



**Fire Protection Association**



**Fire Safety in Housing**  
*Making our Communities Safer!*



**Fire Industry Association**

# Guidance to support a temporary change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy in purpose-built blocks of flats

Version 4

(This fourth edition replaces the previous version of the guide issued 01/10/20)

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**NFCC**  
National Fire Chiefs Council



**The Institution of Fire Engineers**

*The ‘Guidance to support a temporary change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy in purpose-built blocks of flats’ supports Responsible Persons to meet their existing duties and guide them towards a consistent, standardised approach to a change in evacuation strategy and implementation of interim measures. For the purpose of brevity, this document will be referred to as the ‘Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance’ or simply ‘the Guidance’ throughout.*

## Foreword

### Origins of the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance

The Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 was a national tragedy that resulted in the greatest loss of life in a residential fire since the Second World War.

In the days and weeks following the fire, it emerged that many more buildings had similar cladding to that which contributed to the fire spread at Grenfell Tower. The level of risk to residents as a result of a fire involving these external wall systems could not be ignored. To enable people to continue to live in relative safety in their own homes, interim solutions were needed to mitigate the risk. These interim fire safety arrangements can be adopted to mitigate the risk of a fire and the risk to life.

Waking watches began to be put into use for some of these high rise residential buildings shortly after the Grenfell Tower fire, with the principle being adapted from the long-standing historical use of waking watch as an interim measure. For example, as a temporary measure to address failure of fire alarm systems in hotels and to avoid prohibition of the use of the premises.

It became clear following the Grenfell Tower fire that no central guidance existed on how to consistently implement these arrangements. In response to this need, a group of industry professionals convened to produce a technical guide on arrangements to support a temporary change to the evacuation strategy. The first edition of the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance was drafted and released to meet the emerging scale of the problem, and to support Responsible Persons to implement measures effectively and consistently.

### Impact of delays in fully remediating buildings

Those who have been involved with each edition of the Guidance are deeply conscious of the impacts on affected residents that arise from the identification of fire risks, and the delays in fully remediating buildings or applying other suitable and sustainable fire safety arrangements.

This includes an inability to sell properties or access new mortgage products, increased insurance costs and financial uncertainty about the cost of works and interim measures, and unacceptable impacts on mental health and wellbeing. This is exacerbated when there is an extended use of waking watch rather than timely remediation to address the issues, or swift installation of a common fire alarm system or a more sustainable mitigation measure, such as a sprinkler system if appropriate, which has been evidenced as being far more cost effective.

In March 2020, the UK Government announced £1 billion to support the remediation of unsafe non-aluminium composite material (ACM) combustible cladding systems on residential buildings over 18 metres in height, in both the private and social housing sectors in England. This was further to £600 million already in place to remove combustible ACM cladding and, in February 2021, the Government announced a further £3.5 billion for the removal of combustible

cladding on high rise blocks over 18 metres in height. Government funding announced to date amounts to £5.1 billion.<sup>1</sup> Whilst these steps have been taken, it seems that in some cases, barriers to remediation may remain for some time.

This Guidance underscores the firm and long held expectation of the Government and those who have been involved with each edition of the Guidance, that, where it is not possible to remediate immediately, building owners should install common fire alarms or alternative technology to reduce or remove the dependence on waking watch and then work to remediate the building or implement a sustainable long-term alternative as quickly as possible. This is the clear expectation for buildings where remediation may be delayed. This approach should, in almost all circumstances, reduce the ongoing financial burden on residents where they are funding a waking watch.

In support of this position, and building on the third edition of this Guidance, the UK Government has made over £60m available in England to install alarms and replace costly waking watch measures in all residential buildings where a waking watch is in place at cost to leaseholders. Over 300 buildings have benefited from the fund and over 200 of these buildings have now installed a common alarm system.

There is a clear expectation for Responsible Persons to move quickly to install a common fire alarm and to remove or reduce dependence on waking watch in accordance with this guidance.

### Contributors

We would like to thank the following sector stakeholders, who have given their time and expertise in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire to produce, provide significant comment, or contribute to the reviews of each edition of this Guidance:

- Association of Residential Managing Agents (now part of the Property Institute)
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- End Our Cladding Scandal
- Federation of Private Residents Associations
- Fire Brigades Union
- Fire Industry Association
- Fire Officers Association
- Fire Protection Association
- Fire Sector Federation
- Government's Independent Expert Advisory Panel
- Health and Safety Executive
- Home Office
- Institution of Fire Engineers
- Local Government Association
- London Councils
- London Fire Brigade
- Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing
- National Fire Chiefs Council
- National Social Housing Fire Strategy Group
- Optivo
- UK Cladding Action Group

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<sup>1</sup> Please see [Leasehold high rise blocks: Who pays for fire safety work?](#)

## Fourth edition

This fourth edition of the Guidance is the product of a review commissioned by the Government following the [written statement](#) by Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, then Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on proportionality in building safety. The review follows the withdrawal of the Government's Consolidated Advice Note, and the publication of [Publicly Available Specification 9980:2022 Assessing the external wall fire risk in multi-occupied residential buildings](#) (PAS 9980). It has also provided the opportunity to address feedback, concerns, and questions put forward by stakeholders, including leaseholders, in the time since the last review. Such changes can be seen in both the layout and content of this edition.

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Disclaimer: The purpose of this non-statutory guidance is to support building owners, Responsible Persons, associated fire safety specialists, Fire and Rescue Services, and other appropriate enforcing authorities to assist with a consistent, standardised approach. This guidance does not constitute legal advice. All parties' legal duties remain those specified by law, in particular the *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005*, the *Housing Act 2004*, and the *Building Regulations 2010*. If any parties consider that difficulties arise in relation to compliance with their particular duties in any relevant legislation, they should take legal advice.

# 1. Scope

- 1.1. This Guidance is primarily designed to apply to buildings:
  - that pose a significant and immediate risk to the safety of residents;
  - that cannot support a stay put strategy; and
  - where making an immediate change to the evacuation strategy, by implementing short term interim measures, is the only alternative to immediate prohibition of the building by the appropriate enforcing authority.
- 1.2. This Guidance is underpinned by the notion that waking watch is an immediate interim measure. This is only appropriate where there is an immediate risk to residents requiring a measure for detecting fire and alerting residents.
- 1.3. **Within a month**, Responsible Persons should make a plan for implementing more sustainable means for supporting the evacuation strategy.<sup>2</sup> Where a waking watch is implemented, it should only act as an immediate solution. The plan should form part of the fire safety arrangements, and should be subject to ongoing monitoring and review by the Responsible Person.<sup>3</sup> Interim measures are not a substitute for remediation, and remedial work should be progressed as quickly as possible.
- 1.4. This Guidance outlines options for mitigating the risks within unsafe buildings by utilising a series of interim measures once the decision to change evacuation strategy has been made. Where there is the option of remediating the risk in the immediate term, this should take priority, rather than installing longer term mitigating measures. The aim of the Responsible Person's actions should be to make the building safe without incurring unnecessary significant additional costs to residents. Safety solutions should look to minimise these costs where possible. Further detail on the timeframes referred to throughout this document can be found in section 4 and the glossary.
- 1.5. This Guidance is primarily intended to help Responsible Persons fulfil their duties under the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) (the Fire Safety Order), although it is likely that the principles of the Guidance could also be applied to future building safety regulation.
- 1.6. In keeping with other guidance within the fire sector, the presentational convention of this Guidance is that its recommendations are expressed using the principal auxiliary verb 'should'.

## 2. Fire Risk Assessment

- 2.1. The fire risk assessment should be undertaken by a Competent Person to ensure a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks, and the identification of the fire precautions which are required to ensure the building is safe. Guidance on choosing a competent assessor, as well as a code of practice for the competency of fire risk assessors, is available on the [Fire Sector Federation website](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Further guidance on what should be included in the plan is outlined below.

<sup>3</sup> The plan should include costings, timeframes, a resident engagement strategy, and procurement process. It should also consider the principles of prevention as referred to in Article 10 of the [Fire Safety Order](#).

- 2.2. No single set of criteria can be applied to all types of buildings in all circumstances given the complex interactions between people, buildings, and fire. Fire risk assessments need to be specific to the building in question and consider any potential fire spread in conjunction with the other fire safety provisions. Assessments should determine whether the safety measures in the building support the current evacuation strategy and make recommendations for an appropriate change where necessary (i.e. a change from a stay put to a simultaneous evacuation strategy).
- 2.3. The fire risk assessment must be reviewed and updated to reflect the risk posed by a combustible external wall system and/or other significant failings in the general fire precautions. Additional guidance on this type of risk assessment can be found in [PAS 9980](#). Such assessments should only be carried out by a competent fire engineer or other competent building professional.
- 2.4. Whilst undertaking the assessment of the building, the Responsible Person should make best endeavours to engage with residents in order to pre-warn them of any action that may be needed. Where it is envisaged that temporary mitigating measures may be required, the Responsible Person should also look to engage with relevant suppliers where necessary. For example, fire alarm companies to minimise the reliance on more costly measures, such as a waking watch.
- 2.5. When determining the risk within a building, the review of the fire risk assessment should take account of the needs of vulnerable residents and the effect that building safety risks may have on their ability to safely evacuate. Where steps are taken to add in temporary measures, the fire risk assessment should consider the effectiveness of communication with all residents in the building to ensure messages are clearly understood, accounting for areas such as different languages and cognitive abilities. Responsible Persons should ensure that the changes to the evacuation strategy should be communicated in a format that is easily accessible and can be understood by all. They should take into consideration different languages, faiths, and religions, and evaluate any impact on the persons within their premises.

