

North Norfolk District Council

Environmental Protection

Guidance Document:

Fire Precautions in Dwellings



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Introduction

The reason for insisting on fire precautions in dwellings and in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is to save lives and prevent injury by:

- providing early warning in the event of fire
- stopping smoke and fire spreading before residents have a chance of escape
- ensuring residents have a protected means of escape

In general terms an HMO is accommodation where two or more households share amenities where a household includes: families, single people and couples.

Fire guidance

This guidance sets out the fire precautions which the council would expect in different types of property. Each property is unique. It is therefore not possible to have prescribed standards. However the guidance is aimed at providing an understanding of the minimum standards required.

The guidance has been drawn up with Norfolk Fire Service under the terms of the: **“Joint Service Level Agreement between Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and North Norfolk District Council.”**

Risk assessments

The fire precautions which are appropriate in a property will vary. They will depend on the circumstances at the property.

The circumstances taken into account include for example:

- Number of residents
- Number of floors
- Arrangements for cooking
- Layout and ease of escape in the event of fire
- The presence of fire egress windows

- Construction of the building and flammability of building elements
- Safety of appliances and services such as gas and electricity
- Whether part of the building is used commercially

The decisions concerning the standards which will be necessary are based on risk assessments carried out under:

- The Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme under Part 1 Housing Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS)

The HHSRS is a tool for assessing the living conditions of a property. The system is based on 29 possible hazards to the most vulnerable occupiers.

The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to use the HHSRS to assess conditions in dwellings. The HHSRS is therefore used to assess risk from fire in HMOs and single family dwellings.

Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO)

Persons who are **responsible persons** under the terms of the RRO have a legal obligation to carry out risk assessments. **Responsible persons** include: owners and persons having control of the dwelling which can mean agents.

Failure to have a **fire risk assessment** is an offence enforced by the fire service who can ask to see a copy of your risk assessment at anytime.

You can either undertake a **fire risk assessment** yourself or pay a consultancy to carry it out.

The aims of the assessment are:

- to identify potential fire hazards
- to detail options for reducing the risk from those hazards to as low a risk as possible

- to decide what physical precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your premises if the fire starts
- The assessment should also record any significant findings namely specific problems which need urgent attention

A simple guide to **fire risk assessment** is included in Appendix 2 of this document.

General

This guide outlines the fire precautions which the Council would expect to find in dwellings and HMOs.

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Bedsit type accommodation, two storeys

These are typically houses where the tenants have their own room/rooms but the units are not fully self contained (there is some sharing of either a kitchen or a bathroom).

Means of escape

The means of escape needs protecting. The means of escape typically includes the main staircases and all corridors/landings that a person would have to travel through to reach the front door. The protected route means:

- that all walls between the escape route and risk rooms must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)
- that all ceilings between the route of escape and **risk rooms*** must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)
- that cupboards leading onto the means of escape should be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked
- under-stairs soffits must be underlined to provide half hour fire protection
- under-stairs cupboards must be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked
- that all cupboards containing risk of ignition (such as electrical fuse boards or water heaters) must be half hour fire protected
- that all doors leading from **risk rooms*** onto the means of escape must be half hour fire and smoke protected
- that there is no storage on the means of escape
- the final exit door should be capable of being opened from inside without the use of a key
- Walls and ceilings dividing **risk rooms*** must be half hour fire protected and be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed

plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)

Sprinkler systems

A domestic sprinkler system may be considered. In some cases where a domestic sprinkler system and an alarm system is installed it may not be necessary to provide certain structural features such as fire doors, fire extinguishers, or to upgrade walls and staircases. Any installation must be installed in accordance with BS 9251:2005.

If such a system is being considered this must be carried out in consultation with the Strategic Housing Department.

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source (such as any electrical item except fixed lighting).

Fire detection

If emergency egress windows are fitted to the first floor a Grade D LD3 system (see Appendix 1) is required. This means:

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up)

LD3 The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings)

If the first floor windows are not suitable for emergency egress a Grade D LD2 system is required. This means:

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up)

LD2 The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings) and in rooms or areas that present a **high fire risk*** to occupants

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source (such as any electrical item other than fixed lighting).

