

Fire Risk Assessment

1-5 Sojourner Close

Version 3

15 August 2023



Review Date: 15 August 2024

Score: Tolerable Risk

Assessor: Mark Thomas

Contents

1 Action Plan Summary	3
2 Introduction	5
3 Executive Summary	6
4 Premises Details	7
5 Fire Prevention	10
6 Escape Routes & Fire Spread	13
7 Detection & Warning	18
8 Firefighting	20
9 Lighting	21
10 Signs & Notices	22
11 Fire Safety Management	24
12 Tasks	26
13 Risk Score	29

Action Plan Summary

Task No.	Category	Sub Category	Action Required	Priority	Status	Action Taken	Date Completed
1	Escape Routes & Fire Spread	Ease of Use	<p>There is a security gate across the entrance door to flats 3, 4 and 5.</p> <p>Residents should be advised of the dangers of locked security gates in the event of a fire to ensure that they are able to exit quickly in an emergency.</p>	Advisory	Identified		
2	Detection & Warning	Automatic Fire Detection	<p>Consider removal of the fire detection & alarm system from communal areas, as it conflicts with national guidance which recommends a stay-put policy for buildings of this type.</p> <p>The provision of a common fire alarm system contradicts National Guidance for a building of this type (general needs, purpose built, self contained flats). A letter dated 6th January 2020 from QFSM Ltd to ISHA regarding the provision of fire alarms in common parts of blocks of flats offers guidance and recommendations on this matter and this letter should be referred to when considering whether this is a necessary provision, or if it is considered a necessary provision whether this fire alarm is of the Standard required.</p>	Advisory	Identified		

3	Signs & Notices	Fire Door Signage	<p>Replace the Fire Door Keep Closed signs on the electrical cupboard door and the gas meter cupboard with Fire Door Keep Locked Shut.</p> <p>(NB: there are self closing devices fitted to these doors however they are defective, so either repair the self closing devices, or replace the signage and keep the doors locked shut)</p>	Low	Identified
4	Fire Prevention	Housekeeping	The storage of combustible items in riser cupboards should be prohibited.	Medium	Identified
5	Escape Routes & Fire Spread	Fire Doors	Confirm that the flat entrance door to flat 2 is a certificated fire door to an FD30S SC standard (not composite), and fit a self closing device.	High	Identified

Introduction

This report presents the significant findings of a fire risk assessment carried-out at the premises by QFSM Ltd. The scope, format and limitations of the fire risk assessment have been discussed and agreed with the client.

The scope of the assessment does not include individual dwellings. Notwithstanding any statement or recommendation made with respect to smoke/heat alarms within dwellings, it is always recommended as best practice to ensure that working smoke alarms are provided in all dwellings at least to a BS 5839-6 Category LD3 standard. These should ideally be Grade D alarms (mains powered with integral battery back-up), although Grade F alarms (battery powered only) are a reasonable short term measure.

The report includes an action plan which contains recommended tasks, each with a suggested due date. These due dates are only our suggestions, and may or may not be appropriate, depending on individual circumstances such as financial constraints and requirements of enforcing authorities.

The premises risk score was assessed at the time of the fire risk assessment, and a recommended review date has been provided. The actual level of risk may change over time, as a result of tasks being completed, or new risks arising. Regardless of the review date, the fire risk assessment should be reviewed regularly so as to keep it up to date and particularly if:

- there is reason to suspect that the fire risk assessment is no longer valid; or
- there has been a significant change in the matters to which the fire risk assessment relates.

If you have any queries please contact QFSM Ltd at office@qfsm ltd.co.uk.

Executive Summary

The previous FRA for this building was reviewed prior to this inspection, paying particular attention to any tasks generated by that FRA. During this inspection these tasks were inspected where access was possible, to ascertain if the recommended remedial work had been completed, and comments regarding the progress of any remedial work made accordingly. It was noted that there remains a number of tasks outstanding from the previous FRA which detail recommended remedial work required to ensure the safety of the building and that it is compliant with relative fire safety regulations and guidance. It is imperative that such remedial work is carried out within the recommended time frames given.

Records for the testing and maintenance of fire safety related systems are not kept on site. These are managed centrally and are held at the ISHA Head Office.

Residents should be advised of the dangers of locked security gates in the event of a fire to ensure that they are able to exit quickly in an emergency.