### 3. Background and Context

- 3.1. Purpose-built blocks of flats are generally designed and built to support a stay put evacuation strategy. The use of a stay put strategy is a choice made by architects and designers early in a building's design, which will inform other fire safety features within the building. For example, the level of fire alarm and detection systems. This means that only residents from flats directly affected by fire, heat, or smoke should need to evacuate. Residents in unaffected flats should be protected by general fire precautions provided in the building. Those residents should, therefore, be safe to stay put during a fire in their building, unless affected by heat or smoke or otherwise directed by the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). They may also choose to leave for other reasons. In many cases, residents may not even be aware of a fire elsewhere in the building.
- 3.2. A stay put strategy relies on the fire separation between each flat, and between flats and the common parts, such as escape corridors and stairs, to ensure that the fire and smoke does not spread throughout the building unrestricted and uncontrolled in a way that affects the safety of occupants. This fire separation is achieved through different means, such as

fire-resisting doors, fire-resisting walls, floors, and ceilings separating flats. The external walls of the building should also adequately resist the spread of fire.

- 3.3. A Responsible Person, with advice from a Competent Person where necessary, may determine that all or parts of the building can no longer support a stay put strategy.
- 3.4. A change in evacuation strategy will be necessary where there is a risk of fire and/or smoke spread, either internally or externally, which would place residents at risk if they did not quickly evacuate the building.
- 3.5. A temporary change from a stay put strategy should be able to provide a level of confidence that the risk to persons can be mitigated to continue occupation of the building, despite there being clear risks that need to be urgently addressed. It is important that a clear explanation of the fire safety management strategy of the building and the temporary interim measures is communicated to all the residents. This information should be documented and recorded for best practice.
- 3.6. Responsible Persons should notify the local FRS of any change to the evacuation strategy as they will need to consider their operational response.
- 3.7. Where the main issue is the external wall system, the Responsible Person should:
  - check there are no potential routes for fire spread from the interior of the building out onto, or into, any combustible external wall systems present;
  - close any car parks in which a vehicle fire could impinge on any combustible external wall systems that may be present; and
  - ensure that external fuels sources that could allow a fire to spread to any combustible external wall systems that may be present are removed or managed appropriately (for example, bin stores).
- 3.8. Since the publication of previous editions of this Guidance, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have withdrawn the Advice for Building Owners of Multi-storey, Multi-occupied Residential Buildings guidance (also known as the Consolidated Advice Note).
- 3.9. [PAS 9980](#) has been published and this is the preferred methodology for the fire risk appraisal of external wall construction and cladding of existing blocks of flats.
- 3.10. Appendix G gives details of where there should be an assurance that their building's existing fire safety provisions are working correctly, and signposts further information and resources to support Responsible Persons to meet their ongoing responsibilities and improve the safety of residents.



## Managing a Change to an Evacuation Strategy

This Guidance is only to be used after the decision has already been made by a Responsible Person, in conjunction with advice from a Competent Person and a review of the fire risk assessment, that the building cannot sustain a stay put strategy.

**Where immediate works to remediate hazards can be carried out to reduce the level of risk within the premises, this should be the preferred course of action.**

In order to support a change to a simultaneous or partial evacuation strategy it will be necessary to introduce some means of detecting a fire, should one occur, and warning residents of the need to evacuate the building.

Following a decision that a change to the evacuation strategy is necessary, consideration should be given as to how quickly a means of detection and warning needs to be implemented. Analysis should be carried out to determine the most cost-effective interim solution to be adopted in terms of minimising costs to residents, the suitability of proposed measures to the specific building, and a consideration of their effectiveness. This may indicate that the cost of installing a common fire alarm system is a better use of the funding available than the provision of a waking watch. If the risk assessment has identified that there is an imminent risk to residents, then a waking watch may be needed in the immediate term.

Responsible Persons must proactively engage with residents when implementing measures for a change in evacuation strategy. The implementation of immediate mitigating measures should take account of the cost in proportion to the risk. Engagement should include:

- explaining to residents the risk identified in the building;
- steps residents can take to help reduce the risk of a fire;
- information about the measures being put in place; and
- how long these measures are likely to last.

Where a waking watch is implemented, the Responsible Person should explain to residents why this is necessary and the steps being taken to progress with the installation of a common fire alarm system, and action to be taken in the event of a fire including liaison with the waking watch if there is a fire in their flat.

An appropriate common fire alarm and detection system will generally provide more certainty that a fire will be detected and residents warned at the earliest opportunity rather than rely on using a waking watch. It is also emphasised that the combustible external wall systems system and/or other building defects should be remediated without delay.

The Responsible Person should take account of the needs of vulnerable residents and the effect that any changes may have on their ability to safely evacuate. Where steps are taken to include temporary measures, the fire risk assessment should consider their effectiveness and ensure that all residents can be alerted in the event of a fire, accounting for areas such as hearing impairments, different languages, and cognitive abilities.

## 4. Interim Measures Overview

- 4.1. Interim measures may need to be implemented until a building has been remediated or until an alternative permanent mitigation has been installed. Responsible Persons should make a plan within a month that outlines the steps that will be taken to move away from a waking watch and towards remediation or an alternative permanent sustainable solution. Where a ‘first aid fire alarm’<sup>4</sup> system is to be implemented, every effort should be made to install a common fire alarm as soon as practicable. Until this is possible, the premises’ fire risk assessment should outline the expectations for ensuring that either a first aid fire alarm or waking watch are fit for detecting a fire and giving a warning to residents in the affected areas of the building.
- 4.2. The following table gives an outline of the recommended timeframes referred to and examples of actions that a Responsible Person for a building should take. Please note: all timeframes are given from the time where the need to change evacuation strategy is identified.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Immediately<br><b>At once</b>                       | As soon as it is identified by the Competent Person, via the fire risk assessment process, that interim measures are necessary.   |
| Transition Plan<br><b>Within a month</b>            | Where a waking watch is implemented, as soon as practicable but <b>within a month</b> , the Responsible Persons should make a plan for implementing sustainable means for supporting the evacuation strategy to allow the building to transition away from a waking watch. Such a plan should include details such as costings, timeframes, a resident engagement strategy, and relevant procurement processes. In the immediate and transitional term, this plan could include the installation of a first aid fire alarm system. It should also consider the principles of prevention. <sup>5</sup> |
| Transition Period<br><b>No longer than 6 months</b> | The amount of time needed for the Responsible Person to implement the transitional plan and put in place more sustainable measures to allow the building to transition away from a waking watch, such as by moving to installation of a <b>common fire alarm</b> as outlined in Appendix A. This should take place as soon as practically possible and within <b>no longer than 6 months</b> of the risk being identified, other than in exceptional circumstances.   |
| Short-term<br><b>No longer than 12 months</b>       | The time required to formulate, and where possible commence, a longer-term <b>remediation plan</b> , as soon as practically possible and no longer than 12 months.  |
| Longer-term<br><b>12 months or more</b>             | The period by which the remediation plan is in place and underway.  |

<sup>4</sup> A first aid fire alarm system is defined in Appendix E.

<sup>5</sup> The principles of prevention are a requirement of Article 10 of the Fire Safety Order and are further detailed in Schedule 1 Part 3 of the Fire Safety Order.

The following sections detail some of the options that are available to Responsible Persons. It is recommended that any changes are made in consultation with the residents of the building and a competent fire risk assessor.

It is good practice for Responsible Persons to engage with residents, in a meaningful way, so far as is practicable, before implementing a waking watch to consider the roles and support residents can provide to facilitate the changes to evacuation arrangements.

However, this should not delay the implementation of measures where an imminent risk has been clearly identified.

## 5. Engagement with Residents

5.1. Responsible Persons should proactively engage with residents as soon as possible when a temporary change is made to the building's evacuation strategy. The implementation of immediate mitigating measures should take account of the cost in proportion to the risk. Engagement should include explaining to all residents, so far as is practicable:

- the risk identified in the building;
- steps they can take to help reduce the risk of a fire;
- what measures are being put in place;
- what actions will be necessary in order to remove the reliance on a waking watch;<sup>6</sup> and,
- how long measures are likely to last.

5.2. Where a waking watch is implemented, the Responsible Person should:

- explain to residents why this is necessary;
- carry out initial remediation works or other actions to improve safety or mitigate the risks;
- inform the local FRS of the change in evacuation strategy;
- explain the steps being taken to progress measures that are needed, such as the installation of a common fire alarm system; and
- detail the actions to be taken by residents in the event of a fire, including liaison with the waking watch if there is a fire in their flat.

5.3. Cost options should be provided to leaseholders, and leaseholders should be involved in the choice of interim measures. However, this should not delay the implementation of immediate and transitional term measures where an imminent risk has been clearly identified, and where a delay in implementation of interim measures would lead to prohibition of the building.

5.4. It is essential that residents are informed as soon as practicable about the reasons for the change of the evacuation strategy, the purpose of it, and what actions will be taken in the event of a fire. It is unlikely that relying on a simple mail drop or information on communal notice boards will be sufficient. Resident meetings supported with written advice are more

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<sup>6</sup> The ongoing use of a waking watch will rapidly deplete financial resources that could be better utilised on the installation of a common fire alarm system or remediation.

appropriate. These should be supplemented by the Responsible Person or their representative, supported where necessary by the Competent Person, proactively engaging with residents to ensure that they understand the situation and any subsequent changes/works that might be happening. For these resident engagement meetings, language support, including English for Speakers of Other Languages and British Sign Language, may need to be provided.

- 5.5. It is important that, as part of this process, occupants understand the evacuation strategy as well as the evacuation procedures, and what action they should take to exit the building safely. In buildings where there is a waking watch, residents should be made aware of how the waking watch will raise the alarm, and the actions to take upon discovering an alarm. The residents should be made aware of the identities of those carrying out the waking watch, and how to contact them to either raise the alarm or report an issue. As best practice, Responsible Persons should record and document the actions they have taken to engage with residents.

