

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

(HOUSING STOCK AND COMMON AREAS)

APPROVED BY HHP BOARD:
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hebridean housing
partnership

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Hebridean Housing Partnership is committed to maintaining the Health and Safety of employees, tenants and members of the public. We recognise the potential health risks associated with fire safety in our homes.
- 1.2 In meeting these responsibilities, we will ensure that we comply with the relevant legislation regarding fire safety.

AIMS

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to provide a robust fire safety framework which can be implemented to secure the safety and wellbeing of tenants, visitors and firefighters
- 2.2 The procedures detailed within this policy are intended to facilitate the effective management of fire safety, ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and all other relevant legislation.

FIRE AND SMOKE ALARMS

- 3.1 We will provide:
 - one functioning smoke alarm in the room which is frequently used by the occupants for general daytime living purposes
 - one functioning smoke alarm in every circulation space, such as hallways and landings
 - one functioning heat alarm in every kitchen
- 3.2 All alarms will be interlinked, mains or battery powered, and provided with an integral standby power supply.
- 3.3 We will ensure that fire and smoke alarms are in proper working order at the start of each tenancy.
- 3.4 We will ensure that all alarms are installed in accordance with the recommendations contained in BS5839 Part 6.
- 3.5 Specialised alarms will be given to tenants who have a disability, impairment or special needs (e.g. smoke alarms with a vibrating pad, flashing light etc.).
- 3.6 Tenants will be shown how to test alarms and then advised to test them on a weekly basis.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

- 4.1 Carbon monoxide alarms will be installed in any room containing a fossil fuel burning appliance.

EMERGENCY LIGHTING

- 5.1 For blocks of flats and maisonettes, emergency lighting will be present in all communal areas and common escape routes.
- 5.2 The emergency lighting system will be designed to automatically illuminate upon the failure of the power supply.
- 5.3 The emergency lighting system will be tested on a six-monthly basis with a record of the test maintained for three years.
- 5.4 An annual discharge test will be performed by a competent person. This will involve simulating a power failure and conducting a test of the full rated duration of the emergency lights (e.g. 3 hours).

FIRE DOORS AND COMPARTMENTS

- 6.1 Buildings containing flats and maisonettes will be split into fire-resisting compartments by fire-resisting doors, walls and floors which will provide a physical barrier to fire.
- 6.2 Doors connecting shared parts of a multi-occupancy dwelling, such as the doors to individual flats or apartments will be rated fire doors.
- 6.3 Doors used for plant rooms and service penetrations such as rubbish chutes will be fire rated.

EMERGENCY EXIT DOORS

- 7.1 We will ensure all doors which are to be used in an emergency can be opened from the inside without the use of a key

SMOKE VENTILATION

- 8.1 Communal areas, where practicable, will have adequate smoke ventilation either through natural means or by mechanical ventilation.
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FIRE EQUIPMENT

- 9.1 Under Scottish Government legislation, all new build social housing must be fitted with automatic fire suppression systems where the building warrant is applied for on or after 1 March 2021.
- 9.2 Sprinklers will be installed in existing houses where we are unable to reduce particular risks by other means.
- 9.3 Fire extinguishers will not be installed in dwellings as tenants will not be trained on the safe use of extinguishers. Accidents can occur if tenants try to use them in the event of a fire or if they are discharged through malice or horseplay.

FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS

- 10.1 Where furniture and furnishings are provided, we will ensure they are fully compliant with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

EVACUATION POLICY

- 11.1 Where a building is over 2 storeys, fire evacuation procedures and fire assembly points will be clearly contained in tenancy handbooks or tenancy start-up packs which will be issued to all tenants at the start of a tenancy. It will be the tenant's responsibility to familiarise themselves with the procedure and follow it out in the event of a fire.
- 11.2 Alternative methods will be available for tenants with language or learning difficulties (e.g. an interpreter will be used, a copy will be in braille, an audio version will be available etc.).

SIGNAGE

- 12.1 Where a building is over 2 storeys, fire action signs will be placed in corridors (on every level), entrance doors and common areas. Where fire safety signs are provided, they will be in accordance with BS 5499 and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

MAINTAINANCE AND REPAIRS

- 13.1 We will ensure premises, equipment and devices provided for fire safety are subject to a suitable system of maintenance, are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

- 13.2 All repairs will be carried out within the timescale set in our repair policy by a competent person.

