

Fire safety: Low-rise buildings

The safety of residents living in properties of multi-occupancy, such as low rise blocks is very important to us.

To keep you, your family and other residents safe you must not leave items in communal areas, even for a short period. Items include but are not limited to:

- door mats
- carpets
- rubbish bags
- wheelie bins
- buggies and prams
- bicycles
- lockers and cabinets
- upholstered seating
- unwanted bedding, mattresses and other items for disposal
- children's toys
- scooters
- plants
- pictures
- wall mounted objects

To reduce the risks of fires within communal areas of your block we have adopted a 'Zero Tolerance' approach.

Our estate officers will check your block regularly to make sure materials are not placed in communal areas. If any items are found in these areas, you will be asked to remove them immediately. Where items are not removed straight away you will be given seven days notice to remove them. If items are not removed after this time we will remove them for you and you may be charged for this service.

What do I do if fire breaks out in my apartment?

- Alert any other people in the apartment.
- Leave the room at once, and close all windows and the door behind you. Make sure you close the entrance door to your apartment as you leave. Don't tackle the fire yourself, unless you are sure it is safe to do so.
- Don't use balconies which are not part of an escape route.
- Call the fire service by dialing 999 on the nearest phone. This is a free service, even from your mobile. You won't need to pay money if you have to use a call box.
- When leaving the building, use the staircase, not the lift.
- Leave the building and wait for the fire service at a safe distance from the building, you can then advise them where the fire is in your block.

Don't block your escape route

- Keep stairs and corridors in your building clear of clutter. These are escape routes you might need one day. Items like electric scooters and bicycles should never be left in these areas.
- Remember when you share a building with other families, your safety and theirs depends on everyone co-operating.
- In case the exit or corridor is blocked always ensure you have a key to your apartment when you leave.
- In your own home do not block your hall or put portable heaters, or anything that catches fire easily, in there. It is the only escape route for you and your family.
- Do not place personal items in communal areas including bin rooms and meter cupboards. We have a responsibility to ensure these areas are free of combustible materials.
- If your door has an automatic closer fitted, you must not tamper or remove it. It has been designed to close in an emergency and will help contain the fire.

Smoke alarms save lives!

- You should test the alarm each week to make sure it is working properly. Never remove the batteries, unless you are replacing them. Vacuuming the smoke alarm, every six months will help to make sure dust does not affect its ability to warn you should a fire occur.
- A smoke alarm warning device detects smoke at the earliest stages of a fire. If there is a fire in your home, it sounds a piercing alarm to warn you. Many people killed in house fires are asleep at the time.
- A smoke alarm will wake you up and give you vital extra time to escape.

Remember your actions can affect the safety of others in the building. Please follow the advice and instructions in this factsheet.

You can find out if you are eligible for a free 'Safe and Well' visit or complete your own 'Fire Safety Check'. Contact your local Fire and Rescue Service for more information.

If you have any concerns or would like more information, phone us on 0345 8 507 507.



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