The wall, floors and stairs in the common areas are of masonry/concrete construction and are generally sound, however, there is a small amount of fire stopping required in the electrical cupboard.

It should be confirmed that the newly fitted flat entrance door to flat 2 is a fire resisting door to an FD30S SC standard, and this door should have a self closing device fitted.

There is a BS5839-6 fire alarm provided in the common parts of this building. No documentation regarding the cause and effect of the system was available and it cannot be confirmed whether the fire alarm in the common areas is interlinked to those installed within flats. The provision of a common fire alarm system contradicts National Guidance for a building of this type (general needs, purpose built, self contained flats). This has resulted in a confused scenario regarding the evacuation policy of the building. A common fire alarm suggests a simultaneous evacuation policy is in place, and indeed, the sounding of a common fire alarm may encourage persons within flats to simultaneously evacuate the building. In summary, a stay put policy would be compromised by the common fire alarm, however, the current provision of fire alarm is not sufficient to fully support a simultaneous evacuation policy. A letter dated 6th January 2020 from QFSM Ltd to ISHA regarding the provision of fire alarms in common parts of blocks of flats offers guidance and recommendations on this matter and this letter should be referred to when considering whether this is a necessary provision, or if it is considered a necessary provision whether this fire alarm is of the Standard required.

Giving consideration to the general fire safety arrangements within the building, and the tasks recommended as detailed within this report, it is assessed that this building presents a tolerable risk.

This new version was created on 15/08/2023 and is not a review of the fire risk assessment. This is purely an on-site audit carried out at the request of the client to ascertain the progress of any action carried out against previous tasks identified in previous versions of this fire risk assessment.

Premises Details

Building Information

Address line 1	1-5 Sojourner Close
Town	Hackney
Postcode	E8 3NX
FRA Type	Type 3 – Common parts and flats (non-destructive)
Description	<p>A Type 3 fire risk assessment includes the work involved in a Type 1 fire risk assessment, but goes beyond the scope of the FSO (though not the scope of the Housing Act). This risk assessment considers the arrangements for means of escape and fire detection (ie smoke alarms) within at least a sample of the flats. Within the flats, the inspection is non-destructive, but the fire resistance of doors to rooms is considered.</p> <p>Measures to prevent fire are not considered unless (eg in the case of maintenance of the electrical and heating installations) the measures are within the control of, for example, the landlord.</p> <p>A Type 3 fire risk assessment may sometimes be appropriate for rented flats if there is reason to suspect serious risk to residents in the event of a fire in their flats. (This might be, for example, because of the age of the block or reason for suspicion of widespread unauthorised material alterations). This type of fire risk assessment will not be possible in the case of long leasehold flats, as there is normally no right of access for freeholders.</p>
Client	ISHA
Use	Purpose-built, self-contained flats
Number of floors - ground and above	3
Number of floors - below ground	0
Number of flats	5
Number of stair cores	1

Approach to flats

- Direct from stair

Approximate period of construction

1990-2000

Is the top occupied storey over 18 metres above access level?

No

Construction details

Masonry construction with solid concrete intermediate floors and stairs, masonry internal walls and a pitched roof.

Access to common areas is via a secure entrance controlled by an intercom system providing access to an entrance lobby containing flat 1, an intake cupboard, a riser cupboard and access to the common stairwell.

The remaining flats are accessed directly off the stairwell, flats 2 – 3 are accessed at first floor level and flats 4 – 5 at second floor level. Two small riser cupboards are accessed off the stairwell at first floor level.



Brick/mortar external walls, with rendered section - front elevation



Brick/mortar external walls, - end elevation



Brick/mortar external walls, with rendered section - rear elevation



Construction of private balconies



Brick/mortar external walls - end elevation

External wall details

Brick external walls, part rendered on front elevation only. No additional external wall systems installed.

Attention is drawn to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Consolidated Advice Note for building owners of multi-storey, multi-occupied residential buildings, dated January 2020. The Advice Note recommends that building owners should consider the risk of external fire spread as part of the fire risk assessment for multi-occupied residential buildings. Consideration has been given to this matter within this fire risk assessment. The Advice Note further recommends the assessment of the fire risks of any external wall system, irrespective of the height of the building.