## 6. Detection and Warning

- 6.1. A temporary simultaneous or partial evacuation strategy relies on two key essential principles:
  - early detection of a fire and warning of occupants; and
  - management of the evacuation.
- 6.2. Interim arrangements in blocks of flats should consist of measures to ensure that residents who need to evacuate are alerted to a fire at the earliest opportunity to enable them to escape safely. The safest and most effective way of ensuring this is by installing a suitable common fire detection and alarm system conforming to *British Standard 5839 Part 1 Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings – Code of practice for design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of systems in non-domestic premises* (BS 5839-1). Further details about the design of common fire alarms is given in Appendix A.
- 6.3. As an immediate and transitional term solution, it may be possible to make use of other technological solutions to act as a means for detection and warning within the building, whilst waiting for a common alarm system to be installed (referred to in this Guidance as a first aid fire alarm). Further details about first aid fire alarms are given in Appendix E.
- 6.4. The purpose of a common fire alarm is to ensure early detection and warning of a fire throughout the affected areas of the building and, in particular, warning within individual flats.
- 6.5. A common fire detection system is an interim measure and should not be relied on as a long-term solution or an alternative to remediation. There may be some circumstances where a common fire detection system is part of a package of permanent mitigating measures. Where this is the case, it should be agreed by the Responsible Person, together with advice from a Competent Person. The local FRS should be consulted to establish if the proposals will meet the requirements of the [Fire Safety Order](#). A common fire detection system can generally be installed within a few months, subject to the circumstances of the building and any required consultation periods, but it is unlikely that installation can be carried out quickly enough to offer an immediate solution in cases

where there is a risk of serious and imminent danger to residents. In such cases, the Responsible Person will need to consider other temporary measures to provide detection and warning. Such measures are detailed below and in Appendix E.

- 6.6. It is important that all flats are provided with working smoke alarms to ensure the safety of residents in the event of a fire within the flat. It is best practice that smoke alarms should be mains wired with a tamper-proof battery back-up. These are independent of any communal fire alarm and detection system specified as an interim measure.
- 6.7. Where a common fire alarm system is proposed to be installed, it might be possible to maintain some utility for this system rather than removing it entirely once the building has been remediated. For example, consideration could be given to whether it could be converted into an evacuation alert system for use by the FRS, as described in *British Standard 8629:2019 Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of evacuation alert systems for use by fire and rescue services in buildings containing flats* (BS 8629), or as a means of giving a remote warning of a fire in a flat. Where this is the desired long-term outcome, this future conversion should be discussed with a competent fire alarm engineer at the design stage, prior to the initial installation of the common fire alarm system.
- 6.8. Where a common fire alarm system has been installed, a review of the premises' fire risk assessment should be carried out to determine what, if any, ongoing interim measures are required within the building. Onsite assistance may no longer be required at this point depending on the circumstances in the building. Please see Appendix D for further details of general management considerations.

#### [BS 8629 emergency evacuation alert systems](#)

- 6.9. In 2019, BSI published BS 8629. This standard offers a specification for systems for use by FRSs to assist in the evacuation of residential buildings. Whilst the systems clearly offer benefit in the evacuation of buildings and their application is supported by FRSs, in the context of the current guidance, these systems on their own would be unsuitable as a mitigation measure. The waking watch and common fire alarm systems are intended to detect fire as well as warn occupants, something which BS 8629 systems are unable to facilitate. The two systems should be treated as being for different purposes.

## 7. Waking Watch

A waking watch is a system whereby suitably trained persons continually patrol the necessary areas of the building and the exterior perimeter in order to detect a fire, raise the alarm, and alert the FRS. Those same individuals can then carry out the duties that may be required to manage an evacuation if needed. More detailed considerations for the waking watch are detailed in Appendix B.

A waking watch is an immediate solution to reduce the risk in a building and allow for continued occupation where, without them, the risk of fire may lead a Responsible Person to determine occupation is no longer appropriate or lead an FRS to serve a prohibition notice. A waking watch should only be used in the immediate or transitional term, and, where significant risk of fire spreading in a building has been confirmed, to allow time for a more sustainable plan to be made without the need for residents to leave their homes. In all cases, an automatic fire detection and alarm system is the most suitable mitigating measure if there is any expected delay in remediation.

- 7.1. A waking watch is a means of detecting a fire and warning residents of the need to evacuate. A waking watch should be replaced with an alternative means of detection and warning as soon as possible. Responsible Persons should make a plan within a month that outlines the steps that will be taken to move away from a waking watch, and includes the pathway to remediation or an alternative permanent sustainable solution.
- 7.2. If a waking watch is implemented, then the Responsible Person should take reasonable steps to assure themselves that all flats have working smoke alarms. This may involve a range of interactions and the provisions of the lease and/or tenancy agreement may need to be considered. Correspondence with residents should make clear that the necessity for working smoke alarms are part of arrangements to ensure collective safety.
- 7.3. The fire risk assessment or other documentation should identify the operational requirements for the waking watch, including the areas that need to be patrolled, frequency of patrols, and the means of raising the alarm for residents who need to evacuate.
- 7.4. The number of persons required for a waking watch is based on how long it would take to warn residents of a fire (see further details in Appendix C). The waking watch should be able to warn all residents who need to evacuate before the escape routes are affected by fire and smoke.
- 7.5. In assessing the required evacuation time, considerations given by the Responsible Person in conjunction with a Competent Person should include the areas outlined below.
  - **The external wall system** – Consideration should be given to the type and extent of any unsafe cladding and insulation materials and potential for disproportionate fire spread. The proximity of the cladding to windows, vents, stairways, and other architectural features that could assist the spread of fire needs to be taken into account. [PAS 9980](#) gives details of a methodology for assessment of external wall systems.

- **Risk of internal ignition of the external wall system** – For example, from fires inside the building via unprotected window reveals and the proximity of ignition sources, such as domestic appliances, or from ignition sources on any balconies present. Unprotected penetrations through the wall system should also be considered.
- **The height of the building** – This reflects the difficulty of external firefighting, especially above 11 metres. External firefighting at heights above 18 metres may require the use of high reach appliances. It is unlikely for these to be available in the initial stages of a fire and typically would not be able to support firefighting above 30 metres.
- **The occupancy of the building** – This includes factors that influence the number of people particularly at risk, which may include the presence of persons with restricted mobility, young persons, and persons with cognitive impairments.
- **Provision of sprinklers or other automatic fire suppression systems** – Such systems may limit the spread of fire from an internal flat to outside allowing more time to escape.
- **Other known fire safety issues** – For example, poor compartmentation, or the lack of or poor standards of other general fire precautions in the building.

- 7.6. In the case of a building with the highest level of risk of external fire spread (for example, a system incorporating **polyethylene core ACM**), the time from detection of the fire by the waking watch to alerting all residents who need to evacuate and confirming evacuation has started should not generally exceed a time of **10-15 minutes** when a confirmed fire within a flat or elsewhere necessitates simultaneous evacuation.
- 7.7. In the case of a building which has a notable fire hazard<sup>7</sup> or known compartmentation issues, then the **10-15 minutes** should form the basis of an assessment of the evacuation time limit. This time may be increased subject to an appropriate assessment of the risk within the building. This should be suitably justified in the assessment by a Competent Person, taking into account the [PAS 9980](#) methodology to include appropriate information, such as confirmed external wall properties or confirmed extent of compartmentation issues following an intrusive survey.
- 7.8. The timeframe of the waking watch to alert all residents who need to evacuate should be suitably justified in the fire risk assessment by a Competent Person.
- 7.9. Waking watch personnel should not initiate a simultaneous evacuation in the event of a false alarm from a domestic smoke alarm, or a small fire that has been extinguished. This would be confirmed through liaison with the occupants of the relevant flat.

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<sup>7</sup> Examples could include: ACM with fire retardant polyethylene filler (category 2 in screening tests) with phenolic foam insulation (as described in test 7 of Government cladding screening programme) or other combustible façade elements, such as high pressure laminate or expanded polystyrene systems. Further information on the Government's large scale fire tests of ACM is available on the [UK Government website](#).

A change to the evacuation strategy is a means of mitigating the risk in a building until longer term solutions are implemented. In most cases, this will require remediation of any unsafe external wall system, reinstatement of compartmentation or alternative risk reduction, for example sprinklers, or a combination of these measures.

## 8. Alternative Immediate and Transition Period Interim Measures

- 8.1. Subject to a risk assessment by a Competent Person, an alternative temporary system of detection and warning to waking watch could be used until a system as detailed in Appendix A is installed. Further details of the considerations that should be accounted for in the fire risk assessment for such alternatives are given in Appendix E.
- 8.2. Any alternative approach should be able to detect a fire in the building and give an audible warning to all residents. Air horns, klaxons, domestic smoke detectors (hard wired or radio linked), other technological solutions,<sup>8</sup> or a combination could be used. The means of raising the alarm should be loud enough to rouse residents from their sleep and needs to account for those with impairments, which may mean an audible warning on its own is not sufficient. Where an alternative approach is used, it should be tested weekly but it should not be the cause of an evacuation of residents, and results of the testing should be recorded.

## 9. Evacuation

- 9.1. On detection and warning of a fire in a simultaneous evacuation building, there needs to be appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that all residents evacuate the building or to a relevant place of safety. It is the duty of the Responsible Person to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the ongoing control, management and monitoring of the evacuation plans.<sup>9</sup>
- 9.2. The [Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people](#) guide states “The Fire and Rescue Service’s role in fire evacuation is that of ensuring that the means of escape in case of fire and associated fire safety measures provided for all people who may be in a building are both adequate and reasonable, taking into account the circumstances of each particular case. Under current fire safety legislation, it is the responsibility of the person(s) having responsibility for the building to provide a fire safety risk assessment that includes an emergency evacuation plan for all people likely to be in the premises, including disabled people, and how that plan will be implemented. Such an evacuation plan should not rely upon the intervention of the Fire and Rescue Service to make it work.”
- 9.3. The management of an evacuation is a key part of a change to evacuation strategy. The change in strategy should be communicated to all residents in the building and this communication should be repeated regularly, recorded, and any fire action notices

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<sup>8</sup> Further details of detection and alarm system requirements are given in Appendix E.

<sup>9</sup> Further information about managing an evacuation is given in Appendix D.



updated. The [Fire Safety Order](#) requires drills to be carried out for staff (see Appendix D). The [Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people](#) guide outlines that “The level of effort required of a disabled person may not be acceptable for a practice or false alarm or in everyday activities. The procedures put in place should take account of this and allow for simulation in the case of fire drills or other emergency evacuation practices”. It may be necessary in some buildings to maintain an onsite presence, which could be the residents themselves,<sup>10</sup> to manage the evacuation and liaise with the FRS. This should be considered as part of the fire risk assessment.

