

Fire safety: High-rise buildings

What do I need to know in the event of a fire in my high-rise apartment block?

Fire is one of the biggest killers in the home. If you live in a high rise apartment, there are things you should know about how to prevent fires and what to do if fire breaks out. Please read this factsheet carefully and keep it handy.

This guide is for:

- Low Cross Court
- Primrose House
- Greenwood House

Which have a stay put policy.

What safety features does the building have?

Your building has been designed and built with fire safety in mind.

- Walls and doors between apartments, stairs and corridors are specially designed to resist fire and stop the spread of smoke. When not in use all corridor and apartment entrance doors must always be kept closed.
- Your building and apartment is fitted with a fire sprinkler system that is activated by extreme heat. To prevent false alarms and property damage do not use steam wallpaper strippers too close to the sprinkler head.
- In case the exit or corridor is blocked always take a key to your apartment with you when you leave.
- The lift system has been designed to enable firefighters to use it in a fire emergency situation. They will not be in use in emergency fire evacuations.
- 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.
- Where dry risers are provided in your building, these will be used by members of the fire service to fight a fire if one breaks out in your building, you must not tamper or interfere with these outlets as this will compromise yours and others safety should a fire break out.
- Roads and other areas outside are designed to enable emergency vehicles to get as near as possible to the building and the dry riser inlet.

- Do not block or stand on the access road to the main entrance in an emergency situation.
- If you do not have a phone, there will be a public phone not far away, which can be used to call the fire service, do not assume someone else has reported it.

Don't block your escape route

- Remember, when you share a building with other families, your safety and theirs depends on everyone co-operating.
- In your own home, do not block your hall or put portable heaters or anything that catches fire easily there. It is the only escape route for you and your family.
- WDH has a zero tolerance approach to fire safety in all communal areas to make them as safe as possible and minimise any risk of fire. The storage of any items in communal areas is not allowed.

What can I do to prevent fires?

- Never leave children alone. Keep matches and lighters out of reach and don't let children near cooking or heating appliances when in use.
- Look out for older people and make sure they take sensible precautions. If in doubt contact us on 0345 8 507 507 for further advice.
- Don't smoke in bed. This is a major cause of fires in the home. Always finish your cigarette before going to bed, make sure they are stubbed out properly, preferably in a container with water in the bottom.
- Never leave candles unattended. Candles are naked flames, make sure you put candles and incense sticks out at night.
- Chip pans are another major source of fires in the home. Avoid the use of chip pans, use a deep fat fryer if you can. Do not fill them more than a third full of fat. Never leave the pan without turning off the heat. If the pan does catch fire, turn off the heat, if safe to do so. Do not throw water on it or put wet towels over the pan. Turn off the heat and leave for at least half an hour. If yours and the safety of others is at risk, leave the apartment and close doors and windows as you leave, then call the fire service on 999.

- Have your heaters serviced every year. Make sure they can't be knocked over, and keep them away from furniture and furnishings, and that nothing can fall on to the heater.
- Before going to bed, switch off all electrical appliances, except those such as DVD recorders which are designed to be left on. Carefully remove plugs from electrical sockets. Check ashtrays for burning cigarette ends and pipes. Close all internal doors. Check there is nothing blocking the hallway or front door.
- Do not place hot or burning items into the waste disposal chutes or rubbish bins.
- Do not place any large items of furniture or rubbish outside your apartment, or outside the bin rooms. Removal of large or bulky items can be arranged through the local authority refuse collection service. Visit Wakefield Council's 'Request a bulky collection' page on their website or phone Wakefield Council on 0345 8 506 506.
- The use of BBQs on balconies or inside properties is strictly forbidden.

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

1. Alert any other people in the apartment.
2. 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.
3. Don't use balconies which are not part of an escape route.
4. 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.
5. When leaving the building, use the staircase, not the lift.
6. 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.

What if fire breaks out elsewhere in the building?

If you see or hear of a fire in another part of the building:

- The building is designed to contain a fire in the flat where it starts. This means it will usually be safe for you to stay in your own flat. if the fire is elsewhere.

- It will normally be safe for you to stay in your own apartment. If your apartment is affected by heat or smoke from elsewhere in the block, leave at once, closing all windows and doors behind you.
- Keep low to the floor as there will be less smoke and visibility will be better.
- You must leave immediately if smoke or heat affects your home, or if you are told to by the fire service.

If you are in any doubt, get out.

What if I need help to get out of the building due to ill health or mobility issues?

Please contact us on 0345 8 507 507 and we will put an agreed evacuation plan together.

Smoke alarms save lives!

Smoke alarms are fitted in your home.

- You should test the alarm each week to make sure it is working properly. Never remove the batteries, unless you are replacing them. Hoovering 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 is a warning device that 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 are in doubt, phone us on 0345 8 507 507.



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