* **Any room with specific electrical hazards**

Extinguishers and blankets

A 2kg multi purpose dry powder extinguisher to BS EN 3:1996 is required in each room with cooking facilities. All extinguishers are to be wall mounted on wall brackets in accordance with BS 5428: 1987, with carrying handle approximately 1m above ground level, maintained in good order and readily available for use at all times.

A wall mounted fire blanket situated approximately 1.5m above floor level to comply with BS.EN 1869:1997 is required in all rooms containing cooking facilities.

Fire fighting equipment must be maintained in accordance with BS 5306: Part 3:1988.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting may be required if the protected escape route is not provided with adequate background light either natural or borrowed from street lighting to ensure the safe movement to the final exit door. Where emergency lighting is provided it must comply with BS5266 Part 1:1988.

Bedsit type accommodation, three or more storeys

Means of escape

A house with three or more storeys is considered higher risk. The means of escape needs protecting. The means of escape typically includes the main staircases and all corridors/landings that a person would have to travel through to reach the front door. The protected route means:

- that all walls between the escape route and risk rooms must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)
- that all ceilings between the route of escape and **risk rooms*** must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)

- that cupboards leading onto the means of escape should be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked
- that under-stairs soffits must be underlined to provide half hour fire protection
- under-stairs cupboards must be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked
- that all cupboards containing risk of ignition (such as electrical fuse boards or water heaters) must be half hour fire protected
- that all doors leading from **risk rooms*** onto the means of escape must be half hour fire and smoke protected
- that there is no storage on the means of escape
- the final exit door should be capable of being opened from inside without the use of a key
- walls and ceilings dividing **risk rooms*** must be half hour fire protected and be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)

Sprinkler systems

A domestic sprinkler system may be considered. In some cases where a domestic sprinkler system and an alarm system is installed it may not be necessary to provide certain structural features such as fire doors, fire extinguishers, or to upgrade walls and staircases. Any installation must be installed in accordance with BS 9251:2005.

If such a system is being considered this must be carried out in consultation with the Strategic Housing Department.

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source (such as any electrical item except fixed lighting).

Fire detection

In most cases a Grade D LD2 system is required (see Appendix 1). This means:

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up), with central control equipment.

LD2 The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings) and in rooms or areas that present a **high fire risk*** to occupants

When identified large, high risk HMOs will require a Grade D LD2 system in the individual dwelling units and a Grade A LD2 system in the communal areas.

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source.

* **Any room with specific electrical hazards**

Extinguishers and blankets

A 2kg multi purpose dry powder extinguisher to BS EN 3:1996 is required in each room with cooking facilities. All extinguishers are to be wall mounted on wall brackets in accordance with BS 5428: 1987, with carrying handle approximately 1m above ground level, maintained in good order and readily available for use at all times.

A wall mounted fire blanket situated approximately 1.5m above floor level to comply with BS EN 1869:1997 is required in all rooms containing cooking facilities.

Fire fighting equipment must be maintained in accordance with BS 5306: Part 3:1988.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting may be required if the protected escape route is not provided with adequate background light either natural or borrowed from street lighting to ensure the safe movement to the final exit door. Where emergency lighting is provided it must comply with BS 5266 Part 1:1988.

Shared houses, two storeys

These include houses where the residents live together as friends (such as a group of students or work mates).

The fire precautions required for this type of property depend upon the risks involved. Risks can depend on factors such as:

- the number of people sharing

- the stability of the group (do residents keep moving out and being replaced?)
- the vulnerability of the occupants (for example children or elderly persons, physically or mentally disabled persons)
- whether there are cooking facilities in the rooms
- whether the first floor windows are suitable for emergency egress
- whether all rooms have close fitting doors
- whether there is an adverse risk of arson (for instance is the property used for persons retreating from domestic violence)

A typical house would include one shared kitchen and there may also be a shared living room or dining room. There would be five or less occupants and no vulnerable persons.

Means of escape

'Means of escape' refers to a doorway or window leading directly out of a building and/or the provision of a safe route of escape in the event of fire. Escape routes include: stairways, hallways, landing areas and corridors leading from each **risk room*** to the final exit and place of safety.

The escape route must usually be protected to a minimum level of 30 min fire protection. This will include fire doors opening out into escape routes.

However, in a typical low risk shared house a protected means of escape (fire doors etc) will not be required.