ACCESS AND FACILITIES FOR FIRE SERVICE

- 14.1 Where practicably possible, we will ensure:
- there is sufficient means of external access to enable fire appliances to be brought near to the building for effective use
 - there is sufficient means of access into, and within, the building for firefighting personnel to effect search and rescue and fight fire

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

- 15.1 The legal requirements relating to Fire Risk Assessing are complex and are often taken to exclude domestic premises. However, we have a legal duty to risk assess all areas defined as 'workplaces', which will include plant rooms and other non-tenant-accessible areas.
- 15.2 Furthermore, the fire regulations require common areas to be maintained in a certain condition suitable for the fire authority, which can often only be ensured by carrying out a risk assessment.
- 15.3 A Fire Risk Assessment Plan is in place to ensure the undertaking of fire risk assessments (and regular reviews) by competent persons in accordance with the plan.
- 15.4 The following was considered in developing the Fire Risk Assessment Plan:
- Buildings over 2 storeys that may pose a particular risk to tenants;
 - 'Workplaces' such as plant rooms come within the scope of the regulations so far as fire risk assessing is required; and
 - Common areas of domestic premises require to be maintained in a certain condition and may benefit from a 'representative' risk assessing programme.

TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 16.1 We will include fire safety obligations within tenancy agreements and will issue regular fire safety information packs and leaflets to remind tenants to:

- test smoke alarms on a weekly basis
- ensure all communal areas are not obstructed
- ensure fire doors are not propped open or otherwise disabled
- familiarise themselves with any evacuation procedure

LICENSED HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY (HMO'S)

- 17.1 All policies details listed above will be applied. In addition to these, all licensed HMOs and commercial premises that we manage:
- Will be fire risk assessed by a competent assessor, with periodicity determined by the fire risk assessment;
 - Will have doors opening in the direction of escape;
 - Will be supplied with appropriate, maintained extinguishers;
 - Will have the fire evacuation procedure details relayed to relevant persons via the methods detailed in section 12.1 in the case of HMOs and via staff training for commercial premises.
- 17.2 Within commercial premises not managed by us, the responsibility for the completion of the fire risk assessment will fall upon the tenant. A copy of the completed fire risk assessment will be held by both the tenant and HHP.

MONITORING & REVIEW

- 18.1 We will review this policy every 3 years. More frequent reviews will be considered if, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy guidance.
- 18.2 The Health and Safety Committee will monitor compliance on an annual basis and report performance to the Chief Executive in the first instance and then to the Audit and Risk Committee.

REFERENCES

- 19.1 BS 5839-6:2013. Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings. Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm systems in domestic premises
- 19.2 Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 Domestic Technical Handbook (as revised)
- 19.3 The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994. Anyone who manufactures electrical equipment must comply with the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994. These implement into UK law the European Council Directive 2006/95/EEC - commonly referred to as the Low Voltage Directive (LVD). The aim of these regulations is to ensure that electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits is safe to use.
- 19.4 Fire (Scotland) Act 2005. This deals with the law relating to fire prevention and safety, replacing old legislation, and modernising the operation of the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 19.5 Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. These regulations came in to force on repealing all previous Fire Safety legislation, and placing a requirement on Scottish businesses to do a Fire Risk Assessment that looks at reducing and removing the risk of fire.
- 19.6 Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. This act defines the fundamental structure and authority for the encouragement, regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare within the United Kingdom.
- 19.7 Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. These regulations are designed to ensure that upholstery components and composites used for furniture supplied in the UK meet specified ignition resistance levels and are suitable labelled.
- 19.8 Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations. The statutory instrument that deals with the safe installation, maintenance and use of gas systems, including those within buildings.
- 19.9 1998 Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996. Safety signs and signals are required where, despite putting in place all other relevant measures, a significant risk to the health and safety of employees and others remains.

INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

WORD	INTERPRETATION
We	Hebridean Housing Partnership
Competent person	A person suitably trained and qualified by knowledge and practical experience, and provided with the necessary instructions, to enable the required task(s) to be carried out correctly.
Common Area	A common area is a portion of a property that is shared and used by multiple residents. This would include areas such as the lobby, stairway and hallway
Competent Person	person, suitably trained and qualified by knowledge and practical experience, and provided with the necessary instructions, to enable the required task(s) to be carried out correctly."
Dwelling	a house, flat, or other place of residence
Emergency Lighting	lighting provided for use when the supply to normal lighting fails
Fire Door	door or shutter provided for the passage of people, air or objects which, together with its frame and furniture as installed in a building, is intended (when closed) to resist the passage of fire and/or gaseous products of combustion, and is capable of meeting specified performance criteria to those ends
Alarm	device containing, within one house, all the components necessary for detecting smoke and for giving an audible alarm
Sprinkler System	a system comprising thermos-sensitive devices designed to react at a pre-determined temperature to automatically release a stream of water and distribute it in a specified pattern and quantity over a designated area
HMO	a house, premises or a group of premises with shared amenities, occupied by three or more persons from three or more families as their only or main residence."
All references to the masculine gender in this policy shall read as equally applicable to the feminine gender	



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