Are there any private balconies?

Yes

Private balcony details

Concrete protruding decks, which appear to be a continuation of the concrete floor slab, with steel balustrades.

People

Are there any people especially at risk from fire?

Not Known

Fire Prevention

Electrical

Are electrical installations and appliances free from any obvious defect?

Yes

Are fixed installations periodically inspected and tested?

Yes

Are portable electrical appliances used?

No

Comments

Documentation regarding the testing and maintenance of fixed electrical installations is held centrally by ISHA. The Neighbourhood Officer has confirmed these are all up to date.

There are electrical sockets in the common areas, presumably for use by cleaning staff. These were in good condition and showed no evidence of misuse by residents or visitors.

Gas

Are gas installations and appliances free from any obvious defect?

Yes

Is gas equipment protected/located so as not to be prone to accidental damage?

Yes

Comments

There is no gas provision or equipment in the common areas.

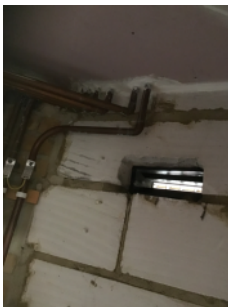


Photo showing fire stopping within gas cupboard, with vent to open air.



Gas installations

Heating

Are fixed heating installations free from any obvious defect?

N/A

Are portable heaters used?

No

Comments

There is no heating provision in the common areas.

Cooking

Does cooking take place on the premises?

No

Comments

Cooking takes place within flats only and does not take place in the common parts.

Arson

Is security against arson reasonable?

Yes

Is there a reasonable absence of external fuels and ignition sources?

Yes

Comments

Access was gained into this building via a secured main entrance door.

The main entrance door was found to be locked and secure, preventing unauthorised access.

Housekeeping

Is accumulation of combustibles or waste avoided?

No

Are there appropriate storage facilities for combustible & hazardous materials?

N/A

Comments

All common areas appeared clean, tidy and free of combustible items, however, there were some combustibles noted in the ground floor electrical and gas cupboards.

Building Works

Are there any hot works being carried-out at this time?

No

Are the premises free of any obvious signs of incorrect hot work procedures in the past?

Yes

Smoking

Are there suitable arrangements taken to prevent fires caused by smoking?

Yes

Comments

“No Smoking” signage is provided, and there is no evidence of smoking taking place in the common parts.



No smoking signage

Dangerous Substances

Are dangerous substances present, or liable to be present?

No

Lightning

Is a lightning protection system installed?

Not Known

Comments

There is no lightning protection visible, However, if there is lightening protection in place it should be periodically inspected by a competent person, to the frequency recommended in BS EN 62305.

Escape Routes & Fire Spread

Ease of Use

Are exits easily and immediately openable?

Yes

Do fire exits open in direction of escape where necessary?

N/A

Are escape routes unobstructed and safe to use?

Minor Defects

Are there reasonable measures for the evacuation of disabled people?

Yes

Comments

There is a security gate across the entrance door to flats 3, 4 and 5.

Residents should be advised of the dangers of locked security gates in the event of a fire to ensure that they are able to exit quickly in an emergency.

There are some cables to emergency lighting and smoke alarms in the common area, which are not suspended using metal supports.

A requirement introduced in 2015 in BS 7671 which covers electrical installations in the UK, states that all new wiring systems to use metal, rather than plastic, to support cables in escape routes, to prevent their premature collapse in the event of a fire.



Entrance door override

Dimensions

Are travel distances reasonable?

Yes

Is there sufficient exit capacity?

Yes

Fire Doors

Doors which are expected to be fire resisting:

- Flats

Flat Doors

- FD30S self-closing (notional)

Are fire doors to a suitable standard?

Yes

Is there suitable provision of self-closing devices?

Yes

Is there suitable provision of hold-open devices?

N/A

Are doors kept locked where appropriate?

Yes

Comments

It is understood that communal doors are inspected regularly by neighbourhood officers and formally recorded in the quarterly/6 monthly estate inspections with residents. Records are held with the neighbourhood officers. Flat entrance doors are inspected during the annual LGSR visits where the gas engineers record on their PDA if a door closer exists and intumescent strips and cold smoke seals exist.

As part of this Fire Risk Assessment, access was gained into a sample flat to assess the suitability of flat entrance doors, and any internal doors which open onto the entrance hallway.