- 9.4. In buildings where there has been a change in evacuation strategy and the fire risk assessment has determined that an onsite presence to oversee the evacuation of the building is required, a document should be prepared to specify the number of persons required and procedures to be followed. This document should be made available to residents and to the FRS when requested.

## 10. Evacuation Considerations for Vulnerable Persons

- 10.1. Where a fire occurs, every occupant of the building should have the means to start their evacuation before the FRS arrive. Some residents may require assistance to do this, whilst other vulnerable residents may identify that they are able to self-evacuate. Detailed information about the principles of the evacuation of vulnerable persons can be found in the [Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people](#) guide, and also within the [Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation](#) guide.
- 10.2. The Responsible Person should make and record reasonable endeavours, through a range of methods, to identify anyone who may need assistance to evacuate their flat and the building in the event of a fire in the resident’s flat or elsewhere in the building. The Responsible Person should, with the engagement of the individual, develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) that, as a minimum, should include how the individual is made aware of a fire in the building and their route, facilities, and options to support their evacuation. For example, additional signage, lighting, handrails, tactile flooring, and evacuation information in accessible formats. In addition, their location and resources required for them to evacuate the building or, if it comes to it, be rescued from the building should be recorded in the Secure Information Box.<sup>11</sup> The Government’s published response to the PEEPs consultation of 2021 identified concerns over practicality, safety and proportionality with mandating PEEPs in high rise residential buildings. The Government’s Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing (EEIS) Plus consultation, which was open from 18 May to 17 August 2022, proposed alternative measures to support fire safety of mobility impaired residents. The Government is due to consider the responses to the 2022 EEIS Plus consultation, and is expected to publish a response and the decision on any new legislative requirements in due course.
- 10.3. For the purposes of this document, the need to consider a PEEP or other measures that may be appropriate to support disabled and vulnerable persons should include people

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<sup>10</sup> Where residents are used to assist in the evacuation of disabled persons, they should receive suitable training. Please see Appendix D for further information.

<sup>11</sup> For further information about the contents of Secure Information Boxes, please see the FIA and NFCC [Code of Practice for the Provision of Premises Information Boxes in Residential Buildings](#).

with mobility, sensory, and/or cognitive impairments where their impairment affects their ability to evacuate by themselves or respond to a signal for them to evacuate.

- 10.4. It is accepted that some people who need assistance to evacuate may choose not to engage with the development of a PEEP process. As a minimum, the location of these residents and the resources needed to rescue them, if known, should be recorded in the Secure Information Box.
- 10.5. Ideally, the development of any PEEP would lead on from a person-centred fire risk assessment (PCFRA). The PCFRA considers individual characteristics, behaviours, and capabilities to identify risk from fire in the resident's own flat, and the value of adaptations and control measures to reduce that risk, such as greater detection coverage, Telecare linked/monitored detection, safer smoking/cooking aids, and personal protective suppression in areas of risk. These measures are particularly important for those who cannot evacuate their flat by themselves. The local FRS may be able to give further advice in this area, as well as carrying out a Safe and Well or Home Fire Safety Check visit. Further information about PEEPs and PCFRAs can be found in the following:
  - [Fire Safety in Specialised Housing guide](#)
  - [Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people guide](#)
  - [Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation guide](#)
  - [Online home fire safety check tool](#)

## 11. Training Requirements for Waking Watch Personnel

- 11.1. Where a waking watch is implemented, all members must receive suitable training in the areas detailed below.
  - The early identification of a fire within the building.
  - How to alert other residents. This could be done by knocking on doors or using other measures, for example, klaxons if it can be assured residents can hear them in their flats. It should be established that the means of raising the alarm is loud enough to rouse residents from their sleep.
  - Management of the evacuation, including calling the FRS and any responsibilities in relation to PEEPs where they are in place.
  - Liaising with the FRS on arrival.
  - The other general duties as outlined in Appendix D.
- 11.2. Contact details for the waking watch should be given to residents as another means to raise their awareness of any fires that occur in the building.
- 11.3. Residents can carry out the responsibilities of waking watch (and assist in any other duties that may have been identified by the fire risk assessment to manage the evacuation of their building) if they fulfil the training requirements. Further details are given in Appendix B.
- 11.4. Where a third-party contractor is employed to carry out the function of a waking watch, the Responsible Person should assure themselves that appropriate checks (Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS]) have been undertaken for their staff.

11.5. It is essential that the arrangements for the temporary move to a simultaneous evacuation strategy are tested in the form of regular exercises to ensure that all members of the waking watch team understand their roles, and that the system remains appropriate for the specific building. Further advice for quality assurance is given in Appendix D.

## 12. Provision of Information for Fire and Rescue Services

12.1. Where a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy is adopted, the Responsible Person should notify the local FRS as soon as practicable. The identification of a change in risk in the premises may mean that the FRS has to update their plans for tackling a fire in the building should one occur. Appendix F gives a pro forma for the information that FRSs will find useful as they may need to update operational information about the premises. The FRS should also be notified where there are any changes to the temporary measures adopted within the premises.

12.2. It is expected that FRS operational crews will visit the premises to update their tactical plans.

## 13. Removal of Temporary Measures

13.1. Any interim measures should only be removed when:

- the required remedial works have been completed, or when a package of measures enabling the building to be safely occupied in the longer term have been implemented;
- the fire risk assessment has been reviewed by a competent person;
- residents have been notified of the change taking place;
- the local FRS has been notified that the simultaneous evacuation strategy has ceased; and
- the building has returned to the stay put strategy.

13.2. Any interim measures can be removed if replaced by a more effective measure. For example, a waking watch should be replaced either by the installation of a common fire alarm system or first aid fire alarm as detailed in Appendix E, or by other mitigation measures, such as carrying out remediation works to make the identified risk safe (for example, by repairing or replacing defective compartmentation measures such as fire doors, cavity barriers or service penetrations). All interim measures should be removed once remedial works make it safe to do so and this has been confirmed in the reviewed fire risk assessment.

13.3. A common fire alarm system is only a temporary measure and not an alternative to remedial works designed to reduce the risk from a non-compliant wall system. Where it is proposed to keep the common fire alarm system, Responsible Persons and residents should be aware of the ongoing maintenance requirements, such as routine testing and maintenance. This will require accessing individual flats to maintain these temporary systems. This will need to be built into the ongoing fire safety arrangements for the building to ensure compliance with the [Fire Safety Order](#).

## 14. Duties of the Responsible Person

14.1. The Responsible Person duties are laid out in Part 2 of the [Fire Safety Order](#).

14.2. The following list outlines some of the duties of the Responsible Person:

- They should ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been made which considers the risk to residents and clearly identifies the appropriate evacuation strategy for the building.
- They should ensure that the fire risk assessment is reviewed regularly, particularly if there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid. For example, after work has been carried out on the premises or where there is concern following a drill or incident.
- They should ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the ongoing management and monitoring of the evacuation strategy and other fire safety provisions in the building, including testing and maintenance of fire safety provisions.
- Where there is a waking watch in place or where the fire risk assessment has recommended on-site persons to assist in managing the evacuation of the building or any other identified duties, their roles and actions should be clearly defined, and the individuals undertaking this function should be competent to fulfil the role. This means they have sufficient training (as detailed in Section 11) and experience or knowledge and other qualities to ensure they can fulfil the role. If the Responsible Person employs these individuals directly, it is a requirement to take into account their capabilities in relation to health and safety in respect of fire prior to allocating them these tasks.
- They should ensure any processes and procedures put in place allow compliance with other applicable legislation, such as the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) and the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#). For example, welfare/toilet facilities must be considered for the wellbeing of staff if employed, such as washing, toilet, rest, and changing facilities, and somewhere clean to eat and drink during breaks.
- They should ensure that residents are informed of the procedures and actions to be taken in the event of a fire – this should be repeated regularly.
- Inform the local FRS of a change to a temporary simultaneous evacuation.
- It is recommended that Responsible Persons continue to engage with their local FRS.

# Appendix A – Common Fire Alarm System

## Automatic fire detection and alarm system supporting simultaneous evacuation – system design and considerations

### Location and coverage of the detection system

- A.1. The common fire alarm system should be designed in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1 for a Category L5 system, except that the sound pressure level of the fire alarm signal within flats need only be 85dB(A) at the open doorways of every bedroom in each flat. The design of the alarm should also account for residents who are unable to hear an audible signal, and appropriate additional devices should be provided in accordance with BS 5839-1. Any fire detection and fire alarm system should be designed, installed, and commissioned by an appropriately qualified, third-party certificated, Competent Person/s.
- A.2. It is generally advised that smoke detection should not be used as it is likely to trigger false alarms. However, there may be some circumstances where lack of compartmentation may mean that smoke detection is required in order to give a warning before smoke enters the means of escape. The choice of fire alarm and fire detection system should be the result of a risk assessment by a Competent Person.
- A.3. It should be noted that compliance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1 for a Category L5 system does not necessitate the provision of break-glass manual call points, though these may be incorporated within the system, which is then properly described as a Category M/L5 system (for example, in a purchase specification).
- A.4. A decision as to whether to incorporate manual call points in the system needs to carefully balance the benefits of the earlier warning that manual call points can give and the risks that repeated false activations may pose to the effectiveness of evacuating the building in a real fire incident.
- A.5. Where the primary benefit of manual call points is for use by those managing the evacuation, they should be key operated to prevent malicious operation.
- A.6. Where manual call points are provided, they should not be used for routine testing of the fire detection and alarm system because, to avoid complacency, it is desirable that residents never hear the system operate other than in the event of a real fire. However, where a temporary system is installed for a period of longer than six months, a short functional test of the system should be carried out at the time of six-monthly servicing by a competent contractor.

### Coverage for buildings with a combustible external wall system

- A.7. In every flat, the system should generally incorporate heat detectors within each room that has a window that overlooks an area of external wall with an external wall system where there is a risk that fire could spread into the combustible external cladding that results in a significant or notable fire hazard, except possibly toilets and bathrooms. Heat detectors should also be included in any other rooms, such as plant rooms and other ancillary facilities with windows or vents or non-fire-stopped penetrations, through which a fire could spread and ignite. Consideration might also need to be given to the provision of smoke detectors within common parts, but these detectors should not initiate the general

evacuation of the building. They may give a warning only to the building's management team.

