



FIRE SAFETY POLICY

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Author: Jermaine Sterling
Department: Operations

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Radcliffe Housing Society (RHS) treats the health and safety of its tenant, staff, contractors, and other users of its buildings of paramount importance. This includes appropriate fire precautions to prevent fires, detect them if they arise and ensure the safety of staff, residents and visitors. We recognise we have a moral and legal duty to maintain a high standard of fire safety at all our properties.

1.2 In meeting our health and safety responsibilities, we will ensure we comply with all relevant legislation in promoting fire safety and risk assessment in the following areas:

- Office, business premises and commercial assets owned and managed by us
- Communal areas of buildings containing flats, including independent living units and other properties
- Exposure of uncontrolled fire and associated smoke at all our buildings and assets

1.3 There is a significant level of legislation and regulation around the prevention of fire in residential buildings. This list includes legislation relating to this policy but is not exhaustive:

- [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2 \(RRO\)](#)
- [Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022](#) and the [Fire Safety Act 2021](#)
- [Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#)
- [Building Regulations 2010 \(as amended\) Schedule 1 Part B](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Section 3](#)

1.4 The implementation and monitoring of this Policy also assists us, to comply with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing.

2.0 Definition of Terms

2.1 In this policy, ‘tenants’ and ‘leaseholders’ are those who have signed a tenancy agreement or Lease. They will usually be responsible for the actions of the occupants in their homes.

2.2 Where the term ‘residents’ is used, this refers not only to tenants and leaseholders, but also to all occupants of a tenant’s or leaseholder’s household.

2.3 In the case of ‘leaseholders’ the Lease agreement will always take precedent over this policy unless there is an overriding legal or regulatory requirement.

3.0 Policy Statement

3.1 As owners and managers of homes, we have a duty of care to ensure our residents, occupants and visitors can use the relevant buildings and facilities safely. This extends to taking all reasonable steps to mitigate any risks associated with fire in domestic properties.

3.2 There is legislation and regulation relevant to fire safety which we will comply with under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Fire Safety Act 2022. Our wider

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organisational commitment to health and safety is set out in our Health and Safety Policies. Keeping residents safe from harm is paramount.

3.3 If premises have been designed, constructed, and used within modern building regulations, structural fire precautions should be acceptable. However, a fire risk assessment will still be carried out and all fire precautions and maintenance routines continued, as set out in the Policy, procedures, and guidance which we comply with.

3.4 We acknowledge and accept our responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that our buildings are safe to live in, are assessed for fire risk and are properly managed to the highest and safest standards.

4.0 Policy Aims and Objectives

- Provide clear lines of responsibility within RHS, for the management of fire safety
- Specify individual responsibilities in the management of fire safety
- Clarify our approach to Fire Risk Assessments
- Clarify our method of reviewing and monitoring fire safety compliance

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 We accept our responsibility to fully implement our duties in respect of fire safety across the housing stock, and to ensure all employees understand their role in fire prevention and fire safety management.

5.2 Our Chief Executive (CEO) has overall responsibility for all Health and Safety matters.

5.3 The Operations Director (OD) is designated to ensure all below actions and aims are monitored, reviewed and delivered.

5.4 The Asset Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate contractors and consultants are competent and accredited in fire safety measures and standards
- Arranging the maintenance and inspection of fire safety equipment in accordance with relevant British standards
- The arrangement for repairs and remedial measures relevant to fire safety to be undertaken in a timely and swift manner
- Co-ordinating with all other staff or other authorised person/s in the management of fire safety
- Liaising with fire and rescue services on matters relevant to fire safety
- Receiving reports from contractors and fire related consultants and to report any significant findings to the Operations Director
- Advising on the implementation of fire safety legislation and other guidance relevant to premises and building maintenance issues
- Assisting and preparing relevant staff with fire safety logbooks for all relevant buildings
- Ensuring all notice boards within our housing stock are fire retardant or resistant
- Ensuring fire drills are carried out bi-annually, where deemed necessary

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- Arranging and documenting periodic fire safety checks on all communal areas
- Ensuring all fire safety devices and equipment are in place, fully operational and compliant
- Arranging statutory tests within the communal areas and to record information in the fire safety log (where applicable)
- Ensuring relevant blocks of flats have a valid and appropriate evacuation plan.

