

EXTINGUISHING THE RISK

A COUNCILLOR'S GUIDE TO FIRE SAFETY IN HOUSING

by

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Objectives

- To understand Fire Safety Law.
- To be aware of the legal responsibilities that elected members have.
- To understand the term “Responsible Person”.
- To be able to outline the basic Fire Safety requirements in Housing Stock



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WHY US?

HOUSING ACT 2004

And

REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY)
ORDER 2005

also known as the RRO or FSO

or

The Order



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WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) – came into effect in October 2006.
- Places the onus for Fire Safety on the Responsible Person for the building. Must carry out Fire Risk Assessments and provide a safe environment.
- Does not apply to single private dwellings e.g. a single flat or house.
- Does apply to the common ways of purpose built blocks of flats and Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs).



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WHAT/WHO IS THE “RESPONSIBLE PERSON”?

- The Employer
- The Owner
- The person who has control
- The person with the budget
- Head of Service
- Chief Executive
- Elected Member/s



BASIC FIRE SAFETY IN BLOCKS OF FLATS.

- Do not place anything that will burn in the common ways and staircase of flats.
- Do not obstruct the common ways or staircase in any way – bikes, mobility scooters etc.
- Do not use the lift in the event of a fire.
- Do not obstruct the vents in the staircases or lobbies.



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BASIC FIRE SAFETY IN BLOCKS OF FLATS.

- Each unit of accommodation is a compartment usually with at least 60 minutes of fire separation between each other and also the common way.
- Do not compromise the compartmentalisation between individual units of accommodation and the common way.



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BASIC FIRE SAFETY IN BLOCKS OF FLATS.

- Do not install a common way fire alarm system in a purpose built block of flats.
- This could lead to residents being encouraged to evacuate into a potentially dangerous atmosphere.



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BASIC FIRE SAFETY IN BLOCKS OF FLATS.

- Do install, or encourage, stand alone, hard wired, smoke detection within each unit of accommodation.
- This will alert the occupant of a unit of accommodation to a fire and enable early escape.
- Sprinklers?



REASSURANCE

- Housing management have ensured that suitable Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) have been carried out.
- These have been facilitated by the Corporate Health and Safety Team under a Service Level Agreement.
- Work is ongoing by Property and Investment to complete actions identified in those FRAs.
- Partnership working with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

STRATEGY

Consistency in approach relating to:

- Complaints from residents
- Press stories



Coroners' Inquests – A Discussion

- Shirley Towers, Southampton 6th April 2010. Two Fire-fighters killed.
- Lakanal House, Camberwell 3rd July 2009. 6 residents killed.
- Rule 43 letters.



Coroners' Inquests – A Discussion



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Any questions?



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