- A.8. An immediate evacuation signal should be triggered by the operation of any single heat detector.
- A.9. The evacuation signal should not rely on the coincident operation of two heat detectors, sometimes described as “double knock”, as such an arrangement would not result in early enough operation of the evacuation signal in the event of a serious fire that might affect combustible external wall systems.

#### Coverage for buildings with other defects

- A.10. For buildings where notable fire hazards have been identified, such as missing compartmentation barriers including fire resisting walls, floors or cavity barriers, the common fire alarm system should be designed to take account of the findings of the fire risk assessment. This should consider areas such as the likely path of fire and smoke spread, the residents that may be affected by this spread, and areas where a warning will need to be given. Care should be taken in specifying the type of detection in these systems to ensure that false alarms are minimised. For example, use of multi-criteria detectors should not cause an alarm from normal cooking activity.

#### Additional considerations

- A.11. In line with the individual PEEP process, specific measures, such as a vibrating pager or visual alarm device, may be required if people with hearing impairments have been identified.
- A.12. It is critical that the common alarm system installed in the premises does not have any adverse effect on the other fire safety provisions in the building. For example, the installation of a wired system must not create a route for fire and smoke to spread in fire resisting walls which were previously imperforate. If the system is an extension of the smoke detection system provided for a smoke control system, care must be taken to ensure that the operation of the smoke control system and any zone plans are not compromised by the new communal system.

## Appendix B – Considerations for a Waking Watch

- B.1. Training must be given to waking watch members and those assisting with evacuation as needed to ensure they fully understand the purpose of their role and what individual tasks they are responsible for, both during normal activities and in the event of a fire. This training should include an overview of existing fire protection features in the building and how they may affect an evacuation in the building. For example, smoke control systems or evacuation lifts. They should be given general health and safety training, and specific fire training to support safe systems of work.
- B.2. In the event of a fire, after calling the FRS, the priority for the waking watch is to initiate the evacuation of the building. Therefore, it is not advisable to expect team members to actively engage in first aid firefighting.
- B.3. Training will need to be repeated if any of the waking watch members change and further training if any other interim arrangement changes. All members of the waking watch should receive regular refresher training.
- B.4. Specific instruction should be provided on the communication processes amongst the waking watch team, and how to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk.
- B.5. It is important that the waking watch can immediately and consistently communicate with each other. The method of communications should be available throughout the building. Radios are often the most appropriate way of achieving this and should be supported by an appropriate radio protocol. Where radios are to be used, a check should be made to ensure that they operate throughout the areas to be patrolled by the waking watch members with no drop in signal, which may make them unusable.
- B.6. Communication processes should include set words for checking in and raising the alarm. Radio traffic should be kept to a minimum to ensure that the system is available for appropriate communications.
- B.7. It is unlikely that mobile phones will provide an appropriate method of communication between members of the waking watch. These require more than just a single button actuation, and will not be available for the instant and simultaneous relay of messages to multiple team members. Mobile phones also rely on being connected to a network and this may not always be possible.
- B.8. Mobile phones may be the most appropriate method of calling the FRS if no land line is available.
- B.9. Responsible Persons should also be aware of any social media communications groups that exist within their building and take account of this as part of their planning. However, this should not be relied upon as the main communication method between waking watch members.

## Appendix C – Waking Watch Specification

### Definition of a waking watch

C.1. A waking watch is a system whereby suitably trained persons continually patrol all floors and the exterior perimeter of the building in order to detect a fire, raise the alarm, and can assist in the management of building evacuations. Persons making up a waking watch can include a group of volunteers or residents of the building subject to full consent by residents, the staff of a third-party contractor, or persons employed directly by the Responsible Person (for example a concierge). For the purpose of this Guidance, a member of a waking watch is one who has:

- received appropriate training in accordance with the duties for waking watch outlined below;
- been employed, contracted, or assigned a role to act in accordance with the requirements of the waking watch systems that have been implemented as part of the premises' fire risk assessment; and
- is appropriately equipped to carry out their duties.

C.2. Provided that they meet the criteria outlined above, members of the waking watch can be paid or volunteers.

C.3. Where trained volunteers or residents form the waking watch, their primary function should be their waking watch role. Other activities should not compromise this function.

### Role specification of a waking watch

C.4. The number of persons forming the waking watch along with their duties should be determined and recorded as part of the premises' fire risk assessment. Duties of the waking watch will be partly dependent upon the building in which it is set up. The basic duties of the waking watch will include:

- continually patrolling the common areas of the building, or part of the building depending upon size, in order to identify the occurrence of any fire in common areas and flats (this may include investigating the sounding of smoke or heat detection);
- responding to the presence of fire by raising an alarm with other waking watch personnel – alerting any personnel involved in managing an evacuation;
- calling the FRS;
- raising the alarm within a set area of the building;
- where relevant, assisting in carrying out duties connected to any PEEPs that have been formulated;
- reporting to building management once the alarm has been raised throughout the area of the building in which the waking watch member was patrolling; and
- using technology and aids supplied to manage the evacuation.

C.5. Other general duties should include the following list:

- Patrolling, or routinely checking as necessary, the perimeter of the building in order to identify and report risks of fire to the Responsible Person. These risks may include, for example, skips, or a build-up of combustible material adjacent to the



building, or cars parked close to the combustible external wall systems or blocking the means of escape.

- Checking corridors and stairwells to ensure they are clear of combustible materials and to monitor escape routes to see they are kept free of obstructions, for example, build-up of refuse on escape routes.
- Checking the fire precautions within the building, for example, fire doors closing fully and lighting units working correctly.
- Providing reassurance to residents of the building.

### Person specification

C.6. Persons forming the waking watch should be fit and active enough to be able to carry out patrolling duties for the duration of their shift. They should also have the maturity to carry out their duties and act in accordance with instructions from the management of the building in the event of an incident. Other areas that should be considered regarding those carrying out a waking watch are that they should be:

- physically and mentally capable of undertaking the waking watch role which may involve long hours and a high degree of repetition;
- able to communicate emergency instructions in a manner that is understood by a wide range of persons with differing abilities and languages;
- able to remain calm and be able to follow pre-set plans in high pressure situations; and
- able to undertake training which will give them knowledge regarding the areas outlined below.

C.7. Where a waking watch is formed, the requirements of [The Fire Safety \(Employees' Capabilities\) \(England\) Regulations 2010](#) should be taken into account.

C.8. Members of the waking watch should be clearly identifiable in order to provide reassurance and confidence to residents. Persons forming a waking watch should be apprised in writing of their duties and responsibilities. They should receive sufficient training to ensure that they are able to carry out the duties expected by their role.

### Recommendations for competency and training requirements for waking watch members

C.9. There are currently no specific qualifications applicable to this role, but similar roles do exist which cover some of the areas that a member may require, for example, security and stewarding roles or fire marshal / fire warden roles. It is recognised that those forming the waking watch may come from a range of occupations and former occupations.

C.10. Waking watch members should receive sufficient training to ensure that they are able to carry out the duties expected by their role. The Responsible Person should keep a record of this training, including details of the individuals involved and content covered. Areas this training may cover include:

- the principles of fire;
- how to spot indications of a fire;
- how to spot building deficiencies or fire safety issues;
- how to raise the alarm in the event of fire;
- how to call the FRS to the premises;

- how to communicate with those managing the building and other waking watch personnel;
- an understanding of how residents are likely to react in a fire or on instruction to evacuate;
- an understanding of how to instruct residents that evacuation is necessary and ensure a safe evacuation;
- how to carry out the actions of any PEEPs that have been formulated;
- an understanding of the specific building in which they are providing waking watch including layout and evacuation routes; and
- how to notify the Responsible Person of any building deficiencies discovered whilst patrolling.

# Appendix D – General Management Considerations

## Risk management and mitigation

- D.1. The Competent Person's advice in conjunction with a review of the fire risk assessment should identify whether or not any additional risk management or mitigation measures are needed.
- D.2. General duties that may need to be considered as part of broader risk mitigation measures include the following list:
- Routine checks of the perimeter of the building, as required, in order to identify and report risks of fire to the Responsible Person. For example, skips, or a build-up of combustible material adjacent to the building, or cars parked close to the combustible external wall systems or blocking the means of escape.
  - Routine checks of corridors and stairwells to ensure they are clear of combustible materials and to monitor escape routes to see they are kept free of obstructions. For example, build-up of refuse on escape routes.
  - Checking the fire precautions within the building. For example, fire doors closing fully and lighting units working correctly.
  - Providing reassurance to residents of the building.