5.5 The Independent Living Officer is responsible for:

- Carrying out fire drills within the schemes, on an annual basis
- Assisting and monitoring all fire safety checks, tests, and logbooks on a quarterly basis
- Monitoring communal areas for fire safety issues and take appropriate action where necessary (sterile corridors, notice board, storage of unwanted items in common areas)
- Ensuring all fire safety devices and equipment are in place and fully operational
- Identifying and recording any occupant who may struggle to vacate the premises in the event of an emergency

5.6 All our staff are responsible for:

- Publicising and enforcing the importance of fire safety to all residents, regardless of tenure
- Identifying all residents who require personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) and to record and review relevant information bi-annually
- Monitoring communal areas for fire safety issues and take appropriate action where necessary (sterile corridors, notice board, storage of unwanted items in common areas)

5.7 Our residents are reminded about their responsibilities which include:

- Ensuring they behave responsibly and adhere to all relevant legislation, policies and expectations around fire safety.
- Acknowledging actions of residents may affect the fire safety of a building. Some residents will have stored oxygen in their properties for medical reasons. Oxygen aids combustion and therefore sources of heat or open flames in the vicinity should be minimised. It is the responsibility of the tenant or leaseholder to inform us of the presence of oxygen equipment in their property
- When we are aware that oxygen is stored at the property and where a tenant or leaseholder has not already done so, we will notify the fire authority of the presence of stored oxygen. Where appropriate, stickers or signs posting a warning against smoking or other high-risk activities in the area can be used
- Residents' goods left in communal areas can be a source of ignition and support combustion, as well as potentially blocking escape routes. Storage of goods in communal areas is not allowed and we will take steps to remove items to ensure the safety of all occupants within a block
- Barbeques (including gas barbeques) are 'open fires' and are not permitted in any of our properties including any balcony areas, which are extensions of properties. Barbeques pose an unacceptable fire risk when used on balconies because they can easily burn out of control and cause combustible materials in the area to ignite, which can spread inside the property. Using a barbeque in an enclosed space also poses a

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risk of carbon monoxide poisoning

- Tenants and Leaseholders should not fit metal security gates to their homes. Gates can hinder entry and exit from premises for the purposes of evacuation and fire-fighting. Permission will not be given for these to be fitted
- Where tenants and leaseholders have added potentially lethal items to their homes, for example, fitted metal security gates and it has been identified as an unacceptable fire risk, we will request for them to be removed. If necessary, we will enforce the conditions within the tenancy agreement or lease, to ensure items increasing fire risks, are removed
- Where any of our residents compromise our approach to fire safety, or there is a refusal to comply to our instructions, we will take enforcement action to protect our residents and our properties

6.0 Training and Information

6.1 All staff appropriate to their role must be provided with suitable Fire Awareness training on a three-year rolling basis. Where employees are responsible for premises, such as those with responsibility for the management of Independent Living schemes, additional Fire Marshal / Fire Extinguisher training may be provided.

6.2 The Operations Director must provide employees, contractors or other person/s working in or on a premises with comprehensible and relevant information for:

- Any risks to them, identified by the risk assessment
- Preventive and protective measures
- Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Any risks from other parties using the same premises

6.3 The above information must be provided to all persons and consideration given to:

- Anyone with impaired needs that people may have, for example, a hearing or visual impairment, learning difficulties and those where English is not their first language
- Our contractors, either by providing information cards, when they sign into a premise or by a verbal induction to the premises

7.0 Planning and Implementation

7.1 The Asset Manager will manage the timetable for the implementation of Fire Risk Assessments, Fire Door surveys and Fire Action Plans.

7.2 The Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) will be carried out independently by an external consultant and shall consist of the following elements, all of which must be of specific relevance to the building to which the assessment refers to:

- Identification of fire hazards
- Identification of those at risk, in particular, young, elderly, disabled and, visitors etc
- The consideration of current controls including fire detection and warning systems,

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means of escape, means of fighting fire, signage, maintenance and testing procedures, information, instructions and also training for staff

- Evaluations of any risks posed and recommendations of further control measures needed
- Recording of findings
- Preparation of an action plan, if appropriate
- Review and revision arrangements.

7.3 There is a legal requirement to ensure fire resisting doors and escape doors are correctly installed and adequately maintained, in order for them to be fit for purpose. To ensure compliance, an appropriate staff member or external consultant will carry out periodic checks on all fire doors, at least bi-annually. Doors where traffic is high, will be checked more frequently than other doors in some buildings. To safeguard, we will complete additional surveys on estate inspections or at specific points within the year. These surveys will be recorded and updated robustly.

8.0 Performance Monitoring

8.1 The Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and Fire Door surveys will be used as a measure of fire safety performance, with the number of outstanding issues measured on a quarterly basis. It will be monthly if an action is deemed urgent. The aim is to achieve a “clean sheet” of Fire Risk Assessment actions within a maximum time span of 3 years.

8.2 Our staff 1:1's and appraisal process with line managers will be used to measure an individual's progress against training requirements laid out in this Policy. This will ensure all staff with fire safety duties and responsibilities are appropriately trained and competent.

8.3 Any exposed risks will be advised to our Senior Management Team (SMT) and reported to RHS Board.

8.4 All PEEPs are to be reviewed bi-annually to ensure they remain relevant to the individuals' current circumstances.

9.0 Auditing

9.1 The Operations Director will advise staff, contractors and stakeholders on the implementation of fire safety legislation and other guidance relevant to premises and building management.

10.0 Review

10.1 The Fire Safety Policy will be reviewed every two years or whenever there is a change in legislation or regulation.