Access was gained into flat 1 which has an entrance door fitted to FD30S SC standard.

Access was also gained into flat 2, which has a newly fitted flat door, however, this door appears to be a composite door with no Fire Door Certification labels visible, nor any BWF fire door identification plugs. The architrave and door frame appears to be uPVC. There is also no self-closing device fitted to this door.

The remainder of flat front doors within the building could not be assessed due to access. However, these all appear to be of the same age, condition and design of flat 1 and were probably all installed at the same time. It is therefore reasonable to assume that they are of the same fire-resisting standard.

The provision and condition of self-closing devices, intumescent strips/cold smoke seals, and effective door-closing action of these doors however could not be assessed and this should be confirmed to ensure all doors afford FD30S SC standard of fire resistance.



FED - Flat 5



FED - Flat 4



FED - Flat 3



FED - Flat 2



It was not possible to access riser doors.
These should be FD30S standard

Construction & Glazing

Are escape routes protected with suitable walls and floors?

Yes

Is there adequate compartmentation?

Minor Defects

Is there reasonable limitation of linings that might promote fire spread?

Yes

Glazing which is expected to be fire resisting, inc vision panels and fanlights:

- Staircases

Staircase Glazing

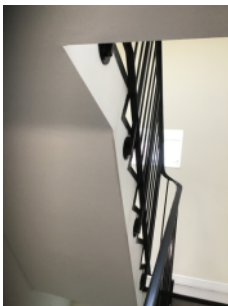
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Is glazing reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

Yes

Comments

Provide fire stopping around cable penetrations in the electrical cupboard.



Showing concrete stairs, floors with masonry walls

Dampers, Ducts & Chutes

Are there suitable measures to restrict fire spread via ducts and concealed spaces?

Yes

Comments

No Dampers, Ducts or Chutes evident.

Smoke Ventilation

Areas where smoke ventilation is expected:

- Staircases

Staircases

- Openable Windows

Is smoke ventilation reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

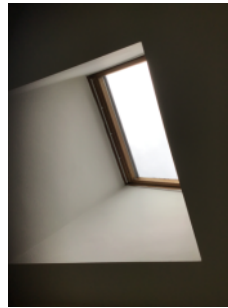
Yes

Comments

The provision of a common fire alarm suggests that a simultaneous evacuation policy is in place in this building. Whilst it is acknowledged that ventilation of the staircase would not normally be required with such a policy in place, it is recommended to maintain a means of evacuating the staircase should the fire service require it in the event of a fire i.e in the event that not all persons had evacuated due to the fire alarm not being interlinked.



Openable windows in staircase



Velux roof-light in staircase

Detection & Warning

Control Equipment

Is an electrical fire alarm system expected?

No

Why not?

Purpose-built flats

Is a fire detection and/or alarm system provided?

Yes

Areas covered

- Communal areas

Communal Areas

System Category

- BS 5839 Pt6 Grade D Category L3

Cause & Effect

- Not confirmed

Is the control equipment suitably located?

N/A

Is the control equipment free from any obvious fault or defect?

N/A

Manual Fire Alarms

Are there sufficient means of manually raising an alarm?

N/A

Are manual callpoints appropriately located and free from obvious defect?

N/A

Automatic Fire Detection

Is there sufficient provision of automatic fire detection?

No

Is the type of automatic fire detection suitable and free from obvious defect?

No

Comments

There is a BS5839-6 fire alarm provided in the common parts of this building. This may have been provided due to concerns over compartmentation within the building. No documentation regarding the cause and effect of the system was available and it cannot be confirmed whether the fire alarm in the common areas is interlinked to those installed within flats.

The provision of a common fire alarm system contradicts National Guidance for a building of this type (general needs, purpose built, self contained flats). A letter dated 6th January 2020 from QFSM Ltd to ISHA regarding the provision of fire alarms in common parts of blocks of flats offers guidance and recommendations on this matter and this letter should be referred to when considering whether this is a necessary provision, or if it is considered a necessary provision whether this fire alarm is of the Standard required.