## Managing an evacuation

### Requirements for managing an evacuation

- D.3. Management of a building that has temporarily changed to a simultaneous evacuation strategy should facilitate a rapid, effective, and coordinated evacuation.
- D.4. There may be some management duties that could still be required where a common fire alarm system has been installed, and the Competent Person's advice in conjunction with a review of the fire risk assessment should determine whether or not any additional duties are required. Any person can assist with an evacuation, such as volunteers or residents, so long as they are appropriately trained to ensure they are able to carry out the duties effectively. For example, where a group of affected buildings form an estate under common management, any existing staff who manage the site on a 24-hour basis could perform any evacuation management duties if there is a method of informing them immediately of the fire alarm actuating, and if they can reach any building in a reasonable time.
- D.5. A member of a waking watch, trained residents, or existing on-site staff (for example a concierge) can perform the duties that assist in managing an evacuation.
- D.6. Duties may include the following list.
- Ensuring that the FRS are called as soon as possible (if the alarm is not connected to an alarm receiving centre) by dialling 999 and asking for the fire service. Those assisting in managing the evacuation of the building will need to provide key information about the building and its address/location, including:
    - knowledge of premises including the address, number of floors and flats, number of staircases, location of gas and electric isolation points, and the location of a Secure Information Box where present;

- where the fire started, i.e. flat number and floor or externally;
  - that a simultaneous evacuation is under way; and
  - where known, the number and location of any people who may not be able to self-evacuate.
- Where relevant, ensuring that actions that form part of any PEEPs are carried out. Further information on this area can be found in the [Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people](#) guide. The Government's published response to its PEEPs consultation of 2021 outlined concerns which were raised regarding other residents supporting evacuation of mobility-impaired residents, and it is expected that a working group will be convened by the Government to explore this matter.
  - Liaising with the attending FRS to provide information, as necessary.
- D.7. Some of the above management duties can be complied with by an Alarm Receiving Centre to call the FRS and Secure Information Boxes with information for the FRS. CCTV could be considered to undertake duties for monitoring the outside of a building and corridor and stair areas, as outlined in paragraph C.5. **If all of the duties required to manage an evacuation, as outlined above, can be carried out by other means, it may be acceptable for there to be no physical evacuation management presence in the building.** This should be decided in conjunction with a review of the fire risk assessment by a Competent Person, to provide details of how these functions are to be carried out.
- D.8. Responsible Persons should ensure that, where relevant, information on residents who may need assistance to evacuate is available to the FRS. Guidance about the type of information that may be useful for FRSs attending incidents in buildings has been produced in the form of the [Code of Practice for the Provision of Premises Information Boxes in Residential Buildings](#). This aims to promote best practice and to ensure consistency of application and regulation, especially in keeping residents safe in high rise residential buildings. Responsible Persons may be able to use this guidance in order to fulfil some of the requirements for managing their building's evacuation strategy. If this is proposed, then details should be recorded as part of a review of the premises' fire risk assessment.
- D.9. As a minimum, the information required should include details of each resident for which a PEEP has been agreed but is not yet accounted for, namely:
- the flat number and floor of the resident; and
  - the assistance required by the resident.
- D.10. The fire risk assessment or other appropriate document should identify the operational requirements for managing the building evacuation (if required), including any areas where routine checks may be needed, the frequency of these checks, and, if necessary, how they assist with those who need help when evacuating.

## Quality assurance

D.11. Where a building has changed from a stay put strategy and the Competent Person recommends either a waking watch or a common fire alarm and management of the evacuation, it will also be necessary for the Responsible Person to implement a suitable quality assurance process. These processes will serve three main purposes:

- to ensure that measures in their building are fit for purpose and address the risks identified;
- to identify gaps which may have been overlooked in the initial assessment of the building; and
- to refine systems that have been implemented.

## Fire evacuation drills

D.12. From experience in non-domestic premises, it is well known that frequent testing of systems aimed at alerting occupants of a fire can lead to the assumption that, when the alarm is raised, it is for a routine test (or false alarm) which can lead to a delay in the evacuation of occupants. For this reason, fire evacuation drills that take place for the waking watch or common fire alarm should be solely for the purpose of testing the actions of any persons coordinating the evacuation of the building and waking watch members. Residents, unless part of the waking watch, do not need to be part of these drills. It is recommended that drills be carried out:

- as part of initial training for the waking watch and any building management; and
- whenever a new person joins the waking watch.

D.13. Routine/monthly drills will need to be carried out more frequently if there is a turnover of waking watch members. The Responsible Person should be able to demonstrate that effective drills are taking place. The local FRS may want to see evidence of these drills taking place and, in some cases, witness them being carried out. Drills should aim to test the actions of management and waking watch members, and should include simulation of discovering a fire, raising the alarm, and communications between team members. Where PEEPs are in place, there may also need to be exercises to ensure that team members are aware of the actions they should carry out.

D.14. Throughout the drill, the Responsible Person and nominated observers should pay particular attention to:

- waking watch members raising the alarm in their designated areas;
- whether waking watch members are easily able to cover their designated area;
- any difficulties with the opening of final exit doors;
- the roles of specified people, for example, anyone with duties relating to managing the evacuation;
- whether building management are simulating their actions and are able to coordinate waking watch members and relay information suitably, the time taken for the actions of the waking watch to be carried out, and, where present, simulate sounding the common fire alarm; and
- Government guidance notes that state the level of effort required of a disabled person may not be acceptable for a practice, false alarm, or in everyday activities.

The procedures put in place should take account of this and allow for simulation in the case of fire drills or other emergency evacuation practices.<sup>12</sup>

- D.15. The drill and quality assurance exercise should not be conducted in a manner that will be obvious to residents.
- D.16. Capturing and sharing learning will help to improve the overall management of the evacuation. This can be achieved by on the spot debriefs where you will discuss the fire drill and gather feedback from everybody. Lessons learned should be captured in a report, which is completed by members of the waking watch, the building managers, and comments from observers should be collated. Any conclusions and remedial actions should be recorded and implemented.

### Routine monitoring

- D.17. Along with fire drills, the Responsible Person should arrange for routine recorded monitoring of the actions of any waking watch. A waking watch is reliant on the constant patrolling of the premises and continued vigilance of those carrying out these duties. Whilst the role involves long hours and a high degree of repetition, it is important that duties are carried out consistently and in accordance with defined routines and responsibilities. Monitoring will help to identify that scheduled actions are taking place and that sufficient cover is being provided. Where a waking watch is used for a protracted period (which is not supported or advised), consideration should be given to implementing systems such as a patrol monitoring system in order to assure that consistent patrolling is taking place.

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<sup>12</sup> [Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people](#) guide, p.5.

## Appendix E – First Aid Fire Detection and Alarm Systems

- E.1. Where the fire risk assessment for a building determines that a stay put strategy can no longer be maintained, there should be some means for detecting a fire within the building and alerting residents. In the immediate and transitional term, it may be possible to make use of detection and warning systems (other than a waking watch) for this purpose, while a common fire alarm in accordance with Appendix A is being arranged.
- E.2. Whether or not the use of an alternative technological solution is a cost-effective measure and faster to procure and install when compared to a common fire alarm, will depend on the individual circumstances of the building. It may be that moving directly to the installation of a common fire alarm is still the most efficient and effective option. Any such proposals should be suitably justified in the fire risk assessment by a Competent Person.
- E.3. Where it is proposed to install a technological solution to act as a first aid fire detection and alarm system, the decision-making process should be documented as part of the fire risk assessment. The risk assessment will need to ensure that the system will provide effective coverage in the necessary areas of the building. The coverage should be sufficient to mitigate the risk within the building. It is important that any such system provides an alert to all occupants in the affected areas of the building.
- E.4. In a building where the risk is from a combustible external wall system, first aid fire detection and alarm systems should look to provide similar coverage to that outlined in Appendix A.
- E.5. In buildings where there are issues that are not related to the external wall system, such as missing or defective fire resisting compartmentation, a temporary system should be able to detect a fire and give warning before the fire can affect the means of escape for people in the affected areas of the building. For example, in flat entrance halls and communal areas.
- E.6. It is likely that any system that is based on smoke detection will lead to an increase in false alarms within the premises. This should be considered when installing the system, as the positioning of the detectors can help minimise this. If there is an option for multi-criteria detectors to be used as part of the solution, this may help to minimise false alarms. Where there are cases of false alarms, the Responsible Person should maintain regular communications with residents to mitigate complacency and evacuation fatigue.
- E.7. Any first aid fire alarm and detection systems should be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations and recorded for best practice. Residents should be made aware of plans for routine testing. It may be necessary to carry out additional checks to ensure the linking of detectors. There should also be a process for residents to alert the Responsible Person to any faults to detectors in their flats.
- E.8. First aid systems should only be used as an interim measure for a limited time. A system conforming to the requirements outlined in Appendix A should be installed as soon as practicable, as this provides greater resilience for buildings until necessary remediation works can be carried out.

## Appendix F – Interim Measures Proforma for FRS

| Contact Details  |                          |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Name   |                          | Role   |                          |
| Email  |                          | Phone number                                 |                          |
| Company name (if applicable)   |                          |  |                          |
| Building Information   |                          |  |                          |
| Address  |                          | Postcode                                     |                          |
| Interim Measures   |                          |  |                          |
| Reason for interim measures (please tick all that apply)   |                          |  |                          |
| Combustible external wall system (ACM)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Combustible external wall system (non-ACM)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Compartmentation issues  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Missing / inappropriate cavity barriers      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Structural issues  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please provide further details below) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments   |                          |  |                          |
|  |                          |  |                          |
| Type of interim measures (please tick all that apply)  |                          |  |                          |
| Waking watch   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Onsite management                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Simultaneous evacuation strategy   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Common fire alarm                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fire suppressions system   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| First aid fire alarm   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please provide further details below) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments   |                          |  |                          |
|  |                          |  |                          |
| Is the building already staffed on a full or part time basis (for example by a concierge)?                       | Full Time                | Part Time                                    | No                       |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you have ticked 'waking watch' above, please provide the date that it was first implemented                   |                          |  |                          |
| If you ticked 'waking watch' or 'onsite management' above, please provide the name of any provider (if relevant) |                          |  |                          |



## Appendix G – Maintaining Fire Safety Provisions

- G.1. A change from a stay put evacuation strategy to a simultaneous evacuation strategy is significant. Where this change occurs, as part of the required review of the premises' fire risk assessment, it is vital to check preventative and protective measures are working as designed, and that they are subject to a suitable and sufficient system of maintenance. Maintenance of these measures is a specific requirement for Responsible Persons under the [Fire Safety Order](#). Where interim measures are implemented, the Responsible Person should ensure that these are subject to routine maintenance.
- G.2. Where it is found that measures are not working as required, steps should be taken to return them to the required level of operation. This appendix aims to consolidate and centralise the most relevant and up to date information to assist those responsible for maintaining fire safety provisions.
- G.3. Where a change has been made to the evacuation strategy, Responsible Persons must give particular consideration to the fire safety provisions in the building that protect the means of escape, and those provisions that support effective firefighting and protect firefighters. This is essential to ensure that, in the event of a fire, people in the building can evacuate as quickly and safely as possible.
- G.4. A number of incidents at buildings operating a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy have identified that fire safety provisions are not always suitably maintained. This appendix is provided to assist Responsible Persons of all buildings in assuring themselves that suitable management systems are in place to ensure that fire safety provisions are operating effectively, and maintained in efficient working order and good repair.