Fire detection

If emergency egress windows are fitted to the first floor a Grade D LD3 system (see appendix 3) is required. This means:

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up)

LD3 The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings)

If the first floor windows are not suitable for emergency egress a Grade D LD2 system is required. This means:

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up)

LD2 The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings) and in rooms or areas that present a **high fire risk*** to occupants

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source (such as any electrical item other than fixed lighting).

* **Any room with specific electrical hazards**

Extinguishers and blankets

A 2kg multi purpose dry powder extinguisher to BS EN 3:1996 is required in each room with cooking facilities. All extinguishers are to be wall mounted on wall brackets in accordance with BS 5428: 1987, with carrying handle approximately 1m above ground level, maintained in good order and readily available for use at all times.

A wall mounted fire blanket situated approximately 1.5m above floor level to comply with BS EN 1869:1997 is required in all rooms containing cooking facilities.

Fire fighting equipment must be maintained in accordance with BS 5306: Part 3:1988.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting may be required if the protected escape route is not provided with adequate background light either natural or borrowed from street lighting to ensure the safe movement to the final exit door. Where emergency lighting is provided it must comply with BS 5266 Part 1:1988.

Please note: The exit from the building should not involve going through a **risk room**, such as a bedroom, living room or kitchen. The route out of a building has to be kept clear, free from ignition sources, free from furniture and stored goods. A bedroom or a living room would not be able to provide this protection. In situations where this does occur a satisfactory alternative route must be provided.

Shared houses, three or more storeys

This includes houses built with three storeys or houses with converted basements or attics. The type of resident will typically be the same as a two storey shared house (although there may be five or more persons).

Means of escape

A house with three or more storeys is considered higher risk. The means of escape needs protecting. The means of escape typically includes the main staircases and all corridors/landings that a person would have to travel through to reach the front door. The protected route means:

- that all walls between the escape route and risk rooms must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)
- that all ceilings between the route of escape and **risk rooms*** must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)
- that cupboards leading onto the means of escape should be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked
- that under-stairs soffits must be underlined to provide half hour fire protection
- under-stairs cupboards must be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked
- that all cupboards containing risk of ignition (such as electrical fuse boards or water heaters) must be half hour fire protected
- that all doors leading from **risk rooms*** onto the means of escape must be half hour fire and smoke protected
- that there is no storage on the means of escape
- the final exit door should be capable of being opened from inside without the use of a key
- walls and ceilings dividing **risk rooms*** must be half hour fire protected and capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls

for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)

Sprinkler systems

A domestic sprinkler system may be considered. In some cases where a domestic sprinkler system and an alarm system is installed it may not be necessary to provide certain structural features such as fire doors, fire extinguishers, or to upgrade walls and staircases.

Any installation must be installed in accordance with BS 9251:2005. If such a system is being considered this must be carried out in consultation with the Strategic Housing Team.

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source (such as any electrical item except fixed lighting).

Fire detection

In most cases a Grade D LD2 system is required (see Appendix 1). This means

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up)

LD2 The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings) and in rooms or areas that present a **high fire risk*** to occupants

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source.

* **Any room with specific electrical hazards**

Extinguishers and blankets

A 2kg multi purpose dry powder extinguisher to BS EN 3:1996 is required in each room with cooking facilities. All extinguishers are to be wall mounted on wall brackets in accordance with BS 5428: 1987, with carrying handle approximately 1m above ground level, maintained in good order and readily available for use at all times.

A wall mounted fire blanket situated approximately 1.5m above floor level to comply with BS EN 1869:1997 is required in all rooms containing cooking facilities.

Fire fighting equipment must be maintained in accordance with BS 5306: Part 3:1988.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting may be required if the protected escape route is not provided with adequate background light either natural or borrowed from street lighting to ensure the safe movement to the final exit door. Where emergency lighting is provided it must comply with BS 5266 Part 1:1988.

Converted flats

This category includes buildings converted into flats where the conversion was carried out before 1 June 1992, or if it has been converted since 1992 but does not meet standards set in the Building Regulations 1991.