As part of this Type 3 Fire Risk Assessment access was gained into a sample flat to assess the provision and suitability of fire alarms. Access was gained into flats 1 and 2 which has a fire alarm provided to BS5839-6 Grade D1 Category LD2 standard. It is always recommended as best practice to ensure that working smoke alarms are provided in all dwellings at least to a BS 5839-6 Category LD3 standard. These should ideally be Grade D alarms (mains powered with integral battery back-up), although Grade F alarms (battery powered only) are a reasonable short term measure.

Audibility

Are there adequate means of alerting all relevant persons?

No

Comments

See task and comments above.

Firefighting

Fire Extinguishers

Are fire extinguishers expected?

No

Why not?

- Not practicable to train residents
- Fire unlikely in communal areas
- Vandalism concerns

Are fire extinguishers provided?

No

Is the provision of fire extinguishers reasonable?

Yes

Fixed Systems

Are any fixed systems provided?

No

Is provision of fixed systems reasonable?

Yes

Fire Service Facilities

Are any fire service facilities provided?

No

Is provision of fire service facilities reasonable?

Yes

Lighting

Normal Lighting

Is there adequate lighting of internal escape routes?

Yes

Is there adequate lighting of external escape routes?

Yes

Is there adequate lighting in risk critical areas?

N/A

Emergency Lighting

Method of emergency lighting of internal escape routes:

- Maintained emergency lighting (local)

Is this provision reasonable?

Yes

Method of emergency lighting of external escape routes:

- Maintained emergency lighting (local)

Is this provision reasonable?

Yes

Method of emergency lighting of other areas:

- Not applicable

Is this provision reasonable?

Yes

Comments

Although this inspection took place during daylight hours, given the provision of street lighting in the immediate vicinity and lighting provided by surrounding buildings, it is reasonable to assume there would be sufficient borrowed light to aid escape in these areas.



Maintained EL is provided in the escape routes

Signs & Notices

Escape Routes

Is escape route signage necessary?

No

Why not?

- Simple escape routes
- Routes in ordinary use

Is escape route signage provided?

Yes

Is provision of escape route signage suitable?

Yes

Fire Doors

Is there signage suitable for self-closing fire doors?

No

Is there signage suitable for locked fire doors?

No

Is there signage suitable for automatic fire doors?

N/A

Comments

Replace the Fire Door Keep Closed signs on the electrical cupboard door and the gas meter cupboard with Fire Door Keep Locked Shut.

(NB: there are self closing devices fitted to these doors however they are defective, so either repair the self closing devices, or replace the signage and keep the doors locked shut)

Other Signs & Notices

Is there suitable signage for fire service facilities?

N/A

Are fire action notices suitable?

No

Are there suitable notices for fire extinguishers?

N/A

Is there suitable zone information for the fire alarm system?

N/A

Comments

The presence of a common fire alarm suggests a simultaneous evacuation policy is in place.

However there is a Fire Action Notice provided on the notice board that is for a stay put policy which may cause confusion to residents in the event of a fire or fire alarm actuation.

An additional fire action notice has been posted on the wall, however this gives instruction to sound the alarm when there is no provision for this, and also to fight the fire with provided fire equipment which again is not provided, nor is it desirable in a building of this type.



This Fire Action Notice is also not suitable

Fire Safety Management

Procedures & Arrangements

Current evacuation policy

Simultaneous

Further details

A simultaneous evacuation policy contradicts national guidance for a building of this type. Please see comments and task in the detection and warning section of this report regarding this matter.

Are fire action procedures suitable and appropriately documented?

Yes

Are there suitable arrangements for calling the fire service?

N/A

Is there a suitable fire assembly point?

N/A

Are there suitable arrangements for the evacuation of disabled people?

N/A

Comments

These are general needs flats and as such no specific occupancy risk is identified. Tenants are presumed to be a typical cross section of public and could include visitors and contractors. It is assumed that all occupants and visitors are capable of using the means of escape unaided to reach a place of ultimate safety.

Training & Drills

Are staff regularly on the premises?

No

Are employees from outside organisations given appropriate fire safety information?

No

Comments

It should be ensured that employees from outside organisations are given information on the action to take in the event of a fire (correct fire action notice).

Testing & Maintenance

Was testing & maintenance information available?

No

Are fire extinguishers subject to suitable test & maintenance?

N/A

Comments

Fire Safety documentation for the testing and maintenance of fire safety systems is held centrally at the ISHA Head Office. The ISHA Neighbourhood Officer has confirmed that these are up to date.

