or permanently open fire doors seriously affect the ability of a building to restrict the spread of fire. In most residential blocks, flat front doors opening onto a common means of escape will need to be self-closing fire doors offering 30 minutes protection (FD30S).

Fire Detection and Warning:

Fire detection and warning systems are provided to warn people if there is an outbreak of fire. Warning can be by means of manual call points, smoke/heat detectors or a combination of the two. Each individual dwelling should have smoke or heat alarms fitted to provide the occupant with audible or visual warning (additional measures should be provided where the occupant is known to have hearing problems) which may or may not be linked to a central system depending on the requirements of the block.

Fully automated communal systems are often not provided in smaller residential buildings where the compartmentation is sufficient and communal areas generally consist of simple escape routes. In most residential blocks the compartmentation is designed to contain a fire at source and allow a “stay put” policy to be adopted.

Where communal alarm systems are in place (complex communal areas such as lounges and kitchens), the systems should be tested weekly and inspected quarterly under a maintenance agreement with a qualified company. Appropriate signage will be placed in buildings so residents and visitors are aware of the fire signal and what action to take in the event of alarm activation.

Fire Fighting Equipment:

Risk assessment will determine whether and what type of firefighting equipment should be provided. Only staff that have been trained in the use of extinguishers should attempt to use them (if they deem it safe to do so).

ISHA does not provide extinguishers for use by residents or visitors as it is considerably safer for residents and visitors to evacuate the affected area and call the fire brigade.

Extinguishers are not provided for contractors. Where a contractor’s risk assessment requires a fire risk assessment (e.g. lift engineer) they should be notified that they will need to make suitable arrangements

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Emergency Fire Plan:

The responsible person will ensure that an emergency plan is drawn up to cover arrangements that are to be implemented in the event of a fire. These procedures should include the following:

- a) What to do in the event of discovering a fire o Raising the alarm
- b) Calling the fire brigade
- c) The identity of the people with specific duties such as fire marshals
- d) How to evacuate the building
- e) Provision for the disabled which may include PEEPs.
- f) Means of confirming that the building/ area has been cleared of people.
- g) Identification of the place of safety (assembly point).

The details of the emergency plan are to be communicated to all persons likely to be affected by fire including employees, residents, visitors and contractors.

In many residential properties it will be appropriate to have a “stay put” policy where the plan will stipulate that the majority of residents will remain in their flat while the fire service is called and the fire dealt with. This policy can only be implemented after a risk assessment has determined that the structure of the building is suitably robust.

Any decision to implement such a policy should be agreed with the local fire authority and communicated to all relevant parties. An emergency action plan is still required for buildings with a stay put policy.

Supported Housing Schemes will have a fire-resistant Premises Information Box (PIB) fitted with an LFB approved lock. This would contain floor plans and information on any resident vulnerabilities that could impact on evacuation.

Testing, Inspection and Maintenance

To ensure that the system(s) that are in place to provide the required level of fire protection is maintained, regular inspection, testing and maintenance is to be carried out. A summary is shown below.

- a) Emergency Lighting – monthly test simulating mains failure. Annual full discharge test.
- b) Fire Detection and Alarm – weekly bell test. Quarterly system maintenance.
- c) Five yearly wiring tests.
- d) Fire Extinguishers, Hose Reels, Fire Blankets: - Annual maintenance check
- e) Other Fire Control Systems (Suppression, Smoke Control): - as appropriate to the system installed as per manufacturer’s recommendations.
- f) Means of Escape, Fire Doors etc.: - Routine inspection (at least sixmonthly).
- g) Fire Drills: - Six-monthly (where appropriate).
- h) Flat Front Doors: Checked as part of Stock Condition Survey or 10% as part of the annual Fire Risk Assessments.

Records

The following records in respect of fire safety are to be kept by the responsible person:

- a) Risk assessments for areas and activities that constitute a fire risk.
- b) List of persons responsible for organising evacuations and dealing with fires in each working area (e.g. fire marshals).
- c) A log of where notices summarising fire procedures are displayed.

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- d) Records of staff training itemising date, duration, persons instructed, the nature of the instruction and the instructor.
- e) Records of routine inspections of means of escape, fire doors, signage etc.
- f) Records of checking of flat front doors (over a 5-year period).
- g) A log of the weekly bell testing and the call point actuated on each occasion.
- h) A log of fire drills including the date of each drill and how long the evacuation took. Any problem or incidents occurring during the drill should be noted and action taken to prevent the problems from re-occurring.
- i) Records of false alarms (and where known, their causes)
- j) Inspection and test schedule which should list the items that need checking and when inspections are due.
- k) Maintenance records for all items of equipment used for fire safety.
- l) Fire extinguishers, hose reels etc.
- m) Fire alarm systems (including detectors)
- n) Extinguishing systems
- o) Smoke control
- p) Emergency lighting.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Statutory and Regulatory legislations that overarch Fire Safety Management in the workplace and residential buildings are as follows: -

- a) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 etc. extend to the risks from work activity hazards arising from contractor work activities.
- b) Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order 2005
- c) Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires risk assessments to be completed by competent persons and control measures implemented if the risk level is shown to be unacceptable.
- d) The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) encompasses risks from combustible toxic hazards such as plastics.
- e) Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. Unintended release of fibres during a fire.
- f) Housing Act 2004 under the provisions of the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS).
- g) Building Regulation 2010 Approved Document B

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

All Fire Safety management process must abide by the Equalities Act 2010. ISHA staff and through their approved contractors will ensure consideration of vulnerability and inclusion of residents in all properties and that all works are completed without prejudice. Care will be taken to ensure vulnerable residents that fall in the protected categories are fully informed and reasonable adjustments are implemented where necessary.

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6. TRAINING

All employees will undertake mandatory fire awareness training on induction and regular refresher training. This will take the form of either a fire awareness e-learning module, Compliance Team & Building Safety Team updates or an external fire Marshall training. More specific training in fire risk assessment and/or fire safety management will be provided to all Surveyors, Neighbourhood Officers and Outreach & Support Officers who have delegated responsibilities for various aspects of fire safety management. Employees who are nominated for fire officer and fire marshal responsibilities are provided with specialist training on appointment which may include training in the use of fire extinguishers. Records of attendance for refresher training are held in Human Resources.

7. DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

Abiding with GDPR, the data for vulnerable residents who require Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) assistance in case of an emergency will be located in the Premises Information Box (PIB) located on the ground floor lobby area of the building. Only relevant sensitive data may be shared with our approved contractors who maybe working near or within the vulnerable resident's property. This is to ensure they are the first residents wellbeing is fully respected.

8. MONITORING

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods fulfils the role of Duty Holder and as such holds the main responsibility for the management of Fire Safety Management and for ensuring that all properties are compliant.

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods has appointed the Compliance team and the Building Safety Team for the residential portfolio and the Business Manager for the office and commercial portfolio as the responsible persons to oversee the day to day Fire Safety management.

Where ISHA has engaged a Managing Agent to manage one or more of its properties, they will ensure that the managing agents have suitable risk assessments and control schemes in place.

9. REVIEW

This policy forms part of the Health and Safety Management System for ISHA and will be subject to an internal audit process and will be reviewed and amended every three years. The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored at the compliance Meeting and the Health & Safety Committee.

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10. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- a) Tenants Handbook.
- b) Fire Door- Guidance for residents.

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