Means of escape

The means of escape needs protecting. The means of escape typically includes the main staircases and all common corridors/landings that a person would have to travel through to reach the front door. The protected route means:

- that all walls between the escape route and risk rooms must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)
- that all ceilings between the route of escape and **risk rooms*** must be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)
- that cupboards leading onto the means of escape should be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked
- under-stairs soffits must be underlined to provide half hour fire protection
- under-stairs cupboards must be emptied of flammable goods and kept locked

- that all cupboards containing risk of ignition (such as electrical fuse boards or water heaters) must be half hour fire protected
- that all doors leading from **risk rooms*** onto the means of escape must be half hour fire and smoke protected
- That there is no storage on the means of escape
- The final exit door should be capable of being opened from inside without the use of a key
- Walls and ceilings dividing **risk rooms*** must be half hour fire protected can be capable of giving half hour fire and smoke protection. Gaps in walls for pipes and cables must be filled to provide protection. Un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) will need to be upgraded (see Appendix 1)

Sprinkler systems

A domestic sprinkler system may be considered. In some cases where a domestic sprinkler system and an alarm system is installed it may not be necessary to provide certain structural features such as fire doors, fire extinguishers, or to upgrade walls and staircases. Any installation must be installed in accordance with BS 9251:2005.

If such a system is being considered this must be carried out in consultation with the Strategic Housing Department.

* **Risk rooms:** This includes all rooms used for living and/or sleeping accommodation and kitchens. It does not include bathrooms unless there is an ignition source (such as any electrical item except fixed lighting).

* **Any room with specific electrical hazards**

Fire detection

In buildings where some or all of the flats are rented (i.e. one third or more of the flats are let on short term tenancies).

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up)

LD 2 The detectors should be sited:

- in all circulation spaces in the common areas (for example in all landings and in the entrance hall)

- in each flat. Situated in the room/lobby that leads onto the means of escape (i.e. near to the front door to the flat)

Extinguishers and blankets

A 2kg multi purpose dry powder extinguisher to BS EN 3:1996 is required in each room with cooking facilities. All extinguishers are to be wall mounted on wall brackets in accordance with BS 5428: 1987, with carrying handle approximately 1m above ground level, maintained in good order and readily available for use at all times.

A wall mounted fire blanket situated approximately 1.5m above floor level to comply with BS EN 1869:1997 is required in all rooms containing cooking facilities.

Fire fighting equipment must be maintained in accordance with BS 5306: Part 3:1988.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting may be required if the protected escape route is not provided with adequate background light either natural or borrowed from street lighting to ensure the safe movement to the final exit door. Where emergency lighting is provided it must comply with BS 5266 Part 1:1988.

Single family dwellings

This category is typically a dwelling that is not an HMO. This would include a self contained flat or house occupied by either a family, a couple, a single person or two friends living together.

In a house of less than three storeys a **Grade F** system is required. This means one or more battery-powered smoke alarms (usually in the entrance hall and first floor landing)

In a house of three or more storeys it is advisable to fit a **LD3 Grade D** system. This will ensure that any person, who has the furthest distance to get to an exit, has an early warning of fire.

This means:

Grade D Mains powered interlinked detectors each with an integral standby supply (battery back up)

LD3 The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings)

Extinguishers and blankets

A 2kg multi purpose dry powder extinguisher to BS EN 3:1996 is recommended in each room with cooking facilities. All extinguishers are to be wall mounted on wall brackets in accordance with BS 5428: 1987, with carrying handle approximately 1m above ground level, maintained in good order and readily available for use at all times.

A wall mounted fire blanket, situated approximately 1.5m above floor level, to comply with BS EN 1869:1997 is required in all rooms with cooking facilities.

Appendix 1 – fire precaution guidance notes

Sprinkler systems

Owners may benefit from a range of accepted and established fire precautions design freedoms where they install a residential sprinkler system. These design freedoms can be applied on a risk-assessed basis and may actually allow HMO's to be used in a more user friendly and flexible manner appropriate to the home environment.

A residential sprinkler system installed and maintained in accordance with BS 9251:2005 can:

- actively save more lives and prevent more injuries in the event of a fire (especially in HMOs where the risk to occupants from fire is widely acknowledged to be disproportionately high)
- reduce property damage in the event of a fire
- assist with business continuity by allowing speedy reoccupation of areas affected by a fire
- minimise the amount of water used to extinguish any fire that occurs by restricting the growth of that fire

There are potential safety, economic and management reasons for installing a sprinkler system. Installation should be carried out by an experienced contractor suitably qualified and registered with the FIRAS/Fire Sprinkler Association 3rd Party Certification Scheme. Alternatively, installers may be certificated under the LPS 1048 Scheme "Requirements for Certified Sprinkler Installers, Supervising bodies and Supervised Installers".