Record Keeping

Were fire safety records available?

No

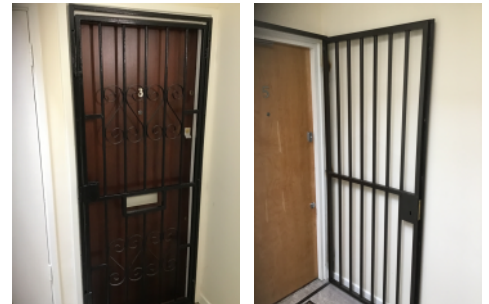
Comments

Fire Safety documentation for the testing and maintenance of fire safety systems is held centrally at the ISHA Head Office. The ISHA Neighbourhood Officer has confirmed that these are up to date.

Tasks

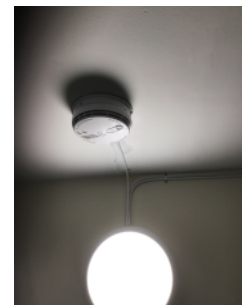
Task 1

Source Version	1
Category	Escape Routes & Fire Spread
Sub Category	Ease of Use
Action Required	There is a security gate across the entrance door to flats 3, 4 and 5. Residents should be advised of the dangers of locked security gates in the event of a fire to ensure that they are able to exit quickly in an emergency.
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	28 July 2022



Task 2

Source Version	1
Category	Detection & Warning
Sub Category	Automatic Fire Detection
Action Required	Consider removal of the fire detection & alarm system from communal areas, as it conflicts with national guidance which recommends a stay-put policy for buildings of this type. The provision of a common fire alarm system contradicts National Guidance for a building of this type (general needs, purpose built, self contained flats). A letter dated 6th January 2020 from QFSM Ltd to ISHA regarding the provision of fire alarms in common parts of blocks of flats offers guidance and recommendations on this matter and this letter should be referred to when considering whether this is a necessary provision, or if it is considered a necessary provision whether this fire alarm is of the Standard required.
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Customer Homes
Due Date	28 July 2022



Task 3

Source Version	1
Category	Signs & Notices
Sub Category	Fire Door Signage
Action Required	Replace the Fire Door Keep Closed signs on the electrical cupboard door and the gas meter cupboard with Fire Door Keep Locked Shut. (NB: there are self closing devices fitted to these doors however they are defective, so either repair the self closing devices, or replace the signage and keep the doors locked shut)
Priority	Low
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	28 July 2021



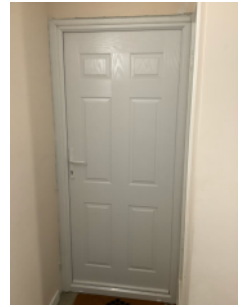
Task 4

Source Version	2
Category	Fire Prevention
Sub Category	Housekeeping
Action Required	The storage of combustible items in riser cupboards should be prohibited.
Priority	Medium
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	10 February 2022



Task 5

Source Version	2
Category	Escape Routes & Fire Spread
Sub Category	Fire Doors
Action Required	Confirm that the flat entrance door to flat 2 is a certificated fire door to an FD30S SC standard (not composite), and fit a self closing device.
Priority	High
Status	Identified
Owner	Customer Homes
Due Date	10 November 2021



Risk Score

Risk Score

Tolerable Risk

Next Assessment Due

15 August 2024

Likelihood	Potential Consequence		
	Slight Harm	Moderate Harm	Extreme Harm
High	Moderate	Substantial	Intolerable
Medium	Tolerable	Moderate	Substantial
Low	Trivial	Tolerable	Moderate

Likelihood

Low Unusually low likelihood of fire as a result of negligible potential sources of ignition.

Medium Normal fire hazards (e.g. potential ignition sources) for this type of occupancy, with fire hazards generally subject to appropriate controls (other than minor shortcomings).

High Lack of adequate controls applied to one or more significant fire hazards, such as to result in significant increase in likelihood of fire.

Consequence

Slight Outbreak of fire unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant (other than an occupant sleeping in a room in which a fire occurs).

Moderate Outbreak of fire could foreseeably result in injury (including serious injury) of one or more occupants, but it is unlikely to involve multiple fatalities.

Extreme Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.