### Smoke control systems

- G.5. An appropriately designed, installed, and maintained smoke control system is essential to effectively managing fire safety risks in a residential building.
- G.6. Smoke control can play a critical role in protecting escape routes in residential buildings in the event of fire. The primary objective being to protect the staircase enclosure, but the system may also be designed to provide protection to the adjacent lobby or corridor.
- G.7. The type of smoke control system will depend on the age and size of the building along with other factors, such as corridor/lobby sizes and numbers of stairs. In older buildings, this may take the form of natural non-automatic ventilation. This can be through either openable vents or vents which are permanently open. In newer buildings, it is more likely the smoke control system may involve automatically operated functions that are controlled via a fire detection system in the common parts.
- G.8. Responsible Persons should be aware of the type of smoke control system in their building and how this is intended to control the spread of smoke in the event of fire. These details should be available in original design information, but if it is not, then the Responsible Person should seek professional advice from a Competent Person in order to understand how the system installed is intended to function.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A list of third-party accredited Competent Persons can be found on the [Smoke Control Association's website](#).

G.9. There should already be a system of testing and maintenance in place for any smoke control system. The standards for the maintenance and testing of smoke control systems are set out in *British Standard EN 12101 – Smoke and heat control systems* and *British Standard 9999:2017 Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings – Code of practice*. These British Standards recommend the following testing of smoke control systems should take place.

- Weekly testing by the Responsible Person to ensure that the smoke ventilation is operating effectively. A weekly test should involve the simulated actuation of the system to ensure that any fans and powered exhaust ventilators operate correctly, smoke dampers close (or open in some cases), natural exhaust ventilators open, and other features, such as automatic smoke curtains, operate as required.
- Every three months, there should be an actuation of all smoke control systems where all zones should be separately tested, and it should be ensured that the items detailed above operate correctly.
- At least annually, there should be a full system inspection and test carried out by a suitably qualified person.

G.10. A record of this testing and maintenance should be kept for best practice.

G.11. If the Responsible Person is in any doubt as to the tests that should be carried out, then they should contact the manufacturer and/or installer of the system for further information.<sup>14</sup>

G.12. When a decision is made to change the evacuation strategy, it is recommended that, unless a full system test has been undertaken recently, one should be arranged to ensure that the smoke control system is in efficient working order. Where any problems are identified, immediate action should be taken to remedy any defects in the operation of smoke control systems.

G.13. Where defects cannot be remedied immediately, a review of the fire risk assessment should be carried out to determine what interim and/or mitigation measures are required and how long these should remain in place. It is likely that temporary arrangements will be required until the smoke control system is repaired and has been tested to evidence that it is functioning effectively. The FRS should also be informed of these measures as they may mean that additional measures for firefighting need to be considered.

G.14. The interim or mitigation measures to be put in place will vary from building to building, and the Responsible Person should seek professional advice from a suitably qualified fire engineer. The local FRS should also be informed and consulted on the planned mitigation measures.

G.15. The Smoke Control Association provides advice on issues related to smoke control systems and has published *Guidance on Smoke Control to Common Escape Routes in Apartment Buildings (Flats and Maisonettes)*. This is available on the [Smoke Control Association website](#), along with other specific advice (please note you must register for free to access resource documents).

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<sup>14</sup> There may be instances where the manufacturer/installer cannot be contacted due to the age of the building. In these cases, advice should be sought from a Competent Person. A list of third-party accredited Competent Persons can be found on the [Smoke Control Association's website](#).

- G.16. There have been issues with electromagnetic holding devices for vents, which can have an unpredictable performance leading to failure under fire conditions. Such failure can occur due to a loss of power to the devices, or through the magnetic fields of the devices being weakened as temperatures in and around the smoke shaft increase. The use of electromagnetic holding devices as part of any smoke ventilation shaft installation should therefore be reviewed as part of the fire risk assessment, with the intent of replacing these devices with a more robust form of vent actuator. Where it is not practicable to replace electromagnetic holding devices for vents or the work cannot be carried out immediately, a review of the fire risk assessment should be carried out to determine what mitigation measures are required and how long these should remain in place.
- G.17. A review of the smoke control system should also ensure that compartmentation throughout any smoke shafts meets the required level of fire resistance.

### Fire doors

- G.18. Flat entrance fire doors leading to shared or communal areas are designed to provide fire and smoke protection and are part of a layered approach to most fire strategies for residential buildings. This is essential to protect the means of escape and ensure that, in the event of a fire, people can evacuate as quickly and safely as possible.
- G.19. It is important that all fire doors, including flat entrance front doors, those in common areas such as cross corridor doors, and those protecting stair enclosures, including the self-closing devices, are routinely inspected and maintained by a suitably qualified professional. Residents and all flat owners should be made aware of the significant importance of a working self-closing device on all fire doors and the procedure for reporting any defects.
- G.20. Where letterplates and other openings have been installed in fire doors, a qualified professional should assess whether these meet the requirements of the tested fire doorset.
- G.21. There may be instances where fire door closers require adjusting to ensure that occupants are easily able to overcome the force required to open them. In these instances, wherever possible, these should close with a minimum pressure of the opening force not more than 30N from 0° (the door in the closed position) to 30° open, and not more than 22.5N from 30° to 60° degrees of the opening cycle.
- G.22. Responsible Persons should ensure that all flat entrance doors meet the fire and/or smoke resistance performance stated in the [Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats](#) guide. Where doorsets do not meet the required performance, they should be replaced with ones that do. A risk assessment process should be used to determine how urgently such doorsets should be replaced.

### Facilities for firefighters

- G.23. The Responsible Person must ensure that any facilities provided for the use by or for the protection of firefighters are subject to a suitable system of maintenance.
- G.24. All facilities provided for firefighters should be checked, including firefighters lifts and dry or wet rising mains, to ensure they are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order, and in good repair.

G.25. Maintenance requirements for fire mains include the following:

- Wet or dry rising fire mains and the accompanying inlet and/or outlet boxes should be regularly inspected for damage and repaired where necessary. Where provided, outlet straps to fire mains should be checked to see that they are in place and secure.
- A six-monthly check by a competent person to ensure that dry mains inlets, landing valves, drain valves, door hinges, and locking arrangements for inlet and landing valve boxes are ready for immediate use, and spindles, glands, and washers are in a satisfactory condition;
- For wet mains, a competent person should ensure that booster pumps and their associated mechanical and electrical apparatus are functioning correctly, and storage tanks are full of clean water.
- An annual inspection by a Competent Person.

G.26. If you have any concerns whatsoever, you should contact your local FRS, who will, if they have not already done so, carry out an inspection to check functionality.

G.27. A lift for use by the FRS is one with protection measures, controls, and signals that enable it to be used under their direct control when fighting a fire.

G.28. It should be noted that the standard and functionality of lifts provided for FRS use has changed over the years. The Responsible Person should understand the type of lift and functionality provided in their building. Lifts should be maintained to the standard to which they were installed. Further information on lifts provided for the FRS can be found in Annex B of *British Standard 8899:2016 Improvement of firefighting and evacuation provisions in existing lifts – Code of practice* (BS 8899). Guidance on who a Responsible Person might turn to for advice on lift compliance can be found on the [Lift and Escalator Industry Association website](#).

G.29. As a matter of best practice, lifts should be maintained to the standard to which they were installed or updated to. Typical maintenance requirements for lifts for use by the FRS include (BS 8899) the following:

- A weekly activation of the firefighter lift switch to check the lift returns to the FRS access level, parks with its doors open, and does not respond to landing calls. Any connections to any Building Management Systems that are present should also be checked on a weekly basis.
- A monthly check of the secondary power supply, which will involve the simulation of a failure to the primary power supply. Where the secondary power supply is a generator, it should energise the lifts for at least one hour.
- Annually, a full test of the firefighter lift's operation should be carried out by a Competent Person in accordance with the appropriate British Standard.

G.30. In order that FRS personnel, when first arriving at the lift, can identify the features provided with the lift, any lift intended to be used by FRS personnel should have an indelible label as shown in Figure 1 of BS 8899.

G.31. Responsible Persons should ensure that there is sufficient roadway access and hardstanding for firefighting vehicles attending incidents. Good access to your building will

allow firefighting to commence as expediently as possible. Factors that may cause access issues may include parked cars or street furniture in the near vicinity of the building.

G.32. If any firefighting facilities are not available for use, you should contact your local FRS. This does not replace the need to ensure that all facilities provided for the protection of firefighters are maintained in an efficient state and in working order.

### Other measures

G.33. In addition to the measures outlined above, Responsible Persons should also carry out the following actions.

- Check that there are no combustible materials, for example, storage of refuse, in the vicinity of the external wall system at ground level or on any balconies.
- Ensure that there are measures to prevent combustible materials from accumulating in such locations, for example, with temporary barriers or instructions to residents.
- Ensure residents are made aware that the use of barbecues and smoking on balconies creates a significant risk to other residents and is therefore discouraged whilst there is a risk of fire spread on the external wall systems of combustible construction. Property rules, where they exist or are permitted, should prohibit the use of barbecues and smoking on balconies. Any existing, new, or revised property rules should be issued as part of the communications recommended in the Information to residents and leaseholders/owners section below.
- Check that any waste/rubbish stores are secure and that a fire in these locations could not spread to affect any areas at risk from rapid fire spread. Waste/rubbish chutes, where present, should be risk assessed to ensure that they do not present a risk of fire spreading between flats or common parts depending upon their location.<sup>15</sup>
- Close any car parks or adjacent car parking where a vehicle fire could impinge on cladding. This may require the support of superior landlords and the cooperation of other Responsible Persons. Where difficulties are encountered with other Responsible Persons, your local FRS may be able to assist.
- Check all walls that separate flats, plant, and storerooms etc. from escape routes to ensure there are no obvious routes for fire or smoke spread, for example, through holes where services, such as pipes and cables, pass through walls. Further advice about this area can be found on the [Association for Specialist Fire Protection website](#).

### Information to residents and leaseholders/owners

G.34. Residents and leaseholders must be advised to ensure all smoke alarms are present and working in their flat, and to report concerns about fire safety measures in the building (for example, presence of combustible materials in escape routes) to their landlord, and understand the purpose and importance of any short-term interim measures being taken.