Fire alarm systems

Grade A system

Fire alarm system to comply with current British Standard (BS) 5839 Part 6 Grade A

This comprises a system of electrically operated smoke and/or heat detectors which are linked to a control panel to give information on the location of any fire or any fault which may develop. The control panel must conform to current British Standard 5839 Part 4.

Grade D system

Fire alarm system to comply with current British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade D

This comprises a system of one or more interlinked mains powered and/or heat detectors each with a standby battery and built in alarm.

LD 2: means

Detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings) and in rooms or areas that present a high risk to occupants.

(High risk rooms include rooms used for living and/or sleeping and kitchens).

LD 3: means

The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route.

Installation of fire alarm system is to be in accordance with BS 5839-6:2004 and BS 5839-1:2002 and should ensure that the alarm signal gives a sound level of 75dB(A) in all rooms particularly in bedrooms.

Installation of detectors

Type

There are two types of detectors optical and ionization. It is better to install optical in most situations as these are less likely to cause false alarms.

Mounting position

Smoke and heat detectors should preferably be mounted on ceilings on a horizontal surface. Detectors should not be positioned at an angle. The detectors should be placed at least 500mm horizontally from any wall/beam or light fitting.

Obstructions

The detector should be positioned either side of a ceiling obstruction such as beams or down-stands which are greater than 150mm depth.

Power supply

The detectors can be supplied from the lighting circuits. However if the tenant is on a payment meter the supply must be taken from the landlord's supply i.e. the power supply will need to come from a dedicated circuit from the main consumer unit.

A competent installer should install the system in accordance with BS 7671. The installer should certify that the installation conforms to the recommendation of BS 5839 for the type LD2 Grade D.

Upon completion of the installation obtain and submit to Strategic Housing a completion certificate in a form which satisfies the requirements of BS 5839 and BS 5306.

Fire doors

Fire doors to provide a minimum of 30 minutes fire and smoke protection (FD30s) complying with BS 476: Part 22 1987 and Section 31.1:1983. The doors must be installed to satisfy the requirements of BS 8214:1990 as set out in the notes below:

Unless otherwise stated each fire door to meet the standards below:

- To be fitted with plain steel butt hinges of not less 100mm x 75mm
- To be fitted with heat activated intumescent seals 4mm x 10 mm rebated in the head and sides of the doors or into the frame coincident with the closed position of the door sides and head. (The strip must not be rebated into the door stops or a coincident position with the stops on the door.)
- To be fitted with a self closing device (preferably of the overhead hydraulic type) manufactured to satisfy the requirements of BS EN 1154:1997
- The self closing device to be capable of: closing the door positively onto the latch or where the latch is not required, of holding the door for not less than 30 mins
- The gap between the door and door lining (or frame) to be not more than 3mm
- All hinges and latch parts necessary for holding the door in place during a fire to have a melting point in excess of 8000 C and to comply with BS 8214:1990 and BS 5872:1980
- Where there are gaps between the door lining and the surrounding construction fill all voids with fire stopping material such as an intumescent foam or filler
- Where glazing is incorporated into the fire doors install 6mm Georgian wired glass or fire resistant glazing. The glazing to be fixed to BS 476 parts 20-23 requirements

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting systems must comply with the provisions of BS 5266-1:1999.

Upon completion of the installation obtain and submit to private sector housing a completion certificate in a form which satisfies the requirements of Appendix 1 to BS 5266 Part 1 1999.

Wall and ceiling finishes

Wall and ceiling finishes should provide 30 min fire resistance.

For new stud partitions this can be achieved by constructing a frame of 75mm x 50mm timbers with head and sole plate and studs at 600mm centres. Providing 12.5mm plasterboard for each face, taping the joints and finishing with a top coat of 3mm multi finish plaster.

For existing wall and ceiling surfaces the appropriate construction standard to bring them up to 30 min standard will have to be agreed following the site inspection.

This may include the upgrading of un-keyed plaster (particularly lath and plaster) by fitting 9.5mm plasterboard on both faces. The scriming of joints and also junctions with ceilings with 75mm wide scrim tape and applying setting coat of multi finish plaster, finished flush with existing surfaces.

Wall and ceilings adjoining commercial premises should provide 60 min fire resistance.

Fire egress windows

Where windows are proposed to be used as a means of escape they must comply with the following:

- The window must have an unobstructed openable window area of at least 0.33m² with the width and height dimension being a minimum of 450mm. Side hung opening lights are recommended
- The bottom of the openable area (window sill level) must be not more than 1100mm and not less than 800mm above floor level

Windows are suitable for means of escape where the drop from the window to the ground level is one storey only (not exceeding 4.5m from first floor level to outside ground level).

Note: The ground below the windows must be flat and free from hazards (i.e. low walls and railings etc).

Gas and Electrical Equipment

Owners have a duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to arrange maintenance by a CORGI-registered installer for all pipe work, appliances and flues, which they own and have provided for tenants' use.

Owners must also arrange for an annual gas safety check to be carried out every 12 months by a CORGI-registered installer. Owners must keep a record of the check for two years and issue a copy to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed and issue a copy to any new tenants before they move in.

Owners should have electrical safety certificates issued on the premises every five years. The certificate should be issued by a competent electrician namely one who is a member of the following:

- NECEIC
- Electrical Contractors Association
- CITB defined competency scheme
- NAPIT Certification Scheme

(You will need Building Regulation approval for electrical work unless it is carried out by a competent electrician).

Since 1997 it has been mandatory under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations for all electrical appliances supplied with rented accommodation to be safe. This applies to both new and second hand equipment. The best way to be sure that appliances are safe is to have a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) undertaken by a competent person.

Furniture and Furnishings

Owners must ensure any furniture or furnishings they provide in the property meets the appropriate safety standards. Under the Furniture and Furnishing Regulations (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 owners must ensure their furniture and furnishings meet the following standard tests:

- Upholstered articles must have fire resistant material
- Upholstered articles must pass the match resistance test
- Combinations of cover material and filling material have passed the cigarette resistance test

Appendix 2 – Fire safety risk assessment

Persons who are responsible persons under the terms of the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) have a legal obligation to carry out risk assessments. Responsible persons include: owners and persons having control of the dwelling which can mean agents.

Failure to have a fire safety risk assessment is an offence enforced by the fire service who can ask to see a copy of your risk assessment at anytime.

You can either undertake a fire safety risk assessment yourself or pay a consultancy to carry it out – for further information on risk assessments go to www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk

The five steps to fire safety risk assessment are as follows:

Step 1 – Identify the hazards

You need to identify:

- Sources of ignition such as naked flames, gas appliances or electrical appliances
- Sources of fuel such as built-up waste, cleaning agents, textiles and other combustible materials
- Sources of oxygen such as air conditioning or medicinal oxygen supplies

Step 2 – Identify the people at risk

You will need to identify those people who may be especially at risk such as:

- Children or parents with babies
- The elderly or infirm and people who are disabled
- Visitors with special needs such as disability, mental health problems or language difficulties

Step 3 – Evaluate, remove and reduce the risk

Evaluate the level of risk in the property. Evaluate the risk to people from a fire. You should remove or reduce any fire hazards where possible and reduce and risks you have identified. For example, you should:

- Replace highly flammable materials with less flammable ones
- Make sure you separate flammable materials from sources of ignition

- Ensure that the fire detection system is adequate for the size of property and the number of people accommodated
- Ensure that you have sufficient fire fighting equipment of the correct type (e.g. kitchens should have a dry powder extinguisher and a fire blanket)
- Ensure all equipment is suitably maintained and in good working order
- Ensure that there are a sufficient number of exits leading to a place of safety
- Ensure that all escape routes are protected and free from obstruction

When you have reduced the risk as far as possible, you must assess any risk that is left and decide whether there are any further measures you need to take to make sure you provide a reasonable level of fire safety.

Step 4 – Record keeping

In this step you should record the findings of your risk assessment. For example you should:

- Record the hazards and people you identified as especially at risk in **step 1** and **step 2**
- Record the action taken to evaluate, remove and reduce the risk
- Establish a procedure to review the fire risk periodically
- Keep a record of the routine testing and maintenance of the fire alarm system and fire fighting equipment
- Make an emergency plan including the action you need to take in a fire in your property.

Step 5 – Review

Make sure that your fire risk assessment is up to date. You will need to re-examine your fire risk assessment if you suspect that it is no longer valid (i.e. if there is a change in the type or number of people occupying the property)