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<sup>15</sup> Additional information about refuse and chute rooms can be found in the [Fire Safety in Purpose-Built Blocks of Flats guidance](#)

G.35. The Responsible Persons should engage with residents of the building to ensure that they fully understand the emergency fire procedures in the building. Fire procedure notices should be updated, where necessary, to ensure they are accurate. This is particularly important where a stay put strategy is temporarily being changed to one of simultaneous evacuation.

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 (the Regulations) are being introduced under Article 24 of the [Fire Safety Order](#) and will come into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

The Regulations apply to England only. The Regulations can be found on the [UK Government website](#). The Regulations will require Responsible Persons in multi-occupied residential buildings to take specific actions, depending on the height of the building:

- some provisions will apply regardless of height;
- more will be needed once a building reaches 11 metres, and
- further requirements will be introduced when a building reaches 18 metres (or 7 storeys) or more.

These regulations will require action from Responsible Persons, as they impose new legal requirements for Responsible Persons. In addition to the guidance above, it is important that Responsible Persons familiarise themselves with the Regulations and the legal requirements they will impose, and the full guidance and factsheets which have been made available by the Home Office.

Further information on when to submit information and the preferred format for providing information, will be detailed within the Home Office guidance, which is currently being produced. The Home Office has indicated that this guidance will be published in 2022 in advance of the Regulations being fully in force on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

Further information is available on the [UK Government website](#).

## 15. Glossary

### 15.1. Assembly point

A designated place where people have been told to gather after evacuating a building in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Note: an alternative assembly point that has protection against inclement weather may be required.

### 15.2. Common parts

Those areas of a building that are not for the exclusive use of individual residents, for example, common corridors, stairways, plant rooms, and other ancillary areas.

### 15.3. Fire alarm systems

**Common fire alarm** – A fire alarm system that will detect a fire in all parts of the premises, including within flats and the common parts, and give an audible warning throughout the building, including within all flats and within the common parts. A common fire alarm system should be installed in accordance with the requirements of Appendix A.

**First aid fire alarm** – A temporary technological solution providing a system of fire detection and alarm that can be used while the installation of a common fire alarm is arranged. The use of such systems should be justified by a Competent Person in the fire risk assessment.

### 15.4. Competent Person

According to the [Fire Safety Order](#) Article 18 (5), a person is to be regarded as competent for the purposes of this article (Safety Assistance) where they have sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them properly to assist in undertaking the preventative and protective measures. Guidance on the competency standard for fire risk assessors and guidance on choosing a competent risk assessor is available on the [Fire Sector Federation website](#).

### 15.5. Evacuation strategy

A process whereby people leave premises in case of an incident, for example a fire, and reach a place of safety.

**Simultaneous evacuation** – Procedure in which all parts of a building are evacuated in the event of fire at one time.

**Partial change** – Where some parts of a premises remain with a stay put strategy while others change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy.

**Stay put** – A strategy based on the design principle that only the residents of the flat of fire origin need to escape initially, while other residents may remain in their own flats unless their flat is affected by fire or smoke, they feel threatened, or they are instructed to leave by the FRS. A stay put strategy does not preclude residents, who are aware of a fire within the building but not affected directly by it, from deciding to evacuate.

#### 15.6. **On-site management personnel**

On-site arrangements to facilitate a rapid, effective, and coordinated evacuation, and to liaise with the FRS to provide an essential link with them during operations.

#### 15.7. **External wall system**

External construction of a building including external walls, cladding, insulation, filler materials, and cavity barriers.

#### 15.8. **General fire precautions**

This term is used to describe precautions that are required under the [Fire Safety Order](#) to ensure the premises are safe (see Articles 4 and 8).

#### 15.9. **Interim measures**

Urgent temporary measures which are to be put in place to address an unacceptable risk to occupants of a building. This could include but is not limited to the use of waking watch or temporary alarm systems or wider measures, for example, closing any car parks in which a vehicle fire could impinge on cladding or restricting the use of balconies or barbecues. See also: Temporary.

#### 15.10. **Mitigation measures**

Measures to mitigate the identified risk until the significant issues are resolved.

#### 15.11. **Person-centred fire risk assessment**

An assessment of the risk from fire focused on a specific resident, carried out with the involvement of the resident, taking into account the physical and cognitive characteristics of the resident, their lifestyle, preferences, and a contextualised consideration of relevant behavioural history. The outcome is a proportionate person-centred action plan that takes into account informed decision making and dignity of the resident, while resulting in tolerable risk from fire.

#### 15.12. **Person-centred planning**

Person-centred planning is a way of asking what people want, the support they need, and how they can get it. It assists people in leading an independent and inclusive life.

#### 15.13. **Notable fire hazard**

A fire hazard that could cause harm to residents due to the unplanned spread of fire beyond the original fire compartment. Examples could include: ACM with fire retardant polyethylene filler (category 2 in screening tests); other combustible façade elements, such as high pressure laminate; or missing compartmentation barriers

#### 15.14. **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)**

A plan put in place, where necessary, for the appropriate assistance provided to an individual resident to evacuate the building. A resident who requires a PEEP should be involved in its formulation and consent to the arrangements put in place.



### 15.15. Remediation plan

A plan to remove or reduce the risk of building deficiencies that have been identified within the premises' fire risk assessment.

### 15.16. Residents

The term 'residents' is used when referring to the occupants, regardless of tenure, of the flats. The term includes all those who live in the building.

Note: when referring to the need to alert relevant persons of the need to evacuate a building, the term 'residents' is inclusive of any visitors or guests.

### 15.17. Responsible Person

The person, including corporate entities, on whom duties are imposed by the [Fire Safety Order](#) to ensure the safety of occupants of a building from fire (see Article 3).

Note: duties are also imposed on persons other than the Responsible Person (see Article 5[3]).

### 15.18. Smoke ventilation system

A system to control and/or prevent the spread of smoke in protected routes in the event of fire. The primary objective of a smoke ventilation system is to protect the common parts. These areas may exist on the floor level where the fire has originated and in stairwells, enabling those occupants who feel threatened or who are at greatest risk to escape. Such systems will further assist firefighters to gain access.

### 15.19. Sounder

A device provided as part of a common fire alarm system that will give an audible warning in the event of fire.

### 15.20. Temporary

Non-permanent measures implemented to mitigate an unacceptable risk in a building as an interim measure, adopted for the safety of residents while works to rectify the identified fire safety failings are carried out. Temporary measures could include the use of a waking watch or the preferred option of the installation of a common fire alarm system along with suitable on-site evacuation management, where necessary. The installation of a temporary fire alarm and detection system is preferred over a continued use of a waking watch system.

### 15.21. Timeframes for Responsible Persons

**Immediately** – At once: As soon as it is identified that interim measures are necessary by Competent Persons and the fire risk assessment process.

**Transition period** – No longer than 6 months: The amount of time needed for the Responsible Person to implement the transitional plan, and put in place more sustainable measures to allow the building to transition away from a waking watch, such as by moving to installation of a **common fire alarm** as outlined in Appendix A. This should take place as soon as practically possible, **and within no longer than 6 months** of the risk being identified, other than in exceptional circumstances.

**Short-term** – No longer than 12 months: The time required to formulate, and where possible commence, a longer-term **remediation plan** as soon as practically possible and within no longer than 12 months. Remediation plans may be dependent upon factors such as the design of the building, the different types of tenures, particularly leaseholders, and the needs of residents. It is unlikely that measures in place for longer than 12 months will prove to be cost beneficial when compared to installing a common fire alarm.

**Longer-term** – 12 months or more: The period by which the remediation plan is in place and underway.

#### 15.22. Transition plan

Within a month: Where a waking watch is implemented, as soon as practicable but within a month, the Responsible Persons should make a plan for implementing sustainable means for supporting the evacuation strategy to allow the building to transition away from a waking watch. Such a plan should include details such as costings, timeframes, a resident engagement strategy, and relevant procurement processes. It should also consider the principles of prevention. In the immediate and transitional term, this plan could include the installation of a first aid fire alarm system.

#### 15.23. Waking watch

A system whereby suitably trained persons continually patrol all floors and the exterior perimeter of the building in order to detect a fire, raise the alarm, and carry out the role of evacuation management.

## 16. Bibliography and Other Resources

### 16.1. Relevant legislation:

- [The Building Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Fire Safety Act 2021](#) and associated [Home Office Guidance](#)
- [The Fire Safety \(Employees Capabilities\) \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022 Home Office factsheets](#)<sup>16</sup>
- [The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)
- [The Housing Act 2004](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) (the Fire Safety Order)

### 16.2. Relevant guidance:

- [Check your fire safety responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order](#)
- [Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats guide](#)
- [Fire Safety in Specialised Housing guide](#)
- [Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people guide](#)
- [Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation guide](#)

### 16.3. Standards and codes of practice:

- British Standard 5839 Part 1 Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings – Code of practice for design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of systems in non-domestic premises (BS 5839-1)
- British Standard 8629:2019 Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of evacuation alert systems for use by fire and rescue services in buildings containing flats (BS 8629)
- British Standard 8899:2016 Improvement of firefighting and evacuation provisions in existing lifts – Code of practice (BS 8899)
- British Standard 9999:2017 Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings – Code of practice
- British Standard EN 12101 – Smoke and heat control systems
- [Code of Practice for the Provision of Premises Information Boxes in Residential Buildings](#)

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<sup>16</sup> The regulations will come into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 following the publication of supporting guidance which is due later in 2022.

- [Publicly Available Specification 9980:2022 Assessing the external wall fire risk in multi-occupied residential buildings \(PAS 9980\)](#)

16.4. Useful websites and further information:

- [Association for Specialist Fire Protection website](#)
- [Disabled Facilities Grants](#)
- [Fire Sector Federation website](#)
- [Government guidance on Aluminium Composite Material \(ACM\) cladding](#)
- [Government written statement on proportionality in building safety](#)
- [Leasehold high rise blocks: Who pays for fire safety work?](#)
- [Lift and Escalator Industry Association website](#)
- [Online home fire safety check tool](#)
- [Smoke Control Association website](#)